



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

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Linked External Documents	DfE guidelines PSHE Association guidelines and resources NSPCC guidelines Equality Act 2010

St Edward's takes seriously its responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible relationships and sex education (RSE) to its pupils as part of the school's personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum. The school wants parents and pupils to feel assured that sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both the age and development of pupils, and safe to voice opinions and concerns relating to the sex education provision.

This policy is created by the Assistant Head Pastoral and Head of PSHE in consultation with the Deputy Head Pastoral, Assistant Head of PSHE and Senior Nurse.

Policy aims

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. It is also about teaching what it is to be in a caring, stable and mutually supportive relationship with another person, and how to control and understand feelings that come with being in a relationship. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity and the school emphasises that by providing comprehensive RSE we are not encouraging pupils to become sexually active at a young age. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the right provision is in place so that pupils have the background knowledge they need to make informed decisions and responsible choices as they grow up.

RSE will highlight the role of marriage for family life and bringing up children as well as other stable relationships as building blocks for community and society.

Through the provision outlined in this policy we also aim to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, trying to develop communication and assertiveness skills that can help them stay true to their values if challenged by others, their peers or what they see in the media. We hope to teach pupils to be accepting of the different beliefs, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities, backgrounds and values of those around them. We want our pupils to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle, teach them to care for and respect their bodies and provide them with all the right tools that will enable them to seek information or support, should they need it, both during their school years and after.

1. Roles and responsibilities

School staff

It is important that staff who teach RSE feel equipped to take the classes and answer questions from pupils. If the teacher does not feel confident leading RSE discussions then that is likely to be reflected by the pupils, and their learning will be compromised. The school provides professional development training in how to deliver sex education; this includes sessions on confidentiality, setting ground rules, handling controversial issues, responding to awkward questions and an introduction to the rationale of why teaching RSE is so important. There are certain members of the school leadership team, such as the Assistant Head Pastoral, Assistant Head of PSHE and the Senior and Deputy Senior Nurse who will hold more responsibility for ensuring that the school's sex education provision is relevant to our pupils and effective, but it is also a responsibility for all staff members.

The school will:

- Develop this policy and review it on a yearly basis.
- Ensure that those delivering PSHE lessons are given regular and ongoing training on issues relating to RSE and how to deliver lessons on such issues.

- Ensure that relevant staff are up to date with policy changes, and familiar with school policy and guidance relating to sex education.
- Provide support to staff members who feel uncomfortable or ill-equipped to deal with the delivery of sex education to pupils. This may be because they do not feel that their training has been adequate or that aspects of the curriculum conflict with their beliefs.
- Ensure that sex education is age-relevant and appropriate across all year groups; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as our pupils do and meets their needs.
- Ensure that the knowledge and information regarding RSE to which all pupils are entitled is provided in a comprehensive way.
- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSE in school.

Teachers will:

- Take it upon themselves to ensure that they are up to date with school policy and curriculum requirements regarding sex education. Any areas that they feel are not covered or inadequately provided for should be reported back to the Assistant Head Pastoral
- Attend and engage in professional development training around sex education provision.
- Encourage pupils to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal and emotional development in confidence, listen to their needs and support them seriously. If a pupil comes to a member of staff with an issue that member of staff feels they are not able to deal with alone, they should take this concern to the Deputy or Assistant Head Pastoral or the Senior Nurse (who are also part of the Safeguarding Team). No one else should be informed at this stage.
- Provide regular feedback to the Assistant Head Pastoral on their experience of teaching RSE and pupil response.
- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSE in school.
- Tailor their lessons to suit all pupils in their class, across the whole range of abilities, including those pupils with special educational needs. If teachers need support in this area, they should speak to the Head of Learning Development or Assistant Head Pastoral.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend sex education classes that are in their school timetable and take them seriously. Although they are not assessed through examination, these classes are still a very important part of the curriculum and a tool to aid personal development and the school expects pupils to recognise this.

Pupils should support one another with issues that arise through RSE. Listening in class, being considerate of other people's feelings and beliefs, and complying with confidentiality rules that are set in class are key to effective provision. Pupils who regularly fail to follow these standards of behaviour will be dealt with under the school's **behaviour policy** which is [here](#).

We also hope that pupils will feel comfortable to talk to a member of staff, in confidence, regarding any concerns they have in school related to sex education or otherwise. Conversations of this nature between staff and pupils will be held in confidence; however, staff will take concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Lead if there is a safeguarding concern or to the Assistant Head Pastoral if they feel ill-equipped to deal with the issue at hand.

We ask pupils for feedback on the school's sex education provision yearly and expect them to take this responsibility seriously. Opinions on provision and comments will be taken into consideration when the curriculum is prepared for the following year. In this way, the school hopes to provide pupils with the education they need on topics they want to learn about.

Parents

Parents share the responsibility of sex education and support their children's personal, social and emotional development. We encourage parents to create an open home environment where pupils can engage, discuss and continue to learn about matters of relationships and sex education. Parents are also encouraged to seek additional support in this from the school where they feel it is needed. For information on accessing school support, see section 4.

2. Implementation and curriculum

It is important that we implement our RSE policy consistently throughout the school. We encourage teachers to provide classes that are specific to the needs of the pupils in that class, and responsive to their behaviour and development.

Through this aspect of our curriculum we aim to explore different attitudes, values and social labels, and develop skills that will enable our pupils to make informed decisions regarding sex and relationships. It is important that pupils know the difference between fact, opinion and belief.

Guest speakers

We may invite guest speakers into school to talk on issues related to sex and relationships. It may be the case that the subject under discussion is better coming from an expert or experienced health professional. A teacher will be present throughout. Visitors will be briefed on the ethos and key points of this policy.

Terminology

Pupils will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang or everyday terms used in certain social circles will be discussed; this will surround discussion about what is and isn't acceptable language to use.

Dealing with difficult questions

Staff training will include sessions on how to deal with difficult questions. There may still be times when staff are faced with a difficult question in class that they feel uncomfortable or ill equipped to answer. In this case, they may wish to put the question to one side and seek advice from the Deputy or Assistant Head Pastoral.

Ground rules in class are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter. Some strategies staff may use to support this might be:

- an anonymous question box or use of post it notes (the 'ask it basket'); this will enable pupils to feel more comfortable to ask questions without being identified
- making the classroom a zone of silence; this means that whatever is discussed in the classroom stays in the classroom and should not be brought up at any other time. We hope this will give pupils the sense that they are in a safe zone to speak freely about sex and relationships.

Pupils with special educational needs

The school works hard to ensure that all aspects of the school curriculum are inclusive and support the needs of pupils of all ranges of abilities. Staff should differentiate lessons to ensure

that all members of the class can access the information fully, and this is no different when it comes to RSE.

The school will use a variety of different strategies to ensure that all pupils have access to the same information. Some of these include:

- interactive teaching methods e.g. contraceptive card game
- use of expert guest speakers
- practical activities
- using DVDs or video
- group and paired activities

Withdrawal from RSE

The school aims to keep parents informed about the RSE curriculum and urges parents to read this policy. The school will do everything it can to ensure that parents are comfortable with the education provided to their children in school. It is, however, a statutory right of parents or carers to withdraw the children in their care from RSE. This excludes withdrawal from the elements on human growth and reproduction.

Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from RSE should contact the Assistant Head Pastoral who will arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns. RSE is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports child development and we strongly urge parents to carefully consider their decision before withdrawing their child from this aspect of school life. However, it is acknowledged that the final decision on the issue is for the parent to take.

The government's guidance on parental withdrawal is as follows:

“Where parents wish to withdraw their child from part or all of sex education (as part of statutory RSE) the school would typically discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Good practice is also likely to include the school discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers’ version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although the detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead). Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents’ request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the school may want to take a pupil’s specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision”.

Complaints

Parents or carers who have complaints or concerns regarding the RSE curriculum should contact the Assistant Head Pastoral in the first instance. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the school's [complaints policy](#) should be followed.

Equal opportunities

RSE lessons provide a good background for talking openly and freely about the diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences. Prejudiced views will be challenged, and equality promoted. Any bullying that relates to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be dealt with swiftly and seriously. This is the case for bullying of any kind and the procedures regarding this are outlined in the [school’s behaviour policy](#).

Safeguarding and confidentiality

We hope to provide a safe and supportive school community where pupils feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at school or at home. Training around confidentiality will be provided to all teachers.

It may be the case that discussion around what is acceptable and not acceptable in relationships may lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. If this is the case, the school's child protection and safeguarding procedure should be followed. The school's safeguarding policy is available on the website [here](#)

Personal information about pupils who have approached a teacher for discussion should not be shared with any other person. If there is a child protection concern, the information must be shared with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

If a staff member is approached by a pupil under 16 who is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, the teacher should:

- Ensure that the pupil is accessing all the contraceptive and sexual health advice available and understands the risks of being sexually active.
- Encourage the pupil to talk to their parent or carer. Pupils may feel that they are more comfortable bringing these issues to a teacher they trust, but it is important that children and their parents have open and trusting relationships when it comes to sexual health and the school will encourage this as much as possible.
- Decide whether there is a child protection issue. This may be the case if the teacher is concerned that there is coercion or abuse involved. If a member of staff is informed that a pupil under 13 is having or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, this will be dealt with under child protection procedures.

Pupils with special educational needs may be more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to protect themselves from harmful influences. If staff are concerned that this is the case, they should seek support from the Deputy or Assistant Head Pastoral, Senior Nurse or Head of Learning Development to decide what is in the best interest of the child.

Advice and treatment

Staff who are approached by pupils with a concern about having contracted or possibly contracted a sexually transmitted disease should refer them immediately to the Senior Nurse or Deputy Senior Nurse. Providing advice on contraception and practising safe sex is a key part of the school's RSE provision.

There is no reason for staff to expect to be made aware of a pupil or colleague's HIV or hepatitis status, and no person will be discriminated against because of this if there is a disclosure of this type of information.

The school's **first aid policy** covers protection for all school members against infection from blood-borne viruses. The First Aid Policy is available for staff [here](#)

Support for pregnant teenagers and young fathers

The school policy for supporting pregnant teenagers and young parents is available on request or on the school intranet

3. Monitoring, review and evaluation

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and economic change. Our aim is to provide RSE that is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our pupils, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason, we review the RSE curriculum yearly, and will inform parents of any substantial revisions to the school policy or sex education curriculum.

The school will review this policy annually.

4. Support

We hope that pupils will feel safe in the school environment to talk to any member of staff in confidence about any areas of concern regarding their personal, social and emotional development, including matters raised by or relating to sex education. We promote the school ethos as one of inclusion and acceptance throughout all areas of school activity and hope that pupils respond to this by feeling comfortable to ask questions and continue their learning both in and outside of the classroom.

Any parent wanting support on providing effective sex education at home should contact, in the first instance, the Deputy Head Pastoral at pastoral@stedwardsoxford.org who will then make the appropriate connections.