



**BEDFORD  
GIRLS'  
SCHOOL**

# Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Reviewed: August 2024

Next review: August 2025 or when new government guidance available

Reviewed by: Head of PSHE & Deputy Head – Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Approved by: Headmistress

## Aims

Relationships and Sex education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Some aspects are taught in science, and others are taught as part of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). This policy is written with regard for the statutory guidance provided for schools (RSE and Health Education 2019). From September 2020, relationships and sex education became statutory for all schools in England. Also, from September 2020 it is compulsory for all schools to teach Health Education. In our school, we aim through implicit and explicit learning experiences to:

- ensure that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is integrated into the curriculum and is not isolated, taken out of context or over emphasised in any way
- foster self-esteem and respect for others as the cornerstone of good health education and, therefore, of good sex education
- nurture a partnership between caring adults – governors, teachers, support staff and parents - to ensure sensitive support for children and young people as they grow and mature
- ensure students have the ability to accept their own and others' sexual orientation
- encourage students to enjoy relationships based upon mutual trust and respect, free from any abuse
- generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without embarrassment
- adopt a whole school approach to RSE
- promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, physical and social development of students at the school and in society
- prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.
- to clarify the content and the manner in which RSE is delivered in this school.
- to focus where possible on boys and young men as well as girls and young women
- to safeguard our students against potential harm.

## Teaching and Learning

Within the taught and broader curriculum, including whole school opportunities, students are given frequent and regular opportunities to explore their feelings and to practise personal and interpersonal skills. The learning that occurs in the community and in the home is valued and respected and are essential dimensions of RSE. It is important to involve parents, whenever possible, and certainly to inform them.

Parents will continue to have a right to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE in secondary schools which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, should be granted up until the end of Year 10. At this point, if the child themselves wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements for this to happen.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at primary or secondary, the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

*Bold*

*Imaginative*

*Reflective*

The curriculum is available on the school website and if a parent has a query about the content they should contact Miss Emberson (Senior School) or Mrs Howe (Junior School) by email in the first instance. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from sex education then a request must be made in writing to the Headmistress in enough time so that reasonable alternative arrangements to support alternative learning can be made.

SRE has three main elements:

### **Attitudes and values**

- understanding the school values of boldness, imagination and reflection
- learning the importance of individual conscience and moral considerations
- learning the value of family life, marriage and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children
- learning the value of respect, love and care
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- developing critical thinking as part of decision making.

### **Personal and social skills**

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- developing self-respect and empathy for others
- learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- managing conflict
- learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

### **Knowledge and understanding**

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- learning about contraception and support services
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay, and the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.
- understand the risks of using social media and the internet to include grooming and exploitation.

### **Organisation**

- **Co-ordination of RSE**

This is essential to ensure continuity, progression and evaluation. The work is co-ordinated by:

Junior School – Carolyn Howe

Senior School – Abigail Emberson

Supported by Heads of Year and School Nurses

- **Delivery**

This is through planned aspects within the Science, PSHE and Religious Education curriculum. These issues may also be addressed through various moral and ethical issues which may arise from apparently unrelated topics in all subjects and are reinforced by content taught by the school nurses or professional outside agencies. Within this category, as long as any discussion takes place within the context of the subject, it will not be deemed to be part of the RSE programme and therefore is not subject to the parental right of withdrawal.

- **Teaching approaches**

*Bold*

*Imaginative*

*Reflective*

A variety of approaches are used to give students relevant information, to enable moral issues to be explored through discussion, and to develop appropriate skills.

All children and young people – whatever their experience, background and identity – are entitled to quality sex and relationships education that helps them build confidence and a positive sense of self, and to stay healthy. All classes include students with different abilities and disabilities, experiences and backgrounds, gender and sexual identities. To encourage students to participate in lessons, teachers should ensure content, approach, and use of inclusive language reflect the diversity of the school community, and help each and every student to feel valued and included in the classroom.

- **Student groupings**

It is important that the students feel comfortable and that all groups are subject to the same information over the period of time it takes to teach the unit of work.

- **Resources**

A wide range of teaching resources will be used. These are available for inspection by parents through the co-ordinators. Where possible the use of trained health workers will be used along with the school nurses.

- **Staffing**

It is important that the staff feel comfortable with the subject matter. Support will be given as required.

- **Time available**

In Years 3 – 13 PSHE is included within curriculum time and this will include specific RSE elements.

## Confidentiality and Advice

Students and parents should be aware that in terms of confidentiality:

- the students' best interests will always be maintained
- students will be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers and the school will give them support to do so.
- students will be made aware that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality
- as confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, the student will be informed first and then supported as appropriate
- if there is any suggestion of abuse, the school will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and inform the Headmistress without delay
- students will be informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the school nurses (see the Health Centre policy), our school counsellors, GP or local young persons' advice centre
- ground rules will be established in the lessons

## Relationships

Students should be taught about all aspects of the law and sexual consent - notably that, in the law on sexual offences, the onus is on getting rather than giving consent. As a principle, SRE should promote equality in relationships and emphasise the importance of seeking and gaining mutual consent through positive and active communication, and go beyond teaching how to say 'no'.

Students should be taught how to identify behaviour in a relationship which is positive and supportive and that which is exploitative and controlling. Students should understand the impact of a pernicious culture that reinforces stereotyped and gendered expectations for both boys and girls, including blaming victims for the abuse they experience and other cultural norms and negative stereotypes that they experience and observe. Students should also develop the skills for negotiating consent and managing the feelings associated with their experiences, and how to seek help and support if they need it. Crucially, learning should open up discussion about real-life situations.

## **Parental Partnership**

- The school values and respects the learning that takes place in the home.
- Parents may view resources to be used in RSE and their views will be taken into account with respect to further policy revisions and curriculum review.

The parental and student rights for withdrawal are outlined earlier in this policy.

## **Learning Support**

Work may be planned in different ways in order to meet the individual needs of young people who require specific learning support. The SEND and SEMH needs of learners will be considered in the same way as they are for any other lessons at school.

For details of the course content please see PSHE Curriculum.