St Mary's School
Gerrards Cross

RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

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MONITORING AND REVIEW

Person Responsible	Katie Cork/ Deputy Head
Reviewed by	SLT
Approved by	SLT
Frequency of Review	Annually
Date of Last Review	September 2024
Date of Next Review	September 2025

The School refers to all staff and students in St Mary's School, which includes the Early Years/Foundations Stage (EYFS), the Preparatory Department (Years 1-6), Senior House (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form (Years 12-13).

The term 'parent' refers to those who have parental responsibility for a child.

AIMS

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is an integral part of the learning process for all children. Its objective is to help and support students' physical, emotional and moral development so that they will be able to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships, and to build their self-efficacy. Students will also be able to put this knowledge into practice as they develop social skills and the capacity to make safe, informed and healthy decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Healthy relationships include intimate relationships, friendships, working relationships, marriage and other types of committed relationships.

This policy has been produced in conjunction with consultation with parents and is reviewed annually by the Head of Department, alongside the departmental teaching staff, parents and students as appropriate.

WIDER REFERENCES

This policy operates within a wider national policy framework, which includes:

- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Regulations (2019)
- DfE - Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019) last updated September 2021
- Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013
- Fraser Guidelines
- SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years (2015) (statutory guidance)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools) (2018)
- SMSC Requirements for Independent Schools (statutory guidance)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (statutory guidance)

RELATED INTERNAL POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with St Mary's School:

- PSHCEE Policy
- Safeguarding (Child Protection Policy)
- SMSC – With Regards to British Values
- SEND Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy

MORAL AND VALUES FRAMEWORK

All students are encouraged to:

- Build positive and healthy relationships
- Distinguish between right and wrong
- Build their self- esteem and personal confidence
- Develop a respect for others and themselves
- Take personal responsibility for their own actions

- Have space to develop a set of moral values for themselves and have tolerance for the values of others
- Understand the consequences of their actions for themselves and others
- Understand socially acceptable behaviour
- Move with confidence from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood
- Understand the meaning of consent and their right to say 'no'

THE RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The Relationships, Sex and Health Education Programme has three fundamental dimensions:

1. Knowledge and Understanding

Factual information is presented through Science lessons in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner at age appropriate stages in line with the National Curriculum. Students learn and understand physical development, puberty, human reproduction, pregnancy, childbirth, contraception, infertility, and sexually transmitted diseases including information about HIV/AIDS and the prevention of infection.

During PSHCEE lessons, in addition to the list above, students also study emotional development, social development, self-esteem, relationships, consent, gender roles, stereotyping, prejudice, personal safety, being safe (including online), pornography, sexual abuse, sexual attitudes, sexual orientation and healthy sexual relationships. They also learn about the law and support agencies. See the PSHCEE Policy or Scheme of Work for more information.

2. Values and Beliefs

All teaching is within our moral and values framework. The Relationships, Sex and Health Education programme fosters an appreciation of healthy relationships through a stable family life, marriage and mutually supportive relationships as well as the responsibilities of parenthood. The key underlying themes are respect, equality and trust. It also encourages the students to:

- Develop their values and attitudes towards sex, sexuality and relationships
- Respect and empathise with other's attitudes towards sex, sexuality and relationships
- Understand that sexual intimacy involves strong emotional feelings
- Respect their own and others' feelings, decisions, rights and bodies
- Understand the significance of marriage and mutually supportive relationships as key building blocks of community and society

3. Extending Personal and Social Skills

Through the Relationships, Sex and Health Education programme students develop the skills to:

- Articulate their own attitudes and values
- Deal with difficult moral and social questions
- Value themselves and be assertive, have resilience and cope with change
- Make decisions and understand the consequences
- Deal with peer pressure
- Understand and manage conflicting pressures relating to consent and exploitation
- Develop inter-personal skills

Recognising that for many students, the distinction between the online and offline world is less marked than for many adults, the Relationships, Sex and Health Education programme supports students in understanding differences between online and offline aspects of life.

ORGANISATION OF SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Relationships and Sex Education is an integral part of the Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education (PSHCEE) programme at St Mary's School.

In the Prep, puberty in girls and the menstrual cycle are delivered through science lessons to all students in Year 5 by the Science teacher and this is reviewed in Year 6. Information about the content of the 'Life Cycles' lesson is shared with parents in advance of the lesson and parents are given an opportunity to meet with the teacher if they have any questions. This is primarily the biology of physical change, which is a part of the statutory Science National Curriculum.

Relationships Education starts in Early Years and is delivered by the class teacher. The focus is on the development of positive relationships, understanding feelings and fears, fairness, kindness and respect. By the end of Year 6 the topics of diversity, bullying, peer pressure, discrimination, family conflict and loss will have been covered in PSHCEE lessons in an age-appropriate way.

The internet for most people is an integral part of life and has many benefits. Internet Safety starts in Early Years and is delivered throughout Prep by the class teacher and additionally in Key Stage 2 in the Computing curriculum. The focus is on understanding how to use the internet safely. Pupils are taught about the benefits of rationing time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing. Understanding that people can behave differently online, sometimes by pretending to be someone they are not and that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to- face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous. This is reinforced through the Computer Science curriculum, which incorporates online safety throughout the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 3.

Physical health, fitness and healthy eating is delivered by the Food and Nutrition, Physical Education, Science and PSHCEE Departments.

In Senior School, all Key Stage 3 students learn about the male and female reproductive systems in Year 7. This is delivered by their science teacher in science lessons and it is a part of the Key Stage 3 statutory Science National Curriculum. Students also study how babies grow and develop inside the womb, puberty, the menstrual cycle and contraception. In Key Stage 4, all students are taught about the hormones that control fertility including the use of them in oral and other forms of contraception. Students are also taught how hormones are used in the process of IVF. All topics are delivered by the Science teachers.

Relationships Education in Senior House starts in Year 7 and is delivered by a team of specialist PSHCEE teachers. The focus is on the social and emotional aspects of development and relationships, including recognising the impact of social media. All topics are taught at an age-appropriate level and include information on how and where to access help and support within school and beyond.

Topics covered include:

- Healthy relationships
- Consent
- Female Genital Mutilation

- Bullying including sexual bullying
- Equality, Diversity and Values within relationships
- Recognising risky behaviours
- Relationships, including those online
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Mental wellbeing
- Menstruation
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Basic first aid

From Key Stage 4, the focus is on preparing the students for life beyond school.

Topics covered include:

- Personal health and wellbeing (physical and mental)
- Relationships with others, including those online
- STI's and sexual health
- Female Health Conditions
- Pregnancy and Fertility
- Pornography
- Making choices regarding contraception
- Consent
- The role of sex in the media
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Sexual assault, abuse and harassment, misogyny and rape culture and the law
- Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse

Staff are encouraged to take up relevant training opportunities, to develop and enhance their expertise in delivering PSHCEE topics. A variety of teaching approaches are used, including ways of dealing with the more sensitive issues that may arise. Ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in a lesson. Students' questions are answered in an honest and sensitive manner and learning experiences are planned to meet the needs of **all** students. This ensures students receive relevant, up to date information in Science lessons and it is ensured that emotional and moral issues can be explored through productive discussion in a safe environment during PSHCEE lessons. Where appropriate, outside speakers will be involved in the delivery of PSHCEE. All visiting speakers will be expected to conform to the guidelines in the Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy.

In accordance with the RSHE statutory guidance, we have the same high expectations of the quality of pupil's work in RSHE lessons as for other curriculum areas. RSHE (in PSHCEE lessons), teaching is incorporated within the Learning Walks schedule and feedback is used in our regular review of materials and provision. In terms of pupil assessment, in Senior House, Learning Questions are posed and answered using OneNote, and these are monitored by class teachers and the Head of PSHCEE to determine

understanding of topics covered. In Prep, girls self-assess their knowledge using a traffic light system. We utilise a range of ways to check for understanding of topics and identify where students may need additional support. Forms of assessment may include:

- Quizzes
- Presentations
- Moving 'attitudes' continuums
- Exit Polls
- Self-evaluation
- Participation in discussion
- Self -reflection/Blob trees

The PSHCEE programme and Science Scheme of Work are reviewed annually by the PSHCEE and Science teachers as part of the School plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Student voice is used to review the curriculum and its relevance for students' experience.

SPECIFIC ISSUES STATEMENTS

Anti-Bullying Procedures
St Mary's School has its own Anti-Bullying Policy, which gives clear guidelines on procedures for students and staff. We recognise that some students are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues on account of their SEND and take this into account when designing or amending our curriculum.

Child Sex Abuse Procedure
In the Prep Department, Mairead Carney, Head of the Prep Department is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with responsibility for Child Protection (Safeguarding), and Rebecca Rose is the DSL specifically for EYFS. In the Senior House, the Senior Deputy Headmistress is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. In the absence of either, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads will take responsibility. The School liaises with the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure the welfare of all children.

Complaints Procedure
Any complaints about the Relationships, Sex and Health Education programme should be made in writing to the Headmistress in accordance with the School Complaints Policy.

Confidentiality
Staff always offer sensitive and appropriate advice. They maintain confidentiality on most matters; however, it is made clear that there are some matters that cannot remain confidential for Child Protection (Safeguarding) reasons. PSHCEE and pastoral staff follow the Fraser Guidelines when dealing with any individual's concern regarding pregnancy and contraception.

Contraceptive Advice
Factual contraceptive information is given in lessons, including emergency contraception. Relevant telephone numbers of support agencies are on the school notice boards and Pastoral and PSHCEE Firefly pages and other sources of help and information are given.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBTQIA+)
We will comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, (please see The Equality Act 2010: advice for schools), under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics. In relation to LGBTQIA+ issues, teaching must be sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. At the point at which it is considered appropriate to teach pupils about LGBTQIA+, content will be fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum.

The Law
Students will be taught about what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, including information and rules regrading sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology.

Withdrawal
Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSHE (although not from the statutory elements which are in the Science Curriculum as detailed above). Before granting any such request the Headmistress will discuss the request with parents to clarify the nature and purpose of the request and, as appropriate, with the child, to ensure that their wishes are understood, taking into consideration the statutory guidance.

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will 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 students with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Headmistress may want to take a student's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. The Headmistress will automatically grant a request to withdraw a student from any sex education delivered in the Prep Department, other than as part of the Science curriculum. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships or Health Education.

Working with external agencies
Work with expert organisations supports the department in ensuring content is up-to-date, accurate, and of the highest calibre. Where appropriate, external organisations may be invited in to deliver content and bring specialist knowledge and ways of engaging students. Organisations or speakers will be carefully considered in relation to their appropriateness in relation to the needs of students and how they can enhance teaching by PSHCEE staff. As with any visiting speaker, the Headmistress will be informed in advance of the details of the organisation or speaker, the purpose of the visit and details of the visit.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Our curriculum complies with the provisions set out in the Equality Act 2010. The planning and delivery of our RSHE curriculum acknowledges and promotes the importance of equality and respect, and specifically taking into account the protected characteristics of race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. Resources used may include video material which may be explicit, but students will be protected from material which is inappropriate having regard to their age and/or cultural background.

Materials used are in accordance with our PSHCEE policy and the law, inappropriate images or explicit material not directly related to explanation will be avoided.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEND)

SRE is accessible to all students, however, the school is aware that for some students SRE can be a particularly important or challenging subject and these factors are taken into account when teaching the subject. The school ensures that teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.

WORKING WITH PARENTS

The School's Relationships, Sex and Health Education programme is developed in consultation with staff, parents and students. The syllabus has been designed to take account of the varied religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds of students in keeping with the Equality Act 2010. The School will from time to time inform parents of changes and developments and include them in any future consultations as appropriate.

DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY

A copy of this policy is available on the School website and accessibility copies will be available on request from the School office.