



Saint Aidan's Church of England High School

Relationship & Sex Education Policy

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1. Aim and Ethos

The aim of this policy is to communicate to staff, governors, parents/carers, visitors and students the manner in which RSE will be delivered and supported at Saint Aidan's Church of England High School, in accordance with the 2020 statutory guidance: Relationship and Sex Education and in a context of Christian understanding.

2. Defining Relationship and Sex Education (Statutory Guidance 2020)

'RSE gives young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It enables students to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what make a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It covers contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex. It teaches what is acceptable and unacceptable in relationships.'

At Saint Aidan's Church of England High School, relationship and sex education will be presented in a balanced, objective and sensitive manner within a framework that is:

- inclusive and considers the needs of all students;
- based on self-esteem and responsibility for the consequences of one's own actions;
- reflective of parents' wishes and recognises the culture of the community we serve;
- based on values which are founded on the school value system.

3. Aims and objectives of RSE

The aim of our RSE programme is to assist our students to prepare for adult life by supporting them through their physical, emotional and moral development and help them to understand themselves, respect others and form and sustain healthy relationships.

We understand that it is our duty to ensure all students, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are properly included in Relationship and Sex Education.

- Students will be taught the importance of making decisions based on respect for themselves and for others. They will be encouraged to consider the responsibility they have for their actions and the responsibility they have to the school and the wider community.
- The school seeks to provide a safe, secure learning environment for RSE that enables children and young people to gain accurate knowledge, develop their own values and attitudes, and develop skills to grow into happy confident successful adults

4. What is effective Relationship and Sex Education?

It is part of lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships and sexual health. We promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students as well as preparing them at school for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. In our view, Relationship and Sex Education incorporates three strands:

4.1 Attitudes and values

Students are helped to examine their own and other people's attitudes and values, particularly related to sexual matters, and to respect the rights of others to their own opinions. RSE can help students to develop a good self-image and high self-esteem, responsibility and the ability to make informed decisions. Students should understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect.

4.2 Personal and social skills

RSE encourages the acquisition of skills so that students' relationships with others may be positive, fulfilling and respectful. It helps them explore how to be themselves in terms of beliefs, culture and traditions and to respect others. It provides opportunities to develop communication skills, assertiveness within a range of different situations emboldening the students to recognise opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle. In addition, students develop an appreciation of the consequences of choices made and learn how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

4.3 Knowledge and understanding

RSE provides information on puberty, personal safety, friendship and love, family life and relationships, gender issues, conception and birth processes, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, prejudice and stereotyping and sex and the law. This gives an understanding of the nature and diversity of relationships and sexuality. It can provide an objective and balanced view of sexual matters, correcting any misinformation students may have gained. It can give them the information and understanding they need, in accordance with the students' background and beliefs.

While promoting the values above, we will ensure that students are offered a balanced programme. Relevant local data and information related to RSE is used to inform planning and to address the identified needs of the whole school community e.g. teenage pregnancy, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, social deprivation, family life, career and life chances.

5. How is Relationship and Sex Education organised?

RSE is not an isolated subject; it permeates the whole school curriculum, the ethos of the school, the pastoral system and is informed by the role models given by teachers. Opportunities should be used as they occur for answering students' questions and exploring issues as they arise. All subjects, but particularly PD, Science, Religious Education, ICT,

English and Drama provide a focus for exploring some elements of RSE. Our programme of Personal Development Days also contributes to the delivery of RSE. The PSHE Co-ordinator alongside the pastoral team and Heads of Faculties complete an annual audit to inform where topics are taught.

6. How does Relationship and Sex Education relate to equal opportunities?

The school's policy for equal opportunities also underpins the teaching of RSE. Relationship and sex education can act as a basis for promoting equality between individuals and groups. It necessarily involves an exploration of human and social diversity, and a fostering of self-esteem and self-worth in a learning environment that recognises and respects difference. We work to ensure that our relationship and sex education is relevant and accessible to all our students and that it is appropriate for all levels of understanding and maturity, taking into account educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, religion or sexual orientation or whether they are looked after children. This means that relationship and sex education is sensitive to the different needs of individual students and may evolve and adapt over time.

Students are taught the facts and the laws about sex, sexuality, sexual health, gender identity, sexism and sexual harassment in an appropriate and inclusive way. All students should feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality, with equal opportunity to explore the features of healthy same sex relationships.

7. How is Relationship and Sex Education taught?

The school recognises the need to begin with students' own experiences, beliefs and values and, therefore, places a high importance on creating a supportive and secure atmosphere where they can develop the confidence needed to talk, listen and think about sex and relationships. In order to do this, teachers:

- establish ground rules with students;
- emphasise the importance of mutual respect;
- require no open personal disclosures in a class setting;
- encourage reflection.

The school also draws on a range of teaching methods in order to encourage exploration of attitudes, values and beliefs, using active learning methods which involve students and help them to personalise information. This also increases the likelihood of the learning being relevant and effective.

The school includes activities where students' can practise and develop confidence in using communication, negotiation and decision making skills. A variety of approaches are used to enable students to gain information and to explore moral and practical issues. These may be seen in the schemes of work. The school recognises that some aspects of RSE are a whole school concern and that some aspects can be covered by subject teachers across the curriculum.

However, there are aspects which need to be taught separately including those specifically relating to sexual matters such as contraception and STIs. The school draws on the expertise of the School Nurse and external national specialist agencies who deliver material appropriate to students' age, maturity and religious and cultural background. All teachers are given training on handling controversial topics and are made clear about confidentiality boundaries and know where/who to refer students for confidential advice and support.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation Relationship and Sex Education

- RSE resources are chosen and checked to ensure they are:
- up to date;
- inclusive – including different types of sexuality;
- promote positive, healthy and unbiased messages;
- age appropriate;
- promote positive values in a context of Christian understanding;
- accurate.

Monitoring of the delivery, content, teaching and assessment of RSE is linked to the usual school monitoring and tracking procedures. It is the responsibility of the member of the SLT responsible for RSE/PSHE/Citizenship to oversee and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.

9. Visitors contributing to RSE

From time to time as part of a planned module of work the school will invite in local experts on issues relating to RSE as well as using health and other professionals associated with the school. All school associate health and other professional visitors will be asked to conform to the following:

- Visitors contributing to RSE will do so at the invitation of the school and will be qualified to make an appropriate contribution;
- Visitors must agree with the aims of the school in delivering its policy on RSE;
- When in class visitors will be supervised by a teacher, who will be present at all times;
- Visitors will follow the school's child protection procedures if a disclosure occurs within the classroom setting;
- Visitors will know and understand where their contribution fits into the school's programme for RSE and PSHE

10. Confidentiality

Due to the nature of RSE/PSHE education, students' learning may result in them seeking advice or support on a specific personal issue. No teacher can offer complete confidentiality, and it is important for everyone's safety that teachers and students are clear about what can and cannot be kept confidential. It is also very important for external contributors, including school nurses, to be clear about these rules and that whilst working in the classroom, they are bound by the school's confidentiality policy, not their own. If we have any reason to believe a student is at risk, we are required to take the steps outlined in our Child Protection Policy.

11. Right of withdrawal

Relationship and Sex Education is part of all students' education and it is hoped that all will participate. However, the school acknowledges that parents have the right to withdraw their child from parts of the relationship and sex education programme. This includes objectives relating to intimate and sexual relationships but they must access all other objectives of the RSE curriculum. They cannot be withdrawn from the statutory National Science curriculum. Parents wishing to exercise that right are asked to make an appointment to discuss their concerns. The school recognises that they are under no obligation to do so, however. The school will provide alternative arrangements. If a student is withdrawn from RSE the school would be unable to prevent him/her from asking peers what they had learnt in the lesson.