



## **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy**

### **Links to other policies**

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

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- IT policy

### **Legislation (Statutory regulations and guidance):**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010;
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education';
- DfE (2019) 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education';
- DfE (2015) 'National curriculum in England: science programmes of study';
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019;
- Children and Social Work Act 2017.

### **Rationale and Ethos - Statement of Principles**

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. We understand that the lives of our pupils are becoming increasingly complex as they navigate social and moral challenges, and we recognise that this has been further challenged by their in-person and online lives becoming less distinguishable from one another. Whilst the challenges of this are significant, we also recognise that this also brings new opportunities young people have previously not had. We therefore include pupils' online lives as a standard consideration with the delivery of RSE.

We believe that RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice in all fora. Our RSE is designed to promote equality through challenging stereotypes and also challenging sexism and sexual harassment in schools, whether online or in-person. We take these issues seriously and ensure that we embed content on equality throughout the curriculum. We are also committed to an RSE that makes every pupil feel valued and included by designing a curriculum that is relevant to them.

We are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice 2014 when planning for this subject. We view the partnership of home and school as vital in providing the context of our RSE programme and are in close communication with parents via Academic Forums, PSHE workshops, Parent Fairs and email communication. We will also ensure that we take into account the religious and cultural background of all pupils when teaching RSE. We ensure our RSE at Blundell's fosters gender equality and LGBT+ equality by seeking to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

## **General Approach to RSE at Blundell's School**

The general approach, as with all PSHE learning, is to provide students with age appropriate factual information on different aspects of relationships and sex education, reflecting the school's Christian values and the law, to build a solid moral foundation for future decisions. RSE is taught within an open, questioning, safe environment based on trust, respect and communication. We believe it is important for students for the following reasons:

- The universal entitlement of young people to live safe, fulfilled, healthy lives, both in-person and online.
- They need to make decisions every day that will affect their lives
- They will access the information in other, less reliable, ways if we don't provide them with the full range of information in an accessible, non-judgemental manner.
- The foundations they learn in school will determine how they act in the future which will affect their self-esteem, and their mental and physical wellbeing and that of their families.
- To maximise their ability to form long-term meaningful relationships and be happy with their decisions in the long term.

## **Aims of RSE**

To give the students factual information and a strong moral foundation on which to base their own decisions about relationships in the future, for their own physical and mental wellbeing.

## **Objectives of RSE**

The purpose of RSE lessons is to provide knowledge and understanding on all types of relationships whether intimate or not; the opportunities and risks they pose; along with the fundamentals of safe and healthy relationships, based on love and respect. We explore the values and responsibilities of stable family life, which includes the responsibilities of parenthood, marriage, civil partnership or other types of committed relationship. We encourage the development of positive attitudes, communication, conflict management and equality within healthy relationships. We seek to ensure that it gives pupils the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help them to:

- Recognise the difference between experiences that characterise healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful

- Recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and when to report issues to keep them safe online
- Realise their health (including sexual health), wellbeing and dignity
- Build self-esteem and self-worth
- Explore and value their personal identity and sexual orientation, and the personal identity/sexual orientation of others
- Understand family structures, committed relationships and the legal status of different types of long-term relationships
- Understand and make sense of the real-life and online issues they are experiencing in the world around them
- Manage and explore difficult feelings and emotions
- Consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others
- Develop as informed and responsible citizens
- Understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

We believe that high quality, comprehensive RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation but in fact builds young people's confidence and self-esteem and helps them understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Evidence shows that effective RSE plays a role in behaviour change, including reducing unprotected sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment and form of sexual violence.

## Values

RSE teaching will reflect the school's Christian values, set within the context and norms of our wider community and society in the 21st Century, in consultation with the wider parent body. At Blundell's we actively promote, without prejudice, the importance of stable relationships, of marriage and of the wide variety of family lives. We adhere to Department of Education guidelines on promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools.

## Roles & Responsibilities

**The Board of Governors is responsible for:**

- Approving this policy;
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy;

**The Head is responsible for, and may delegate through the Second Master:**

- The overall implementation of this policy, i.e. ensuring the RSE curriculum is well-led, effectively managed and well-planned
- Ensuring parents are informed of this policy on an annual basis;
- Reviewing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory elements of the RSE curriculum
- Discussing escalated withdrawal requests with parents, and the child if appropriate, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, including the benefits of receiving the education

- Ensuring withdrawn pupils receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal
- Encouraging parents to be involved in consultations regarding the school's RSE curriculum
- Reporting to the Governing Board on the effectiveness of this policy and the curriculum.

**PSHE and RSE Education at Blundell's is underpinned by five keys principles. It will be:**

- Delivered thematically across the school
- Delivered via an age-appropriate spiral-curriculum
- Underpinned by training & development
- Be up to date
- Be informed by best practice & be research led

**To ensure that RSE at Blundell's delivered this, the Head of PSHE is responsible for:**

- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis
- Overseeing the delivery of RSE education
- Working closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the RSE education curriculum complements, and does not duplicate, the content covered in national curriculum subjects

Ensuring parents are provided with the RSE policy and the planned topics for the year, and that parents are communicated with when changes are made or feedback/communication is advantageous and beneficial.

- Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate and high-quality
- Ensuring the continuity and progression between each year group
- Ensuring that changes in the external environment are reflected in RSE teaching
- Reviewing changes to the RSE education curriculum and ensuring their implementation
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the curriculum
- Monitoring the learning and teaching of RSE education, providing support to staff where necessary
- Leading staff meetings and ensuring all members of staff involved in the curriculum have received the appropriate training

- Organising, providing and monitoring CPD opportunities in the subject, helping to develop colleagues' expertise in the subject
- Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to RSE and health education
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subjects and providing reports to the Senior Leadership Team

## Curriculum Design & Delivery

### a) What is RSE?

Sex and Relationship Education is a significant element within the PSHE curriculum. It includes a wide range of areas, starting with awareness of one's self and self-esteem, investigating relationships with friends and families, and how special relationships can develop into sexual relationships. It includes personal development through puberty, elements of sexual relationships, sexuality, pregnancy and parenthood. It also looks into breakdowns of relationships, mental health and physical sexual health.

This is summarised by the DfE's guidance as follows:

"Give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships". (DfE RSHE Guidance, p25)

RSE lessons in PSHE will complement other subjects e.g. Science, Drama, RS, IT, and English. The Senior School curriculum is aligned with the Blundell's Prep School to allow for recap and follow on of prior knowledge for a smooth transition into Year 7.

### b) Learning Outcomes

When discussing relationships and sex our students will be able to:

- Know and understand the information
- Be able to make informed choices that reflect a healthy attitude and strong moral compass
- Understand their rights and the law
- Know where to access sexual healthcare and advice in and outside of school
- Understand their responsibilities, to themselves, to each other and to their families and the wider community.

### c) Teachers

RSE is taught by a team of PSHE teachers and at times by nurses from the Medical Centre. We draw on resources from the PSHE Association, the NHS and elsewhere. The curriculum will complement lessons taught in Science. Outside speakers will also address different year groups. Outside speakers are clearly briefed prior to teaching students, and their resources are seen by the Head of PSHE. Teachers receive training in how to deliver RSE effectively both from the Head of Department and also external experts.

## d) Methodology

Blundell's recognises that high-quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching can help pupils prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, as well as promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils both at school and in society. Blundell's has therefore taken the decision to treat PSHE and RSE as a discreet subject which had dedicated timetable provision.

The PSHE Staff Team teach RSE within PSHE lessons with Year groups 7-11. Subjects delivered are raised to be age appropriate and re-visited in subsequent years in more detail, to ensure reflection, progression and reinforcement. There is flexibility in the programme to address specific issues which may arise in the press or within the school community. For a small number of lessons, boys and girls may be taught separately to allow points to be addressed in an environment with minimum potential for embarrassment.

As with all curriculum subjects, RSE is suitably differentiated so that it is accessible to all pupils, including those with a special educational need or disability (SEND).

## e) Topics taught at appropriate age groups include:

Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The roles and responsibilities of teachers, parents, carers, and children in families, in schools</li><li>• Types of relationships – grandparents, parents and children, siblings, civil partnerships, same sex relationships, and marriage</li><li>• Features of positive, stable relationships</li><li>• Features of negative, unhealthy relationships, including domestic abuse</li><li>• Family life and parenting</li><li>• How to develop and maintain a variety of healthy relationships within a range of social/cultural contexts and to develop parenting skills</li><li>• Breakdowns in relationships - separation and divorce</li><li>• Loss and bereavements</li><li>• Sexual relationships</li><li>• Gender and sexuality</li><li>• The concept of consent in a variety of contexts (including in sexual relationships)</li><li>• How to deal with risky or negative relationships, including all forms of bullying and abuse, sexual and other violence and online encounters</li><li>• Digital relationships</li></ul>
Health & Sex Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Puberty - physical and emotional change</li><li>• STIs*</li><li>• Contraception*</li><li>• Pornography and its impact on sexual expectations*</li><li>• Parenthood and the consequences of teenage pregnancy*</li><li>• How to maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing including sexual health</li><li>• Pregnancy &amp; pregnancy decisions*</li><li>• The relationship between sex and pleasure*</li><li>• How to identify and access help, advice and support</li><li>• Smoking, alcohol and drugs</li></ul>
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rights and responsibilities</li><li>• The law and protected characteristics</li><li>• Examples of diverse values encountered in society</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal position</li> <li>• Similarities, differences &amp; diversity among people – such as race, culture, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation</li> <li>• The impact of prejudice, sexism, misogyny/misandry, bullying, discrimination, and racism on individuals and communities</li> </ul>
Personal Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forming and maintaining personal values</li> <li>• Self-esteem</li> <li>• Confidence</li> <li>• Assertiveness</li> <li>• Communication and Negotiation skills</li> <li>• Challenging offensive behaviour</li> <li>• How the media portrays young people</li> <li>• Media and body image</li> <li>• The role and influence of the media on lifestyle</li> <li>• Stereotypes</li> </ul>

Topics marked with \* are those that parents can request for their children to be withdrawn from. Please see section “Engaging Stakeholders” for further information.

### **f) Diversity**

Students will be given clear, impartial scientific information and facts on matters such as contraception, fertility, the law, abortion, consent, rape, pornography, marriage and partnerships, female genital mutilation, sexual assault, and equality. RSE at Blundell’s will respect how pupils choose to identify themselves, aware of the sensitivities and pressures faced that their sexual orientation and gender identity may be emerging. RSE will continue to evolve over time, and be sensitive to the needs of individual pupils. We will respect individual student’s starting points with the topics and respect different abilities, faiths, cultures, gender identity, and sexual orientation

### **g) Questions**

Questions are invited anonymously in lessons. Pupils will be able to post anonymous questions in the post box in the lesson, in an online anonymous box, outside the PSHE/Careers office or in FoBs Cafe. RSE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from pupils. We view questions as a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others. As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group. There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class. Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way and take into account whether a parent/carer has requested their child to be removed from sex education lessons.

School staff will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their students that could make either party vulnerable. We believe that an open approach to answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and other students. We believe exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSE. Importantly, we believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they are able to discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

## Wider support for students

As well as their PSHE teacher students can seek additional advice and support from:

- Their tutors
- House Parents and Matrons
- The School Chaplain
- School Counsellor
- School nurses in the Medical Centre, and the School GP
- The Sexual Health Clinic in Exeter or Tiverton
- Their own GP
- Online sites signposted in lessons
- Safe and effective Practice

## Engaging Stakeholders

The school welcomes close and proactive input from parents and guardians, to ensure all PSHE topics are relevant, up to date and reflect concerns at home. We actively encourage parents / families to have discussions with their children about topics discussed in class, inviting questions, recognising differences of opinions and reinforcing values, moral courage in decision-making, and openness to ask questions. The PSHE Annual Plan is sent out each year, and resources are freely available on request are available upon request. The School RSE policy is available on the School's website.

Blundell's School respects the rights of parents/carers to withdraw their child from all or part of Sex Education (but not Relationships or Health Education) up to and until 3 terms before their child turns 16. As outlined within the Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from sex education. Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships or Health Education. Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum.

All children will have the right to opt *into* sex education three terms before they turn 16 and the school will make arrangements for this to happen. In practice, this means that when a child turns 15 they have the right to be taught sex education if they want to.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of Relationships Education, it is our aim to encourage parents to see the value of RSE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice. Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the Head of PSHE to discuss their concerns. The Head of PSHE will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum. If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the Head in writing and the school will keep a record of this. Except in exceptional circumstances, we will respect the parents' request to withdraw their 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 will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

If a pupil is withdrawn, the School upholds its responsibility to provide them with appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.



---

## **Safeguarding**

Staying safe online, mental and physical health are recurring elements that underlie all PSHE lessons, and staff are particularly sensitive to student safeguarding within RSE. If at any time teachers have concerns about students, or if students raise concerns about their friends it will be referred via the safeguarding chain.

Students are encouraged at all times to distance the conversations and not disclose personal information within lesson time, e.g. “a friend of mine” or “someone I know”. Blundell’s School acknowledges that RSE is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the school and for meeting our statutory obligations as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

RSE helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing abuse, or have experienced, abuse. We recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSE covers, some pupils could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory training around child protection and will follow the schools safeguarding policy and procedures.

We also recognise that some children may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes to their personal life. For those children, additional support will be given to prevent them being affected by the scenarios or topics in their planned lessons. However, it is sometimes the case that topics arise as part of classroom discussion, or a speaker’s presentation or the questions pupils ask them, due to the exploration of a subject and the intertwined nature of many of the areas that PSHE covers.

## **Monitoring & Evaluating**

### **a) Pupil Assessment**

Blundell’s School uses a range of assessment methods to get regular feedback on pupil progress in RSE. We also use pupil assessment to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention. Lessons are planned to ensure that pupils of differing abilities, including the most able, are suitably challenged. This assessment might include written work, oral questioning in class, or forms for pupils to complete.

### **b) Pupil Voice**

Pupil voice is central to the culture and ethos of Blundell’s School. We use pupil voice to evaluate how relevant and engaging RSE is to children’s lives. Throughout our RSE scheme of work we embed pupil voice practices to enable students to express their views on the range of topics and issues that RSE covers and to ensure that they listen to other opinions and evidence, reflect on their own perspectives and take a broader view. We want to ensure that all pupil voices are heard but that those views that are hurtful, offensive or exclusionary do not dominate and are addressed. We want to ensure a culture where human rights, social justice, inclusion and diversity are promoted.

### **c) Monitoring**

We regularly monitor our RSE scheme of work to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, that the curriculum is meeting the new national requirements under the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance, and that learning outcomes are reflective of pupil need. This policy will be reviewed by the Second Master in conjunction with the Head of PSHE and Governors on a regular basis. The School’s Senior Leadership Team monitors the implementation of the

---

programme through lesson observations, analysis of the schemes of work, analysis of feedback from pupils, and regular communication between the Second Master and the Head of PSHE.

## Amendments:

Autumn 2022: This policy has been essentially rewritten in line with the latest guidance which supersedes the previous recommendations

September 2023: The topic of “gender and sexuality” has been moved from that category of ‘Relationships’ into that of ‘Health and Sex Education’ whilst the school awaits guidance from the topic on the teaching of RSE.

September 2023: Minor changes to wording and some clarification of meaning

September 2023: Addition of circulating RSE guidance and topics to parents added to Head of PSHE responsibilities.

Author:	Second Master and Head of PSHE
Date:	Autumn 2022
Reviewed:	Autumn 2023
Next Review Due:	Autumn 2024