

# RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY



Blundell's

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FOUNDED 1604

## RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

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<b>Policy Name:</b>	Relationships & Sex Education Policy (RSE)
<b>Applicable to:</b>	Senior School
<b>Name of Sponsor:</b>	Second Master and Head of PSHE
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## POLICY AMENDMENTS

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Date of Amendment	Material Details
Autumn 2022	Rewritten in line with the latest guidance.
Autumn 2023	Topic of "gender and sexuality" has been moved from that category of 'Relationships' into that of 'Health and Sex Education'. Circulating RSE guidance and topics to parents added to Head of PSHE responsibilities.
1st December 2024	FGM added to topics taught; rewarding of some sections with no alteration to meaning; link to PSHE Sharepoint added and section added re: removing pupils from RSE.

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## LEGISLATION & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

1. This Policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:
  - a. Equality Act 2010;
  - b. DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2024);
  - c. DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019);
  - d. DfE National Curriculum in England: Science Programmes of Study (2015);
  - e. The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019; and
  - f. Children and Social Work Act (2017).
2. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the School's:
  - a. Safeguarding Policy;
  - b. Anti-Bullying Policy;
  - c. Curriculum Policy; and
  - d. IT Acceptable Use Policy

## RATIONALE & ETHOS

### Statement of Principles

3. 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.
4. 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.

5. 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 LGBTQ+ 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**

6. 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:
  - a. The universal entitlement of young people to live safe, fulfilled, healthy lives, both in-person and online.
  - b. They need to make decisions every day that will affect their lives
  - c. 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.
  - d. 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.
  - e. To maximise their ability to form long-term meaningful relationships and be happy with their decisions in the long term.

### **AIMS OF RSE**

7. 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**

8. 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:

- a. Recognise the difference between experiences that characterise healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful;
  - b. Recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and when to report issues to keep them safe online;
  - c. Realise their health (including sexual health), wellbeing and dignity;
  - d. Build self-esteem and self-worth;
  - e. Explore and value their personal identity and sexual orientation, and the personal identity/sexual orientation of others;
  - f. Understand family structures, committed relationships and the legal status of different types of long-term relationships;
  - g. Understand and make sense of the real-life and online issues they are experiencing in the world around them;
  - h. Manage and explore difficult feelings and emotions;
  - i. Consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others;
  - j. Develop as informed and responsible citizens; and
  - k. Understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.
9. 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

10. 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

11. The **Board of Governors** is responsible for:
- a. Approving this policy; and
  - b. Monitoring the implementation of this policy.

12. The **Head** is responsible for, and may delegate through the Second Master:
  - a. The overall implementation of this policy, i.e. ensuring the RSE curriculum is well-led, effectively managed and well-planned;
  - b. Ensuring parents are informed of this policy on an annual basis;
  - c. Reviewing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory elements of the RSE curriculum;
  - d. 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;
  - e. Ensuring withdrawn pupils receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal;
  - f. Encouraging parents to be involved in consultations regarding the school's RSE curriculum; and
  - g. Reporting to the Governing Board on the effectiveness of this policy and the curriculum.
13. PSHE and RSE Education at Blundell's is **underpinned by five keys principles**. It will be:
  - a. Delivered thematically across the school;
  - b. Delivered via an age-appropriate spiral-curriculum;
  - c. Underpinned by training & development;
  - d. Be up to date; and
  - e. Be informed by best practice & be research led.
14. To ensure that RSE at Blundell's delivered this, the **Head of PSHE** is responsible for:
  - a. Reviewing this policy on an annual basis;
  - b. Overseeing the delivery of RSE education;
  - c. 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;
  - d. 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;
  - e. Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate and high-quality;
  - f. Ensuring the continuity and progression between each year group;
  - g. Ensuring that changes in the external environment are reflected in RSE teaching;



- h. Reviewing changes to the RSE education curriculum and ensuring their implementation;
- i. Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the curriculum;
- j. Monitoring the learning and teaching of RSE education, providing support to staff where necessary ;
- k. Leading staff meetings and ensuring all members of staff involved in the curriculum have received the appropriate training;
- l. Organising, providing and monitoring CPD opportunities in the subject, helping to develop colleagues' expertise in the subject;
- m. Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to RSE and health education; and
- n. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subjects and providing reports to the Senior Leadership Team.

## **CURRICULUM DESIGN & DELIVERY**

### **What is RSE?**

- 15. 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.
- 16. 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)
- 17. 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.

### **Learning Outcomes**

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

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

## **Teachers**

19. 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.

## **Methodology**

20. Blundell's recognises that high-quality, evidence-based, and age-appropriate teaching plays a vital role in preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life. This approach also supports the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils, both within school and in the broader community. With this in mind, Blundell's has established PSHE and RSE as distinct subjects with dedicated timetabled provision.
21. The PSHE staff team delivers RSE within PSHE lessons for Year 7 to Year 11 students. Topics are presented in an age-appropriate manner and revisited in more depth over the years, allowing for reflection, progression, and reinforcement. The curriculum is designed with flexibility to address specific issues that may arise in the media or within the school community. In certain cases, boys and girls may be taught separately to provide an environment that minimises potential embarrassment and encourages open discussion.
22. As with all subjects, RSE is carefully differentiated to ensure accessibility for all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

## **Topics Taught**

23. Topics taught, to appropriate age groups, are as follows:

<b>Relationships</b>	The roles and responsibilities of teachers, parents, carers, and children in families, in schools
	Types of relationships – grandparents, parents and children, siblings, civil partnerships, same sex relationships, and marriage
	Features of positive, stable relationships
	How to build and maintain healthy, supportive relationships
	Features of negative, unhealthy relationships, including domestic abuse
	Family life and parenting
	How to develop and maintain a variety of healthy relationships within a range of social/cultural contexts and to develop parenting skills
	Breakdowns in relationships - separation and divorce
	Loss and bereavements
	Sexual relationships
	Gender and sexuality
	The concept of consent in a variety of contexts (including in sexual relationships)
	How to deal with risky or negative relationships, including all forms of bullying and abuse, sexual and other violence and online encounters
	Digital relationships
<b>Health &amp; Sex Education</b>	Puberty - physical and emotional change
	STIs*
	Contraception*
	Pornography and its impact on sexual expectations*
	Parenthood and the consequences of teenage pregnancy*
	How to maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing including sexual health
	Female Genital Mutilation
	Pregnancy & pregnancy decisions*
	The relationship between sex and pleasure*
	How to identify and access help, advice and support
	Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

<b>Diversity</b>	Rights and responsibilities
	The law and protected characteristics
	Examples of diverse values encountered in society
	Legal position
	Similarities, differences & diversity among people – such as race, culture, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation
	The impact of prejudice, sexism, misogyny/misandry, bullying, discrimination, and racism on individuals and communities.
<b>Personal Values</b>	Forming and maintaining personal values
	Self-esteem
	Confidence
	Assertiveness
	Communication and Negotiation skills
	Challenging offensive behaviour
	How the media portrays young people
	Media and body image
	The role and influence of the media on lifestyle
	Stereotypes

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

### **Diversity**

25. 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.
26. 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.

### **Questions**

27. Questions are encouraged anonymously during lessons, allowing pupils to freely share their thoughts and curiosities. They can submit questions through multiple channels,

including a post box in the classroom or an online anonymous form. RSE encompasses a broad range of topics that may prompt questions, and we see these inquiries as a positive sign of engagement and comfort in exploring issues related to self, body, and relationships. When questions are relevant to the whole class, we address them collectively; however, questions that are not suitable for everyone may be addressed individually outside the classroom. All questions will be answered in an age-appropriate and developmentally sensitive manner, taking into account any parental requests for withdrawal from specific sex education lessons.

28. Staff members are not expected to answer personal questions about themselves, nor will they ask students personal questions that may create vulnerability for either party. We believe that an open approach to answering questions helps prevent students from obtaining inaccurate or potentially harmful information from online sources, peers, or other channels. Addressing these topics in a group setting helps reduce stigma and shame often associated with RSE discussions. Most importantly, we believe that when children have the chance to discuss sensitive issues openly with trained professionals in a safe, supportive environment, they are better protected from harm and abuse.

## **WIDER SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS**

29. At School, as well as from their PSHE teacher, students can seek additional advice and support from:
  - a. Their tutors;
  - b. House Parents and Matrons;
  - c. The School Chaplain;
  - d. School Counsellor; and
  - e. School nurses in the Medical Centre, and the School GP.
30. Outside of School, PSHE teachers will signpost pupils to:
  - a. Online sites that provide appropriate support, such as The Wellbeing Hub, Childline and The NSPCC;
  - b. Their own GP; and
  - c. The Sexual Health Clinic in Exeter or Tiverton.

## **ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS**

31. The school values close and proactive engagement with parents and guardians to ensure that all PSHE topics are relevant, up to date, and reflect concerns at home. We actively encourage parents and families to engage in discussions with their children about topics covered in class, fostering an environment where questions are welcomed,

differing opinions are recognised, and values such as moral courage in decision-making and openness to inquiry are reinforced.

32. In addition to regular communication, parents and carers are invited to engage through the first Academic Forum for Years 7 to 11 where the annual curriculum for that year group will be presented at in-person events and there will be one-to-one contact with the Head of PSHE. The [PSHE Sharepoint](#) site serves as a valuable resource for parents, where the [PSHE Annual Plan](#) and [lesson materials](#) are made freely available. Parents are also invited to participate in consultation regarding this policy. This policy is accessible on the [school's website](#) for further reference. This multi-channel approach ensures that parents and carers are well-informed and involved in their child's PSHE learning journey.

## **WITHDRAWING PUPILS**

33. 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.
34. 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.
35. While parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from any or all aspects of sex education within RSE, we aim to encourage parents to recognise the value of RSE in promoting their child's safety, emotional, social, and physical wellbeing, as well as in fostering equality and social justice. Should a parent decide to withdraw their child from any RSE lessons, we ask that they first engage in a conversation with the Head of PSHE to discuss their concerns. The Head of PSHE will listen to and address any objections or concerns regarding the curriculum content. If parents/carers choose to proceed with the withdrawal, they should provide written notification to the Head, and the school will maintain a record of this decision.
36. 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.
37. If a pupil is withdrawn, the School upholds its responsibility to provide them with appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

38. Staying safe online, as well as mental and physical health, are key themes woven throughout all PSHE lessons, with staff maintaining a heightened awareness of student safeguarding, particularly within the context of RSE. If teachers have concerns about a student, or if a student raises concerns about a peer, these will be promptly referred through the safeguarding procedures in place.
39. Students are encouraged to maintain a respectful distance from personal disclosures during lessons, often framing situations as "a friend of mine" or "someone I know" to ensure confidentiality and safety. Blundell's School recognises that RSE plays a vital role in fostering a culture of safeguarding and in meeting our statutory responsibilities as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.
40. RSE equips students with the knowledge to distinguish between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to seek help if they are experiencing or have experienced abuse.
41. We acknowledge that certain topics within RSE may prompt disclosures of abuse or other sensitive experiences. In such cases, all staff have safeguarding and child protection training and adhere to the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
42. Additionally, we recognise that some students may be particularly vulnerable to certain content in RSE due to previous safeguarding concerns, ongoing challenges, or changes in their personal circumstances. For these students, support will be provided to mitigate any potential negative impact from the lessons. However, given the interconnected nature of many PSHE topics, sensitive issues may arise during class discussions, guest speaker sessions, or through student questions, and we are prepared to address these appropriately and sensitively.

## **MONITORING & EVALUATING**

### **Pupil Assessment**

43. Blundell's School employs a variety of assessment methods to gather regular feedback on pupil progress in Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). These assessments also help identify areas where pupils may require additional support or intervention.
44. Lessons are carefully planned to ensure that pupils of all abilities, including the most able, are appropriately challenged. Assessment methods include opinion lines, topic discussions, written work, oral questioning during lessons, and pupil surveys, all of which provide valuable insights into student understanding and progress, as well as their enjoyment and satisfaction with the curriculum and its delivery.

### **Pupil Voice**

45. Pupil voice is at the heart of Blundell's School, shaping our culture and ethos. We actively use pupil feedback to assess the relevance and engagement of our Relationships and

Sex Education (RSE) curriculum, ensuring it connects with students' lives. Throughout our RSE scheme of work, we integrate opportunities for pupils to share their views on the topics covered, while also encouraging them to listen to others, consider different perspectives, and reflect on their own beliefs.

46. Our aim is to create an environment where all voices are heard, while addressing any hurtful, offensive, or exclusionary opinions. We are committed to fostering a culture that champions human rights, social justice, inclusion, and diversity.
47. Regular pupil feedback on RSE and PSHE is gathered at various points in the curriculum and from the PSHE Pupil Panel, ensuring that student input shapes the content and delivery of lessons.

### **Monitoring**

48. We continually monitor our RSE scheme of work to ensure the consistency of teaching quality, that the curriculum aligns with the latest national guidelines under the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education framework, and that learning outcomes address the needs of our pupils. This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Second Master, in collaboration with the Head of PSHE and the Governors.
49. The Senior Leadership Team oversees the implementation of the programme through lesson observations, analysis of the schemes of work, feedback from pupils, and ongoing communication between the Second Master and the Head of PSHE.

**END**



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