

# RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY



Blundell's

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FOUNDED 1604

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

### **References:**

- The DfE statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (2020)
- Safeguarding Policy
- PSHE Policy

### **Access**

Parents can request access to this Policy by contacting the School Office.

### **Statement of principles**

We believe that RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. Our RSE is designed to promote equality through challenging stereotypes and also challenging sexism and sexual harassment in schools. 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 and is relevant to them. We are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice 2014 when planning for this subject. We will also ensure that we take into account the religious and cultural background of all pupils when teaching RSE. An inclusive RSE at Blundell's School will seek 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:

- Universal entitlement of young people to live safe, fulfilled, healthy lives.
- They need to make decisions every day that will affect the rest of 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 these lessons is to provide knowledge and understanding 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 and marriage. We encourage the development of positive attitudes, communication and equality within healthy relationships.

We seek to ensure that it gives pupils the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help them to:

- realise their health (including sexual health), wellbeing and dignity
- build self-esteem and self-worth
- explore and value their personal and sexual identity and the personal/sexual identities 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 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.
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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 or unwanted sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment and sexual violence

## **Teachers**

RSE is taught by PSHE teachers and at times by nurses from the Medical Centre. We draw on resources from the PSHE Association, the CWP programme, the NHS and elsewhere. The curriculum will complement lessons taught in Science. Outside speakers will also address different year groups, for example from the sexual health and advice organisation Brook.

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

Specific PSHE teachers teach RSE within PSHE lessons with year groups 7-11. Subjects 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.

## 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)

## Topics taught at appropriate age groups include:

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| <b>Relationships</b> | The roles and responsibilities of teachers, parents, carers, and children in families, in schools<br>Types of relationships - grandparents, parents and children, siblings, civil partnerships, same sex relationships, and marriage<br>Features of positive, stable relationships<br>Features of negative, unhealthy relationships<br>Family life and parenting<br>How to develop and maintain a variety of healthy relationships within a range of social/cultural contexts and to develop parenting skills<br>Breakdowns in relationships - separation and divorce<br>Loss and bereavements<br>Sexual relationships<br>The concept of consent in a variety of contexts (including in sexual relationships) |
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**Sex**

How to deal with risky or negative relationships, including all forms of bullying and abuse, sexual and other violence and online encounters  
Puberty - physical and emotional change  
STDs  
HIV/Aids  
Contraception  
Parenthood and the consequences of teenage pregnancy  
Pregnancy decisions  
How to maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing including sexual health  
Gender and sexuality  
Digital relationships

**Diversity**

How to identify and access help, advice and support  
Rights and responsibilities  
Clarification of personal values  
Examples of diverse values encountered in society  
Legal position  
Similarities, differences, diversity among people -  
race,  
culture,  
disability,  
gender,  
age,  
sexual orientation

**Personal Values**

Values  
Self esteem  
Confidence  
Assertiveness  
Communication and Negotiation skills  
Challenging offensive behaviour  
The impact of prejudice, bullying, discrimination, and racism on individuals and communities  
How the media portrays young people  
Media and body image  
The role and influence of the media on lifestyle.  
Stereotypes

## Wider support for students

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

- Their tutors
- House Parents and Matrons
- School Counsellor
- School nurses in the Medical Centre, and the School GP
- The GUM clinic – at RD&E in Exeter or the Tiverton Health Centre.
- Their own GP
- Online sites signposted in lessons

## Co-Curricular

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.

## Parents

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 Schemes of Work are on the parent portal, and the School RSE policy is available on request from the school office.

As outlined within the Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSE. Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education. Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education.

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.

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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.

## **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.

## **Values**

RSE teaching will reflect the school's Christian values, set within the context and norms of our wider community and society in the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 do adhere to Department of Education guidelines on promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools.

## **Questions**

Questions are invited anonymously in lessons. Pupils will be able to post anonymous questions in the post box in house or outside the PSHE/Careers office.

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 older 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

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protected from harm and abuse when they are able to discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

## **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 to 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

## **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.

## **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.

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This assessment might include written work, oral questioning in class, or forms for pupils to complete.

## **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.

## **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:**

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

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| Author:          | Second Master and Head of PSHE |
| Date:            | Spring 2022                    |
| Reviewed:        |                                |
| Next Review Due: | Spring 2024                    |

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