

Policy	03 - 09	Relationships, Health and Sex Education Policy	
Responsible Member of staff	Alex Sigley		
Responsible Governor	Simon Attwood		
Approved	August 2021	Next Review Date	August 2023
Last Technical Review	August 2022		

## PART 1 - STATEMENT OF GENERAL POLICY

### Relationships Education (RE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) At The Downs Malvern

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Health Education document (DfE, 2019) and in line with The Equality Act 2010 (Gov.UK). Moreover, this policy has recently been reviewed in light of the recent publication of OFSTED's Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (2021) and the Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE, 2021) document and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

**Statement of Policy:** *At The Downs, Malvern, we believe that relationships education (RE) and relationships and sex education and (RSE), enables our children to become healthy, safe, independent and responsible members of society. This includes recognising and forming positive life sustaining relationships with others both in the real and virtual world.*

*We are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all pupils and strategies that support this are pastoral provision, health & wellbeing disclosure on admission, peer listeners and buddies, alongside quality teaching and learning about awareness and management of mental health through the PSHCE curriculum.*

This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website or from the school office.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

At The Downs, Malvern, we are dedicated to ensuring that our school community is a happy, stimulating, and caring place and we expect high standards of behaviour and good manners throughout the school. RE/RSE is at the heart of our school ethos.

Our objective is to convey to our children that for most of the decisions they make and the actions they take, the factual knowledge they need will be different, but the skills and personal attributes will be the same. Therefore, we aim to build upon their negotiating, reflecting, and critical thinking skills, while developing confidence and resilience.

### What are RE and RSE?

RE and RSE offer pupils an opportunity to learn about their personal, physical, and emotional development, in a supportive and caring learning environment, as they move through adolescence towards adulthood. This area of study is also enhanced in other areas of the academic curriculum (e.g., Science, TPR, English).

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education (RE) compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) continues to be compulsory in independent schools.

At the Downs, Malvern, RE, RSE and Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic education are taught within the PSHCE curriculum.

Relationships Education (RE) has been a statutory component of the PSHCE curriculum since September 2020. Relationships Education teaches about the many strands of relationships and growing up. This includes family relationships, friendships and relationships with peers and adults, healthy and unhealthy relationships, the characteristics of positive relationships, relationships online and the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up. Sex and relationship education (RSE) is compulsory from age 11 onwards. It involves teaching children about reproduction, sexuality, and sexual health.

PSHCE and RE/RSE is a planned programme of study based on National Curriculum guidelines. It also takes into consideration the following documents:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014)
- Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance (Sept 2023)
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools) (2018)
- Independent School Standards as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying)
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC))
- SMSC requirements for independent schools (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).

The following five outcomes, highlighted in 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children', are key to a child's well-being and have formed the framework which underpins our Scheme of Work:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

It also contributes to school's statutory responsibilities to:

- promote children and young people's wellbeing
- promote community cohesion

Many of the topics covered in the PSHCE and SRE/RE programme arise directly or indirectly in the academic curriculum. This helps to reinforce issues and supports our pupils to gain a deeper understanding of the subject, while adding to their enrichment.

These topics are updated and reviewed with reference to the PSHE Association Programme of Study, with core themes of:

1: Health and Wellbeing. 2: Relationships. 3. Living in the Wider World.

The scope of SRE/RE at The Downs Malvern is wide-ranging and is not exclusively delivered in the classroom, it also promotes engagement with the school community. We encourage the pupils to be actively involved in the life of the school and to appreciate how this involvement will enable them to be effective in society.<sup>[SEP]</sup> For example: with the support of the House system, pupils are encouraged to adopt a charity, organize fund-raising and learn about the work of their chosen charity.

## **KEY PRINCIPLES AND TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

RE/RE is taught by experienced and skilled teaching staff who are committed to preparing pupils to live and learn safely in the modern world, negotiating the transition into increasing independence with the development of knowledge, values, and skills, including the Skills to Thrive, to make positive, healthy and safe choices.

Through our Relationships Education (RE) provision, we aim to help all children grow up healthy, happy, and safe by providing all pupils with:

- the knowledge and understanding to build positive and safe relationships
- an understanding of the characteristics of positive relationships
- the ability to identify any concerns they have about a relationship
- an understanding of their rights and responsibilities within different relationships
- an awareness of the process of growing up and the changes they and others will experience
- coping strategies and an awareness of how and where to seek support
- the knowledge to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health, and relationships, including online and digital safety and wellbeing
- the tools to prepare for successful adult lives and manage the challenges and opportunities of modern Britain

RE and SRE at The Downs, Malvern, are taught as both explicit lessons in Personal Social Health Citizenship and Economic education (PSCHEe) and is also embedded in other areas of the curriculum, co-curricular and enrichment activities.

We aim to:

Establish a baseline to ascertain prior knowledge

- Provide a balance of information, and the skills and personal attributes necessary for managing life experiences, through role-play, discussion and other activities
- Offer an opportunity for critical reflection

We will ensure that sessions, including those on risky behaviours remain positive in tone by managing discussion and refraining from sensationalising.

We liaise with all departments on an on-going basis to ensure cross-curricular learning.

It includes the following areas, taught in at an age-appropriate level:

- Growing up
- Relationships
- Sex, sexuality and Sexual Health ((from Y7 onwards)
- Alcohol, Tobacco, and other drugs
- Emotional wellbeing and Mental Health
- Healthy lifestyles
- Risk and safety
- Digital wellbeing
- Identity
- Rights and responsibilities
- People who can help me/where to get advice.

Our programme promotes the values of family life, the importance of stable relationships and diversity. We encourage our children to embrace our RE/RSE curriculum with a non-judgmental attitude and the confidence to discover what is right for them in the context of their future relationships.

### **INTENDED OUTCOMES**

RE/RSE is delivered as a spiral curriculum that enables pupils to build on their prior learning by revisiting some themes to further develop knowledge, values and skills in an age and stage-appropriate manner.

### **INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION WITH PUPILS**

For the younger years of the school, we will explore the children's needs by means of assessing the prior learning that they bring to the classroom. As they get older, we use a needs and baseline assessment to plan our delivery. Our pastoral systems (house parents, tutors, school councils etc.) often inform our evaluation of what has been learned and what we need to offer.

### **ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING**

We build opportunities for both Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning into our provision. Baseline assessment, in order to understand pupils' prior learning, is essential to ensure new learning is relevant and progress can be assessed. Providing pupils with opportunities to reflect on and assess their learning, recognising its relevance to their day to day lives and how they are progressing is a fundamental aspect of our PSHCEe, which includes RE/RSE, and we measure this both informally through discussion and formally through end of topic assessment, using teacher, peer, and self-assessment.

### **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

We promote the needs and interests of all pupils irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, culture, ability, or aptitude by delivering teaching pedagogy that encompasses gender-aware material, uses neutral terminology when describing relationships, is aware of and celebrates cultural differences, and differentiates for learning needs. We are sensitive to parental withdrawal regarding personal beliefs surrounding RE and SRE. Teaching pedagogy will consider the ability, age, readiness, and cultural backgrounds of our children and those with English as a second language to ensure that all can access RE and RSE.

We will use RE/RSE as a vehicle to address diversity issues and to ensure equal opportunities for all, and we will ensure that the curriculum covers age-appropriate learning. We promote social learning and expect our students to show a high regard for the needs of others by modelling good behaviour and using discussion and scenarios in our learning.

We will ensure equality by being sensitive to the emerging and changing needs of our pupil body, and an awareness of the need to adapt over time as the pupil population changes.

With reference to the Equalities Act 2010, we will ensure that we strive to do the best for all our pupils, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Through the RE/RSE programme we will help children to recognise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber-bullying and use of prejudice-based language). We will give them the tools to be able to respond and ask for help. We assess our pupils' needs through constant communication between all our pastoral channels – house parents, form tutors, boarding staff, matrons, and the wider school community, and review this policy at least every year and more often in the light of an emerging issue.

## **INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATION**

We will identify pupils' different starting points through cultivating an environment that is open and non-judgmental. We will respect pupils' unique starting points by recognising different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances, for example their own sexual orientation, gender identity, faith, or culture (which may be decided or emerging). No child will be removed from PSHCE unless parental wishes are received. We work closely with the SEND department and are aware of the learning and physical needs of all the children in our PSHE classes. We are committed to championing diversity and celebrating difference.

## **INVOLVING PARENTS AND CARERS**

As a school we welcome the involvement of parents and carers of all of our pupils whether day or boarding. We aim to do this by giving prior notice of when RE/SRE lessons will be taking place. We will always answer any questions that parents may have about their child and the curriculum, by phone or email.

## **RIGHT TO WITHDRAW CHILDREN AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN WHO ARE WITHDRAWN FROM THE PROGRAMME**

Parents cannot withdraw their child from any part of the Relationships and Health Education aspects of the PSHCE curriculum which is taught to all pupils. It is important for all children to be taught the content of such essential matters like friendships and keeping safe.

Parents and carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE, with the exception of the objectives included in National Curriculum Science. Those considering this option are asked to discuss this with the Headmaster. Before making a request, parents are asked to:

- Speak to the school about what will be taught in Sex Education and when
- Remember that the science curriculum at The Downs, Malvern includes content on human development, which includes human reproduction
- Remember there is no right for a parent to withdraw their child from the science curriculum

If a parent requests that their child be removed from "sex education" the school will make provision for the child by setting a programme of work which dovetails with the material to be covered in the lesson but without the sexual content. We are aware of possible reaction from peers to this withdrawal and will make sure that the removal from the lesson is discreet and discussed with the child.

## **ENSURING A BALANCED CURRICULUM**

We will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced curriculum by presenting a range of viewpoints, while promoting our school values of family life, stable and loving relationships, and diversity. We will deliver lessons that are sensitive to a range of views while ensuring that pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their individual rights. We will include impartial scientific information, facts on the law and the concept of equality throughout the PSHCE curriculum. Our curriculum is based on the PSHE Association recommendation and reflects the universal needs shared by all children and young people as well as the specific needs of the pupils at The Downs, Malvern. Our RE/RSE is taught through a spiral programme, revisiting themes, whilst increasing the challenge, broadening the scope, and deepening pupils' thinking.

By teaching our curriculum, we will ensure that pupils are offered a balanced programme of lessons by providing the tools they need to enable them to make their own choices, while staying safe and healthy and protecting and enforcing their human rights. We will include impartial information on matters such as forced marriage and termination of pregnancy, in an age-appropriate manner. We cover FGM from a human rights aspect, so it is not specifically taught as part of the RE/RSE curriculum.

### **STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR DELIVERING THE PROGRAMME**

This programme will be led by the head of PSHCEe and will be taught as part of our PSHCE curriculum by teachers dedicated to each year group. The programme is supported by our school Matrons, both in and out of the boarding house and by the Science, DT and TPR departments who complement and support our teaching.

### **SUPPORT AND LINKS ACROSS THE SCHOOL**

RE/RSE is supported across the school in many ways, by our links with:

- other subject departments (see below)
- our Matrons and PE staff who speak to the children on a regular basis on subjects such as personal hygiene and puberty
- Our pastoral system, which includes, house parents, form tutors, matrons, and boarding staff

### **LINKS TO OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES AND SUBJECTS ON THE CURRICULUM**

This policy complements the following policies: PSHCE, Safeguarding Children and Child Protection, Welfare and Boarding and Anti- Bullying etc.

Our RE/RSE curriculum links to RS and Science and we plan some of our lessons in conjunction with each other – for example children cover puberty in science in year 5 and year 7 and in PSHCEe in year 6.