

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

(please refer to separate RSE policy for the Prep School, including EYFS)

Updated: August 2023 (DHP)

Next Review: Summer 2024

Policy introduction:

This policy has been updated in line with the DfE guidance on the statutory teaching of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) from September 2021 as outlined in the document *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance*.

This [document](#) and [FAQs](#) answered by the DfE can be viewed via these links.

Definition of RSE – from *Sex Education Forum*

Relationships and sex education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

Policy statement:

Oxford High School takes its responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible RSE to all its pupils as part of the school's personal, social, health and careers education (PSHCE) curriculum very seriously. At our school we want parents and pupils to feel assured that relationships and sex education is delivered at a level appropriate to both age and development of pupils.

This teaching is not intended to replace advice or guidance which is ideally received at home, but to supplement and broaden knowledge and understanding.

This policy has been written by the Deputy Head Pastoral in consultation with the Head, the Head of PSHCE and Wellbeing, the School Nurse, and SEND Coordinator. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss this policy content and the RSE curriculum map via the annual RSE survey.

Aims of policy:

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching sex, sexuality, sexual health and online safety in a way that is fully understood and used by pupils in our care to make informed choices. This includes emphasis on good health, the value of self-esteem in making choices and judgements, the nature of healthy and consensual relationships, and knowledge about how the body works and an understanding of the law, all of which are taught within a context of moral issues and values.

RSE will outline the importance of marriage and family life and the raising of children, as well as highlighting the role of marriage and other stable relationships as building blocks for community and society.

We want our pupils to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle and to care and respect their bodies and we provide them with the right tools that will enable them to seek information or support, should they need it, both during their school years and after.

Relationships and Sex Education at OHS is taught in an inclusive way to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils.

Provision:

Taught PSHCE has also been part of the Independent Schools Standards since 2014. We aim to provide a relevant, broad and balanced curriculum that not just fulfils, but exceeds externally set standards.

The Oxford High School PSHCE curriculum is spiral, so that topics and key messages are re-visited in later years. Although the topics below are listed specifically, we treat Relationships and Sex Education as part of the wider PSHCE curriculum. We support equal opportunities in education, seeing it as enabling and encouraging all our students to build self-esteem through discussion and activities in a safe environment. We are equipping pupils with decision-making skills irrespective of gender roles and stereotyping.

The RSE curriculum map outlines the topics taught to each year group, and should be read in conjunction with this policy. The RSE curriculum map is available to download from the [school website](#).

As part of the PSHCE programme, Relationships and Sex Education is taught by the School Nurse, PSHCE teachers and experts such as Split Banana, the RAP project and It Happens. Sessions are mainly in small, supportive groups, using a range of activities with materials and support provided by health professionals. This allows for frank discussion and we encourage students to ask questions.

Sessions led by the school are planned by either the School Nurse, Deputy Head Pastoral or the Head of PSHCE and Wellbeing.

The programme is developed and reviewed by the pastoral team with opportunities for frequent student feedback. In line with the statutory guidance, a parents' consultation takes place annually. The most recent parent consultation took place in June 2023. The full RSE curriculum map is shared with parents so they can see the material covered in each lesson. Parents are able to request further resources on RSE lessons should they require further information.

We ensure that RSE is age relevant and appropriate across all year groups; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as our pupils do and meets their needs. We ensure that staff are given regular and ongoing training on issues related to RSE including confidentiality, setting ground rules and establishing positive behaviour, handling controversial issues and responding to questions.

We ensure that all staff are up to date with policy changes, and familiar with the school policy and guidance relating to Relationships and Sex Education.

We ensure their personal beliefs and attitudes do not prevent them from providing balanced RSE in school by being aware of the Prevent policy and allowing staff who are uncomfortable with a topic to be supported.

Terminology:

Pupils are taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang and everyday terms used in social situations will be discussed; this is part of the discussion about what is and what isn't acceptable language to be used.

Ground rules are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter and staff use strategies to enable pupils to feel comfortable to ask questions. Pupils are allowed to raise anonymous questions, if preferred. We recognise that because of the nature of the subject, sensitive and controversial issues are likely to arise. These may include, for example, abortion, emerging gender identity, sexuality and sexual abuse. These are dealt with within the framework of the aims of the school and of the Relationships and Sex Education policy as a whole. Any cause for concern will be dealt with in accordance with our pastoral systems and safeguarding arrangements.

Guest speakers:

We use outside speakers to complement our teaching of this content, who are asked to work within the framework of the school's Relationship and Sex Education policy and adhere to the policy for Visiting Speakers. A teacher will be present throughout these lessons.

Withdrawal from RSE:

The school aims to keep parents informed about all aspects of the RSE curriculum and urges parents to review this policy. RSE is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports the whole development of the child. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education. Any parents considering withdrawing their child from RSE should contact the Deputy Head, Pastoral or the Head of PSHCE and Wellbeing. According to *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance* paragraph 47-50 pupils can opt into sex education from three terms before their 16th birthday.

Review and evaluation:

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and other changes. For this reason, we regularly review our RSE curriculum in Pastoral Committee meetings and through student, parent and staff surveys. Student understanding of RSE is assessed at the end of each unit.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Updated August 2023

Laura Knowles (Deputy Head Pastoral)