

	Policy Name: Life Skills Policy
	Owner: Deputy Head
	Last Reviewed: September 2020 Next Review: September 2021
	This policy will be revised as regulations or review demands.

Lifeskills is our chosen name for the Relationships and Sex Education and Personal, Social, Economic and Health Education. It also encompasses the Careers Guidance programme. We feel this name gives a clear sense of purpose to this subject and is a transparent description of what we aim to provide the girls with through this course.

This programme was devised through consultation with SMT, teaching staff, boarding staff and the Health Centre and with regard to, the National Curriculum for PSHE, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and ISI guidelines. Most of PSHE education becomes statutory for all schools from September 2020 under the Children and Social Work Act 2017. RSE became compulsory in all schools in September 2020 and Health education became statutory in all state funded schools.

Documents that inform the school’s Life Skills programme include:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspection Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019)

Please read in conjunction with the following school Policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equal opportunities for Pupils
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Policy for pupils with particular needs
- SMSC at Mayfield
- Acceptable Use of ICT Policy for Pupils

Aims

Life Skills at Mayfield is underpinned by Cornelia Connelly’s philosophy of enabling girls to ‘grow strong in faith and lead fully human lives. The wide-ranging Life Skills curriculum is rooted in the moral and social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. As well as having more universal application this also promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Our aim is to develop strong, outward looking, informed and compassionate young women. If we are truly to educate girls ‘to meet the wants of the age’ they must be supported to learn and explore the realities of life and the challenges that they, and those around them, may meet. Through this they will learn to make the most of their individual potential and to be prepared to be active contributors to their communities and be able to apply what they have learnt to “real-life” situations.

‘Be yourself but make that self just what Our Lord wants it to be’

The Life Skills programme is a key tool in the School's promotion of its core values. It does this alongside many other curricular subjects and together these promote values of respect, tolerance, mutual understanding and support, as well as equipping our pupils to protect themselves against harm and to evaluate different types of risk.

In line with the School's commitment to Safeguarding, and in active response to *The Prevent Duty* (1 July 2015), the Life Skills programme promotes the values of democracy and free speech, and the importance of mutual respect. It helps equip pupils to understand diversity within society and to perceive and evaluate risk to themselves and others.

Objectives

Life Skills will prepare girls to:

- Take care of themselves, physically and mentally
- Show consideration and respect
- Be aware of others, having a positive influence and impact
- Identify and manage risks
- Understand the society in which they live
- Understand and respect cultural, racial and sexual differences
- Make critical and responsible life choices
- Make informed choices about a broad range of careers
- Move on to new challenges with confidence
- Make responsible and positive contributions to the communities to which they belong.

Diversity and Inclusion

We are committed to providing Life Skills that are relevant to all the girls in the School, and to provide a programme which is sensitive to ability, social and cultural background, religion, sexual orientation, physical and emotional needs.

Organisation and Delivery

The running of the Life Skills programme is overseen by the Head of Department. The content and continuous development of the programme is overseen by a Life Skills Committee which includes; Head of Department, a Housemistress, a Head of School, a Senior Tutor and the Deputy Head.

Life Skills is taught by staff who are form tutors and others who have particular expertise (e.g. Food and Nutrition, Politics, Economics etc.). Staff not teaching as part of the Life Skills delivery team may contribute with talks in their field of expertise. This is supplemented by the use of outside speakers where relevant.

Life Skills is taught in a session of 40 minutes, once a week.

In Years 7-13 the girls follow Life Skills courses in the following units (usually of five weeks):

- Health and Well-being incorporating Relationship and Sex Education
- Society and Citizenship
- Financial Literacy
- Independence Skills
- STEM

The ethos of the units followed in year 12 and 13 is one of transition and is specifically geared to helping them prepare for life beyond School.

Each teacher will teach 4 or 5 units out of a potential 6 units of the School year. The majority of teachers will deliver lessons focussed within 1 or 2 of the 5 units and many will specialise in only 1, to increase expertise and quality of delivery. They will teach this unit at the appropriate level to different year groups. Most units are delivered on a rotational basis.

The exception to this system is the RSE programme. The teachers delivering this topic teach groups from Lower, Middle and Upper School over the course of the year. In each unit they keep the same class for the five weeks taking them through a linear programme. (This is explained in more detail in the section 'Relationship and Sex Education' below).

Teaching and learning

The very nature of the topics covered in Life Skills, and the importance of the issues for the girls requires that they are engaged actively in their learning. Girls will often be taught in a non-classroom-based setting, which enhances their learning experience, especially for Independence Skills.

All Life Skills teaching should show awareness of this.

One of the strengths of the rotational system of teaching the subject is that girls benefit from a wide variety of approaches. Similarly, widely varying subject matter will lend itself to a wide range of approaches.

It is important that:

- The purpose of each lesson is made clear and the content is relevant to the girls
- Opportunities exist for girls to draw on their own experiences or existing knowledge and there are a range of opportunities for them to learn, practise and demonstrate skills; to express coherent opinions and demonstrate their understanding

Support for staff delivering the course will be directed by the Head of Life Skills department, who will arrange relevant training and resources.

Pastoral Welfare

Inevitably some of the material covered in the Life Skills programme is of a sensitive and challenging nature. Issues such as bullying and abuse may have very personal and challenging resonances for girls. The Head of Life Skills will liaise with Heads of School and Deputy Head on a regular basis to ensure that staff can be made aware, when appropriate, of any specific issues or sensitivities for individual girls or groups. At the end of such sessions the School's pastoral system and other support networks will be flagged in case any girls have felt affected by the topic covered.

Teachers work with regard to whole school policies, notably the Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Acceptable Use of ICT Policy, and within the Staff Code of Conduct, but also with recourse to the School's pastoral care system (liaising with form tutors, senior tutors, Health Centre, Housemistress, Heads of School or other senior staff when appropriate).

Visiting Speakers are supervised on site in line with the School's Visitors Policy.

Monitoring of Provision

The Head of Life Skills Department and the Committee will be responsible for annual review of the programme. The review will take place at the end of the Spring Term so that there is time for preparation for each new academic year.

This will involve:

- Consultation with staff delivering the course
- Consultation with senior staff, boarding staff, Health Centre
- Consultation with girls and parents
- Evaluation of teaching and learning through observation and feedback from both staff and girls.
- Review of course structure
- Review of resources
- Review of staff support and professional development in this subject.
- Review of outside speakers
- Setting of targets for programme development.

Relationship and Sex Education

As a Catholic School our aim is to provide RSE which contributes to the development of self-image and respect and love for the other, from the perspective of Catholic teaching. It is clearly of great importance that girls are properly equipped with knowledge and understanding of reproductive processes, the attendant risks of sexual activity and its place within, and its impact on, relationships. Girls will be provided with information that will enable them to make informed decisions, and given the context of Gospel values.

It is not enough, however, to provide sex education that concentrates solely on the biological functions and implications; rather we aim to bring girls to a growing understanding and appreciation of Christian values and how these can inform their moral principles and action. Putting sex education firmly within the context of the wider issues of relationships (both human relationships and our relationship with God) is of central importance. Educating the conscience and allowing girls to develop skills to make their own moral choices is also a fundamental element of this course.

There are challenges in reconciling the need to be faithful to the moral teachings of the Church with a desire to be sensitive to the realities of some students' lives. This is possible when teachers, while not condoning sexual activity taking place outside the context of married love, are non-judgemental about individuals whose lifestyle or family circumstances do not show adherence to Church teaching.

RSE contributes to the wider aspects of Life Skills by ensuring that the girls:

- Develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships
- Are able to recognise and respond to the characteristics of healthy and positive friendships. Recognise the need for consent and boundaries in all types of relationships including online relationships. Be informed about laws concerning sexual consent, coercion, abuse, grooming and be able to spot signs of these behaviours. It ensures that they are aware of the potential for sexual pressure and manipulation.
- Have an understanding of the way some relationships develop from friendship into exclusive and intimate relationships and the qualities, of shared interests and outlook, respect, loyalty trust and consent that underpin these relationships
- Understand the benefit of committed, stable relationships, predominantly, but not exclusively that of marriage, and predominantly, but not exclusively between a man and a woman, and the roles and responsibilities of parents within stable, long term relationships. Understand the legal position of marriage as opposed to other forms of relationships.
- Are able to seek help and advice in all circumstances relating to relationships
- To understand the destabilising, trivialising and negative effects of the portrayal of human relationships in some media and online and its potential effects on future relationships.

- To acquire knowledge of reproductive health, including fertility, the menstrual cycle and its implications for mental and physical health, the range of menstrual products, a range of contraceptive choices, including abstinence, (without advocating their use) their efficacy and potential effect on short and long term physical and mental wellbeing, the effects on children when relationships break down.
- Are aware of the risks of STIs from risky sexual behaviour and the symptoms of STIs
- Are aware of cervical cancer and the NHS cervical screening programme
- Have a clear understanding of online risks and responsibilities, their own online footprint and future implications of it, the risks of viewing online harmful content. Are made aware of the unhealthy repercussions of comparing oneself unfavourably with unattainable fake ideals and of forming superficial and potentially dangerous virtual relationships and the mental health issues that can be caused. The benefits of rationing time on line.
- Understand the link between drugs, alcohol and behaviour that puts themselves and others at risk.
- Are aware of the position of the law on issues or consent, privacy, harassment, violence, sexting, pornography, substance misuse, smoking, drug use and supply, county lines, abortion, radicalisation, hate crime and FGM.
- Understand the need for good personal hygiene with reference to teeth, hair, headlice showering, body hair and underwear, and in particular good personal hygiene after participating in sport.
- Understand the key elements of good diet and regular exercise and the importance of both of these in establishing good mental health.
- Learn the values of mutual respect and human dignity.

RSE teaching takes place in the context of Gospel teaching and pronouncements of the Catholic Church.

Schemes of work

The RSE course draws on a wide range of resources including “Called to Love” devised by the Scottish Catholic Education Service as well as the most up to date teaching resources produced by Hodder Education in line with the 2020 Statutory Guidance “Explore PHSE” textbooks for KS 3 and 4

Each teacher works with one tutor group within each school, taking the same group of girls through the weeks of their linear RSE unit. This allows for continuity of discussion and the building of trust within the group and a safe environment for honest questions and answers.

If pupils would like to ask questions anonymously, they can do this by leaving a note in the box outside Mrs Aherne classroom, stating just which year group they are in. yes

All staff teaching RSE will be supported by the Head of Lifeskills department and the Deputy Head

At the beginning of each unit, each tutor group devises a class agreement which sets boundaries for their discussions (incorporating statements such as ‘No immature behaviour’, ‘Respect the opinions of others’ as agreed by the group) and allows them to agree a mode of discussion which is sensitive to the different experiences and perspectives of the members of the group.

Learning about relationships and sex education in Lifeskills lessons will complement learning in Science, Religious Education and across the wider curriculum.

Staffing

RSE is taught across all age groups by the same team of staff. This group work together to select and create resources and co-ordinate the content of each session, revise and adapt material, discuss ideas, strategies and best practice.

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. Teachers will consult with the designated safeguarding lead and in her absence their deputy.

Working with Parents

Copies of this document and any associated schemes of work are available to parents on request. We will inform parents when RSE will be taught.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children (up to and until three terms before the child turns 16, after which it is their choice) from all or part of the sex education provided at the School **except** for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum Science. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.