

Charitable Objects of St. Catherine's School - The Objects for which the Company is established are to promote and provide for the advancement of education by providing, conducting, governing, carrying on and maintaining in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere, a boarding or day school or schools for girls in which the teaching shall be in accordance with the principles of the Church of England.



SENIOR SCHOOL POLICY RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

History

This policy was written in August 2021, revised and continued in 2022 and updated in September 2023. It replaced the previous Whole School Policy, Health and Sex Education, which was written prior to 1998, updated in 2000, 2005/6, 2009, 2014 and 2017.

The policy was developed in response to Relationship and Sex Education Guidance DfES 2000, Updated SRE Guidance 2010, DFE Advice SMSC 2014, and the National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and National Healthy Schools Programme. The policy is also in line with the new statutory guidance provided by the DfE 'Relationships and sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' 2020, the implementation of which was delayed to September 2021 by the Covid 19 pandemic and national lockdowns for the Summer Term 2020 and Spring Term 2021 during which the School delivered a full programme of Life Matters (PSHCE) via Zoom to all pupils.

The overarching Aim of the Life Matters Department delivering PSHE/RSE to the Senior School

St Catherine's aims to create an environment in which the confidence and awareness of pupils can grow through treating every girl as an individual, giving constant encouragement and by striving to ensure that every pupil is as happy as possible in the school setting.

Rationale

As a result of the new statutory guidance, the Life Matters (PSHCE) curriculum was reviewed in 2017, and new content created, which is supportive of the aims set out by the DfE (see appendix B). Key issues that were newly defined, following the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 are:

- a. Relationships and sex education compulsory at Secondary school.
- b. Physical health and Mental well-being

Since September 2020, Relationships Education has been compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for all pupils receiving secondary education. Health education is now compulsory in all schools too.

What Is Relationship and Sex Education?

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, of respect, love and care, and for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

Relationship and Sex Education involves teaching children and young people about physical and mental well-being, healthy relationships, LGBTQ matters, reproduction, equality and diversity, sexuality and sexual health. It does not promote early sexual activity or any particular sexual orientation.

Children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and they need to know how to be safe and healthy. RSHE helps them embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life. These subjects support children and young people to develop healthy relationships, and to keep themselves and others safe, both on and offline. RSHE also provides pupils with the knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing.

In line with Government guidance, we have updated our Curriculum and have embedded RSE into our Life Matters curriculum. Although RSE is not compulsory (other than the aspects taught in the compulsory Biology curriculum), and parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child, the curriculum covers a broad range of topics that promote healthy living and students' rights, and St Catherine's encourages parents/carers to allow their children to access the full PSHE/Citizenship curriculum. Students aged 16 + can decide if they wish to remove themselves from RSE.

Principles and Values

In addition, St Catherine's believes that RSE should:

- be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life
- be an entitlement for all young people
- encourage every student to contribute to our community and aim to support all individuals as they grow and learn
- be set within the wider school context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept, not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and an acceptance of different approaches.
- encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation without promotion of any particular family structure. The important values are love, respect and care for each other
- generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment
- recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents and students, sharing with them the content of programmes
- recognise that the wider community has much to offer, and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, our team of nursing staff, psychologists and counsellors in School, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

Main elements

Relationship and Sex Education at St Catherine's has three main elements:

1. Attitudes and Values

- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices
- Learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships, and marriage

- Learning about the nurture of children
- Learning the value of respect, love and care
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- Challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour

It is important that we support our students to identify and develop these values as they progress through their school years. For example, treatment of others is revisited in multiple topics throughout the Key Stages and the importance of respect and consent in intimate relationships is developed from KS3 through to KS5. In addition, the kind treatment of others is embedded in our school tradition of 'courtesy to everyone always'. This extends to the online world.

2. Personal and Social Skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively (*Chimp Paradox* model and RULER (Recognise, Understand, Label, Express, Regulate) taught in U3 and revisited every year in different ways)
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others
- Learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- Managing conflict
- Empowering students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances, both as exploiter or exploited

3. Knowledge and Understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- Learning how to resist unwelcome pressures to be sexually active
- Learning about contraception and infection avoidance and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy and STIs
- Learning about pregnancy
- Understanding the legal aspects of sexual behaviour
- Learning about the links between sexual health and alcohol
- Understanding the positive benefits of loving, rewarding and responsible relationships
- Learning about the impact of coercion and violence and understanding that consent is critical
- Learning and understanding about LGBTQ matters
- Learning with an awareness of diversity and inclusion ensuring students are aware of the protected characteristics and adopt behaviours that acknowledge these.

Aims

The aim of RSE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSE programme aims are to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others; have respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for relationship and sex issues.
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality
- challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity
- understand the reasons for having protected sex
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships

Organisation and Content of Relationship and Sex Education

St Catherine's specifically delivers Relationship and Sex Education through its Life Matters (PSHE) Programme. Elements are also embedded into Religious Studies and Biology lessons at KS3 and KS4 and in the Sixth Form via lectures in the Enrichment Programme (SCOPE).

Life Matters is delivered to girls in Upper 3 and Lower 4 by their Housemistress or the Head of Life Matters. The Upper 4 and 5th form teaching teams also include a number of Housemistresses, Boarding Housemistresses and experienced pastoral staff. We believe that they are usually the best people to work with the students on many of the RSE topics as they are aware of each student's individual circumstances. At Sixth Form level, there is some delivery of RSE and Health and Well-being through SCOPE lectures delivered by the Head of Life Matters, the Deputy Head of Life Matters and the Head of Thinking Skills. The Biology curriculum is delivered by staff in the Biology Department. Biology lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten.

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons, ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

Mentimeter (an ICT tool enabling the gathering of information via student iPads/phones) is used to provide the students with an anonymous voice and helps the Head and Deputy Head of Life Matters gauge where students are and how best to introduce and deliver specific subjects. This also ensures that those who are uncomfortable with asking questions or with specific topic areas,

are able to express this. Students are also encouraged to email members of staff directly if they would like specific information to be discussed without having to raise their hands to ask publicly.

More expert or specialist teachers are on hand to support any member of staff who is uncomfortable with teaching certain aspects of the curriculum and support would be offered by the Head of Life Matters with the delivery of lessons if required. Specialist individuals include members of the medical team and our resident psychologists.

Assessment is carried out weekly in KS3 through the use of One Note, which is being introduced and developed from 2023 as the school moves away from the use of Google Classroom to the use of Microsoft One Note. Class pages are distributed, and the Life Matters teacher is able to look at the work covered and check understanding. Tutors can then be alerted to any concerns regarding individuals, should any arise. Indeed, tutors regularly review students' knowledge and understanding, interpersonal skills, and attitudes.

In KS4, RSE is taught on rotation with Careers Education, Current Affairs, PPE, Life is for Living, Mental Toughness and Managing Risk, and within the RSE rotation, tasks are set regularly to assess the above.

Inclusion

Ethnic and Cultural Groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to different backgrounds and ethnic groups and difficult topics are always taught with the awareness of a range of pupil background, culture, influence and belief.

Students with Special Needs

We will ensure that all young people receive Relationship and Sex Education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that Relationship and Sex Education is relevant to them.

Challenging negative attitudes

Our whole school approach is to challenge all incidents of bullying/peer-on-peer abuse, including any incidents of homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Right of Withdrawal of Students from Relationship and sex Education

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Relationship and Sex Education curriculum *except* for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (i.e. in the Sex Education topics taught in the Science curriculum which has been statutory since 1996. Parents do not have a right to withdraw their children from this). We would make alternative arrangements in such cases. They do not have the right to withdraw from those lessons that cover health (for example, Puberty in Upper 3) rather than RSE. Parents are encouraged to discuss their decisions with staff at the earliest opportunity. Parents are welcome to review any RSE resources the school uses. Parents wishing to withdraw their child should contact the Head of Life Matters in the first instance.

Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and are expected to raise any sensitive issue brought to them with the Head of Life Matters and Head of Pastoral Care. Child protection issues should be taken immediately and in person to one of the School’s Designated Safeguarding Leads and dealt with in line with the school’s Child Protection Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Relationship and Sex Education

The Housemistresses meet regularly with the Head of Life Matters to discuss, review and evaluate the provision of Life Matters.

The Independent Schools’ Inspectorate is required to evaluate and report on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. This includes evaluating and commenting on the school's Relationship and Sex Education policy, and on support and staff development, training and delivery.

Signature of Head of Life Matters

Signature of Headmistress:

Date:

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis and St Catherine’s welcomes input from Parents/Carers.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

RSE content at KS3 & KS4 in Life Matters

In Upper 3 (Year7) the RSE content is within the context of Health and well-being:-

- the process of puberty for the purposes of developing into reproductively capable adults; understanding the changes they are going through and sources of support for those changes.
- the correct terms for genitalia and understanding that there is no “normal” to conform to; well-being, personal autonomy and developing a healthy relationship with one’s body.
- how to recognise and respond to unwanted contact, including FGM, and sources of support.
- the distinctions and key terminology regarding sexual orientation and gender identity, challenging myths and stereotypes.

Lower Four (Year 8):

- assessing how media represents relationships
- the principles of healthy relationships and how to manage difficulties in relationships, including online
- issues surrounding the sharing of sexual imagery online; including to whom to bring their concerns in School and sources of help, including education about the NSPCC’s Report Remove tool; how to recognise manipulative behaviours used to put pressure on someone into sharing such images and strategies to respond, the impact of non-consensual sexual imagery sharing on the individual and the law.

Upper Four (Year 9):

- romantic relationships: including discussion of healthy relationships and resisting pressure to engage in unwanted sexual activity
- a variety of faith and cultural practices and beliefs concerning relationships and sexual activity; to respect the role these might play in relationship values, the choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- what it means for someone to have the freedom and capacity to consent
- reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
- basic information on contraceptives - what they are, how they are accessed and how to use them
- STIs - introduction to the main types of STIs, prevention and treatment
- healthy pregnancy and how lifestyle choices affect a developing foetus
- the possibility of miscarriage and support available to people who are not able to conceive or maintain a pregnancy
- the reasons why people choose to adopt/foster children
- the importance of parenting skills and qualities for family life, the implications of
- young parenthood and services that offer support for new parents and families

In Lower 5 (Year 10) the RSE content is covered in a 10-week rotation unit and will further develop pupils' understanding:

- of the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- how consent can be actively communicated and recognised, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available (condoms are provided for demonstration)
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex and the importance of, and facts about, testing and treatment
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships - positively or negatively - for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing

In Upper 5 (Year 11) the RSE content is covered in an 8-week rotation unit and will further develop pupils understanding of:

- the importance of stable, committed relationships with skills and strategies to recognise and respond to exploitation, bullying, harassment and control in relationships
- the ways in which to access information and support for relationships, including those experiencing difficulties, and the law relating to abuse in relationships, including coercive control and online harassment
- the challenges associated with getting help in domestic abuse situations of all kinds, the importance of doing so, sources of appropriate advice and support, and how to access them.
- the role of pleasure in intimate relationships; orgasm and expectations
- the potential impact of the portrayal of sex in pornography and other media, including on sexual attitudes, expectations and behaviours.
- the physical and emotional responses people may have to unintended pregnancy; the different options available; whom to talk to for accurate, impartial advice
- the current legal position on abortion and the range of beliefs

Appendix B

Taken from the DfE Statutory Guidance *Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* (2020)

By the end of Secondary School, pupils should know:

Families

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children
- what marriage is, including its legal status

- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to the raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting

(At St Catherine's, all of the above is covered in the RS curriculum in U4)

- how to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy
- how to judge when a family, friendship, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships)
- how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

Respectful relationships, including friendships

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online such as trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict
- reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationships and friendships
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

Online and media

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- the impact of viewing harmful content

- that specifically sexually explicit material, for example pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties, including jail
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

Being safe

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- the facts around pregnancy, including miscarriage
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

The law

Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls

- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)