



DEAN CLOSE
SCHOOL
CHELTENHAM

**Independent, Co-educational, Day and Boarding
Senior School**

**Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy
(S118)**

Registered Charity No: 1086829

DEAN CLOSE SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Rationale and ethos

1. The education provided by the Dean Close Foundation is informed by Christian teaching which places the value of each and every person as a cornerstone of its practice.
2. The Foundation is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from harassment or prejudice so that every pupil can develop their full potential. To this end, the Foundation expects all members of its' community (teachers, pupils, support staff and parents/guardians) to treat one another with courtesy and cooperation so that learning can take place in a supportive and orderly atmosphere.
3. Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) lessons at Dean Close are part of the PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) syllabus which seek to create a safe school community in which pupils can grow, learn, and develop positive, healthy behaviours for life.
4. RSE plays a crucial role in reinforcing and embedding the Foundation values, of love, contribution, and courage across the Dean Close community allowing pupils to flourish.
5. The RSE curriculum gives young people an opportunity to explore and develop their own attitudes by promoting equality in relationships and mutual consent through positive and active communication. Through listening and sharing, pupils learn how to challenge the ideas of others in respectful and non-confrontational ways. Pupils are encouraged to acknowledge the importance of respecting the views of others, deepening their understanding of inclusion and the value of diversity within a community.
6. RSE promotes pupil wellbeing as it develops skills and understanding within the context of respectful attitudes and values so that pupils can enjoy positive relationships based on equality, benefiting their mental wellbeing. Through the development of important skills such as resilience, pupils can consider how rejection or disappointment might feel and prepare strategies for when they experience them in later life.

What is Relationship and Sex Education?

7. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) provides pupils with the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It is learning about the emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality, and sexual health.
8. RSE equips pupils with the information, skills, and positive values in order to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and wellbeing.

9. Relationships education is learning about the physical, social, legal, and emotional aspects of human relationships including friendships, intimate, sexual, and committed relationships, and family life. Relationships education supports pupils to be safe, happy, and healthy in their interactions with others now and in the future.
10. Sex education is learning about the physical, social, legal, and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual health.

RSE aims and lesson structure

11. Effective RSE does not encourage or promote sexual experimentation but provides knowledge about loving relationships, the nature of sexuality and processes of human reproduction.
12. RSE leads to the acquisition of understanding and positive attitudes towards relationships, which enables pupils to view all relationships in a responsible and healthy manner. This increases the pupil's ability to make informed decisions about their physical health and contribute to positive sexual health outcomes including consensual and pleasurable relationships.
13. Information in RSE lessons is presented in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner with an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the value of stable family life, marriage, and responsibilities of parenthood.
14. RSE allows pupils to examine the physical, emotional, and moral implications of behaviour and to appreciate the need for both partners to behave responsibly in sexual matters. This includes a clear understanding of consent.
15. Pupils are encouraged to develop an awareness of sexual identity, and to challenge sexism and prejudice in society, whilst accepting diversity and differing views.
16. RSE also encourages the development of self-esteem, social skills, and strategies, which will reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse. This is part of developing an understanding of what constitutes a 'healthy' relationship as well as considering when relationships are unhealthy and may include teen domestic violence and sexual exploitation.
17. Within RSE, the influence of technology on sexual behaviour including online pornography, sexting and sextortion is explored and strategies developed to ensure digital safety and positive choices.
18. RSE also develops the skills of critical thinking, communication and helps pupils develop the confidence to advocate for themselves.

Curriculum

19. The PSHE Handbook (S115) contains detailed schemes of work for all year groups. The Relationship and Sex Education curriculum is an integral part of the broader PSHE programme, and all junior year groups will follow an age-appropriate spiral curriculum. The curriculum is approved each year by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and is annually reviewed.
20. The RSE curriculum is also annually reviewed, using data from surveys, pupil voice and parental consultation carried out by the Head of Department and overseen by the Deputy Head Pastoral.

Assessment

21. RSE work is assessed as part of the PSHE curriculum in line with the Dean Close Marking Policy (S125). Pupils in 4th, Remove and 5th form will be awarded an engagement grade on a grade card at least once a term.
22. Pupils in 4th, Remove and 5th form will have a PSHE report annually outlining knowledge of key words, understanding of key concepts, the ability to apply and evaluate key concepts and overall contribution to class discussions.

Roles and responsibilities

23. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) has overall responsibility for the RSE programme. The RSE curriculum is planned by the Head of PSHE and is taught by a qualified PSHE teacher. It is supported at times by the Director of Tutoring and by a team of tutors. External agencies are occasionally used to complement classroom teaching.

Legislation (statutory regulations and guidance)

24. Dean Close is required to deliver sex education as part of the RSHE/PSHE curriculum as stated in the DfE statutory requirements published in 2020 and the ISI Inspector framework September 2023. This policy was reviewed and developed in response to the following guidance:
 - a. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education
 - b. Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014)
 - c. Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)
 - d. 16-19 Study Programmes Guidance (DfE/ESFA, 2019)
 - e. Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE, 2017)
 - f. Equality Act 2010: advice for schools (DfE, 2014)
 - g. Children and Social Work Act (2017)
 - h. Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning Team (Gloucestershire County Council)
25. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school and Foundation policies:
 - a. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (W044)
 - b. Anti-Bullying Policy (W045)

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- c. Promotion of Good Behaviour Policy (S102)
- d. Equality Policy for Students (W013)
- e. DCS Acceptable Use of IT for Pupils Policy (S112)

Equality and inclusivity

26. **SEND** - RSE at Dean Close is inclusive and meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The content of lessons is planned carefully to ensure that it is accessible to all learners, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who may be more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues on account of their SEND. In addition to designing materials to be as accessible as possible, the curriculum will be shared with the Learning Support department to enable support both inside and outside normal lessons.
27. **Cultural Differences** - The rich diversity of pupils at Dean Close means that the cultural background of all pupils must be considered when planning RSE teaching so that the topics included in the core content of the guidance are appropriately handled.
28. The delivery of these topics should be sensitive to, and inclusive of, the culture faith and beliefs of all pupils and communities. RSE lessons do not aim to change people's personal beliefs but facilitate inclusive discussions that recognise diversity at Dean Close and in our wider society as well as enabling pupils to disagree well through an emphasis on listening and understanding.
29. At Dean Close the PSHE department work collaboratively with the EAL department, with a focus on key words and phrases that may be used in discussion to support understanding in RSE lessons. Clear definitions are provided to enable access by all pupils.
30. **LGBT+** - Homophobic, biphobia and transphobic bullying is well reported in society. This is addressed by educating pupils, within the PSHE curriculum, about the issues that affect LGBT community, the legal status of LGBT relationships in the UK, the experiences of LGBT people. The pupils explore themes of difference, diversity, and equality. Inclusive language, differing perspectives on gender and resources are used to enable pupils to build communication skills that allow them to express areas of commonality and agreement as well as disagreement in a way that builds compassion and encourages critical thinking.

Right to withdraw

31. Parents/guardians do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationship education. However, parents of children below the age of 16 do have the right to request their child be withdrawn from the sex education curriculum.
32. Parents will be required to write to the Head to request a withdrawal. They will be invited to discuss their concerns with the Head (or a nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team) to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the RSE curriculum. In line with the statutory guidance, where pupils are withdrawn from Sex Education, a record will be kept (including discussions/requests from parents/carers)

and the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

33. Such requests for withdrawal from sex education would usually be granted until up to three terms before the child's 16th birthday, the legal age of consent. At this point, if the child wished to attend sex education lessons, this will be considered, in consultation with the parent/ guardians.

Safe and Effective practice

34. Within RSE lessons, a safe learning environment is created through managing behaviour effectively and following class devised ground rules, specific to the study of RSE. Teachers and pupils will agree 'ground rules' by negotiating priorities at the outset and these will be discussed and displayed each lesson.
35. Distancing techniques such as anonymous questions and the safeguarding principal of keeping contributions anonymous to maintain privacy and confidentiality of both pupils and teachers will be enforced. Pupils will be able to raise questions anonymously with strategies such as the use of post-it notes and each class having a designated jar that they are free to top-up with questions. Questions will be answered on a regular basis.
36. Pupils' questions will be answered by the teacher of RSE and where appropriate other professionals such as Health Centre staff. Sensitive issues will be handled by the teacher being prepared and informed, being ready to react to sensitive content and warning pupils at the outset of the lesson of the nature of its content and reinforcing the pre-agreed ground rules.
37. Disclosures of a sensitive nature will be recorded, and the Safeguarding Policy adhered to in a timely fashion. All staff teaching RSE will be supported by their Head of PSHE and provided with resources to ensure consistency of approach and content. All staff teaching RSE will also be supported by receiving regular training to support pupils to develop healthy and nurturing relationships of all kinds.

Safeguarding

38. Safeguarding is a whole school responsibility, and all staff have a duty of care to pupils and to each other. Teaching staff are aware that effective delivery of RSE can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. Staff will follow the schools' usual safeguarding procedures to deal with such a disclosure. Teachers will consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy as soon as possible.
39. Pupils who may be more 'at risk' or considered vulnerable will be spoken to by a member of the pastoral team where necessary. These specific pupils will also be given the option to sit out of a lesson or external talk should the content being delivered be detrimental to the individuals mental or emotional well-being.
40. To enhance the delivery of RSE, visitors from external agencies will be used to enrich the programme. The Foundation Visitors Policy (W034) will be followed to ensure that all visitors are checked and verified.

Engaging stakeholders

41. Dean Close recognises the vital role parents play in educating their children in relationship and sexual matters. The school aims to engage and communicate with parents to ensure that they are fully aware of what is being taught in the RSE curriculum.
42. The RSE policy is available to parents on the school website.
43. Parents will be notified by letter when Relationships and Sex education is taught this will include a summary of the content. The materials and resources used within RSE sessions will be made available upon written request.
44. Parents will also be supported through signposting links to websites suitable for their children that they can use independently, in addition to websites suitable for adults wanting to educate themselves more in preparation for talking to their children.