

Sydenham School Relationships and Sex Education Policy



Approved by:

Children and Families Committee

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1. Aims

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Sydenham School are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Ensure that there is a zero-tolerance approach to harmful sexual behaviours, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, and that students are fully educated about this.

This supports Sydenham's values of open-mindedness and kindness. We recognise discrimination faced in our society and provide students with the spiritual, mental and physical confidence to challenge and overcome it. It fits with the Sydenham School Code of Conduct and the Sydenham characteristics specifically that:

We show respect by:

- Speaking out against bullying and never bullying others, even as a bystander
- Listening to the ideas and opinions of others respectfully
- Being respectful of everyone and never discriminating against others

2. Statutory requirements

As a maintained secondary school, we must provide Relationships and Sex Education to all students as per the Children and Social Work Act 2017 [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

In teaching Relationships and Sex Education, we must have regard to the statutory guidance on [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and the [guidance](#) issued by the Secretary of State as outlined in Section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance

2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to provide online feedback about the policy
4. Pupil consultation – we have responded to student feedback and ensured our policy addresses this
5. Ratification – once amendments were made the policy was approved by the Headteacher.

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, students and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner, so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online. For more information about our curriculum, see links to our curriculum map in Appendix 1.

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

Where a student requires personalised and in-dept support they can self-refer to a member of the Inclusion Team or be referred by any member of school staff. The Inclusion Team are able to signpost or refer to appropriate services and offer personalised sessions with a learning mentor which may include, among others:

- Healthy Relationships
- E-safety
- Sexuality and Gender questioning
- Mental health, wellbeing and body image
- Substance misuse

- Harmful sexual behaviours, including sexual violence and sexual harassment

If a session indicates a safeguarding concern, this is addressed through the school's safeguarding procedures as outlined in Sydenham School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media including the dangers and benefits of online presence, including child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSE), cybercrime, radicalisation and all forms of peer-on-peer abuse, including but not limited to sexting, upskirting and sexual harassment. The curriculum aims to support students to develop strategies for safety and integrity with this medium.
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
- Not engaging in harmful sexual behaviours, including sexual violence and sexual harassment.

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

7. Equality Statement

Under the Equality Act Sydenham School acknowledges the legal duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to practice and policy for children with SEND/EAL. The Equality Act 2010 is clear that schools must make reasonable adjustments to ensure SEND/EAL children are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. This includes making reasonable adjustments in the application of an RSE policy, to ensure that all students can access the SRE curriculum equally. Sydenham School will ensure that all students with special educational needs and learning needs are properly included in sex and relationship education. Some students will be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than their peers, and others may be confused as to what is acceptable public behaviour. We will help these students to develop skills to reduce the risks of being abused and exploited, and to learn what behaviours are, and are not, acceptable. All staff including external specialist professionals used by the school as well as teachers should follow the school's RSE policy when working with students with special educational needs and learning needs.

This also means ensuring staff working with SEND/EAL students should have appropriate training to adjust their practice as outlined in the SEND policy.

The Equality Act 2010 is also clear that students must be given equal opportunities, and that education must meet the needs of all students. The protected characteristics are marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, sex, gender reassignment, race and nationality, religion or belief, disability and age. We take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Board will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Governing Board has delegated the approval of this policy to the Headteacher

To ensure that the delivery of RSE is in line with the Equality Act statutory requirements

8.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory components of RSE (see Section 8).

8.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE
- Ensuring there is a zero-tolerance approach to harmful sexual behaviours throughout the school, including sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

Staff responsible for the teaching of RSE at Sydenham include:

- Subject Leader of PSHE
- Teacher of PSHE & Head of Year
- Curriculum Leader Science
- Assistant Headteacher responsible for PSHE

8.4 Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

9. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The headteacher, or an appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team, will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. This may include informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead and liaison with appropriate members of the curriculum team.

Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education, and they will be supported by our pastoral teams during RSE taught lessons.

10. Training

Staff delivering RSE are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their continuing professional development. Maintaining this training is the responsibility of the Curriculum Leader for Humanities and Subject Leader of PSHE.

The school will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by SL PSHE and Assistant Headteacher through the school's internal monitoring arrangements.

Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the Deputy Headteacher annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Headteacher.

Appendix 1:

Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE at Sydenham School

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY SYDENHAM SCHOOL

Agreed actions from discussion with parents	Include notes from discussions with parents and agreed actions taken.