



## **Relationships and Sex Education Policy (RSE) Culford Senior School**

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## Contents

Introduction.....	2
Principles and Values.....	2
1. What is Relationships and Sex Education?.....	2
2. Delivery of RSE.....	4
3. Safe and Effective Practice.....	5
4. Methodology and Resources.....	6
5. Monitoring and Evaluation.....	6
6. Inclusion.....	6
7. Working with Parents/carers and the wider community.....	7
8. Right of Withdrawal of Students from Sex Education within RSE.....	7
9. Safeguarding, Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues.....	7

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## Introduction

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is taught at Culford through our Learning for Life (PSHCE) and is an opportunity for pupils and boarders to learn about and discuss relationship and sex topics in a safe space and with regular frequency.

To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.

This policy aims to provide Culford's pupils, parents and staff with details of the school's responsibilities as set out by the Department for Education's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance and framework for RSE.

This policy should be read in reference to the following documents:

- Equality Act (2010)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- Culford Anti Bullying Policy
- Senior Staff Handbook (referring to the Learning for Life section)
- Culford's Child Protection ( Safeguarding) Policy

## Principles and Values

Culford School 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 Culford pupils
- Encourage every pupil to contribute to our community and aim to support each individual as they grow and learn.
- Be set within a 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 acceptance of different approaches.
- Encourage the respecting of different 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, consulting them about the content of programmes.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

V1.0

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## 1. What is Relationships and Sex Education?

The term Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is used in policies, guidance and the curriculum, rather than sex education. This is to stress that our approach begins with the importance of healthy relationships and goes beyond provision of biological information to focus on clarifying attitudes and values and developing self-esteem and the skills to manage relationships.

According to the DfE guidance (2019)

*'Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.'*

The DfE guidance identifies the following two key elements:

### **Relationships and Sex Education**

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

### **Physical health and mental wellbeing**

- Mental wellbeing
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Health and prevention
- Basic first aid
- Changing adolescent body

Learning for Life at Culford aims to promote the physical, social, healthy and mental well-being by:

- Enabling pupils to consider attitudes and values
- Enhancing pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence
- Building confidence and awareness of personal safety in today's society
- Developing personal, emotional, social and communicative skills
- Ensuring children become valuable and fully rounded members of society who treat others with respect and tolerance, regardless of background.
- Encouraging pupils to understand the basic British values and the importance of respect so that they leave school fully prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Allow students to examine the physical and emotional implications of sexual behaviour and to appreciate the need for all genders to behave responsibly in sexual matters.
- All pupils should feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Sexual orientation and gender identity should be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner.
- Ensure that students have a clear understanding of sexual and reproductive biology, including knowledge of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Make students aware of the impact of media on their own body image, self-esteem and expectations of relationships.
- Give students accurate and relevant guidance on how to get further support if needed.

V1.0

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Next review: June 2025

Relationships and Sex Education at Culford School has three main elements:

### **Attitudes and Values**

- learning the importance of values and individual conscience
- learning the value of stable and loving relationships, whether in the context of marriage, civil partnership or other family models, for the nurture of children
- learning about the value of respect, love and care
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- learning to respect and value difference and diversity including diverse family models, genders and sexualities
- learning about the rights and responsibilities to oneself and others
- understanding responsibility for one's own safety and that of others both in the real and digital world
- understanding the importance of equality concerning genders and sexuality
- learning that violence and coercion in relationships is unacceptable

### **Skills**

- learning to recognise one's own emotions and those of others
- learning to manage emotions and relationships with confidence and sensitivity
- learning to manage change
- developing self-respect
- learning how to use appropriate language in the real and the digital world
- learning to be empathetic to others
- learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- learning how to identify risk in relationships both in the real and digital world
- learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse
- learning how to keep oneself safe and how to extricate oneself from an unsafe situation
- developing critical thinking
- learning to make and carry out informed decisions
- developing decision-making skills both in the real and the digital world
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices both in the real and digital world
- learning to manage conflict and developing negotiation skills
- learning how to cope with and resisting unwelcome peer pressure
- learning to communicate openly and respectfully about relationships and sex
- learning how to ask for help and accessing advice/services

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

- learning and understanding emotional and physical development at appropriate stages
- learning about the impact of stereotyping and negative language
- learning about and understanding reproduction
- learning about a safe and healthy lifestyle based on accurate information
- understanding the positive benefits of loving, rewarding and responsible relationships
- learning protective behaviours
- understanding the nature of consent
- learning about the impact of coercion and violence
- knowing where to seek appropriate help and advice

V1.0

Created: June 2024

Next review: June 2025

## 2. Delivery of RSE

Culford School specifically delivers Relationships and Sex Education through the Learning for Life Curriculum, although some aspects are also delivered in academic lessons such as in PRE lessons and Science lessons in KS3 and KS4. There are also parts of the programme that are delivered by external professionals and members of the Health Centre.

Most of the Relationships and Sex Education takes place within timetabled Learning for Life lessons. In the Fourth Form, Lower Fifth and Upper Fifth, pupils have one Learning for Life lesson a week. The Sixth Form have one lesson a week as part of the Culford VI programme. This takes place over four terms from the Lower Sixth into the Upper Sixth. There are also external speakers who provide specialist advice to Sixth Form students.

The rationale is that the programme of RSE at Culford School is designed to support the other forms of relationships and sex education, for which parents/carers are responsible at home. House staff have a duty of care to support the needs of the boarders, and will do so as the need arises. House staff are closely supported by the health centre and regularly discuss students' social and emotional wellbeing. We aim to provide timely, age appropriate, information that supports our students in their personal development. The order of lessons and the content delivered may be subject to small changes as our teachers adapt their teaching to the responses of their classes, but the level and detail will always remain age and circumstance appropriate. There may also be changes to the order depending on what is happening in the world around us which we feel needs to be raised with our students.

RSE involves consideration of a number of sensitive issues about which different people may hold strong and varying views. In line with the Department for Education guidance, the School's approach is educational, rather than one based on propaganda or personal bias and as such, RSE is balanced, takes account of and is sensitive to, different viewpoints. The DfE guidance makes it clear that we are free to determine how we deliver the content they set out; at present this is a combination of the Learning for Life Programme (PSHE), form time activities and presentations, assemblies and inclusion in the Pastoral Friday sessions.

We are mindful of the fact that young people may have varying needs regarding RSE depending on their circumstances and background. Therefore, the school's approach to RSE takes account of student needs including, but not exclusively: ethnic, religious and cultural diversity; varying home backgrounds; sexual orientation (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans-gender or Questioning, LGBTQ); and Special Educational Needs.

'Schools should be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Staff have an important role to play in modelling positive behaviours. 'DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Guidance, September 2021'.

Schools are free to determine where it is best placed in the curriculum and at what age it is appropriate for certain types of approaches and content; we will ensure that it is fully integrated into our teaching and ethos, not treated as a stand-alone unit or single lesson.

Research has shown that young people who feel good about themselves, and are knowledgeable and confident about sex and relationships, are more likely to be discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviours and are more likely to have fulfilling relationships.

There is no evidence to suggest that RSE makes students more likely to enter into sexual activity. We believe that pupils have an entitlement to age and circumstance appropriate RSE.

V1.0

Created: June 2024

Next review: June 2025

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 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 and 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 sex and relationship 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.
- Understand how there may be links to other issues in Learning for Life and to be able to manage the pressures a 'party atmosphere' may bring.

### 3. Safe and Effective Practice

It is imperative that RSE is conducted in an environment which is open and safe for pupils. As such, teachers, health centre staff and those helping to deliver aspects of RSE are expected to establish clear ground rules and boundaries, being sensitive to the needs of the group and any individual needs.

Particular attention should be given to ensure there is fair treatment of any pupil with SEND, or a protected characteristic, and pupils should be signposted to who they can speak to should they have any concerns about any aspect of RSE.

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. Those delivering RSE sessions should be aware of the importance of making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up.

Any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously; staff should be aware that statistically it is more likely that females will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment than males, and that it is more likely that it will be perpetrated by males. However, males can also be the victims of sexual violence and it can also happen in same-sex relationships. It is, however, essential that assumptions are not made about the behaviour of boys and young men and that they are not made to feel that this behaviour is an inevitable part of being male.

V1.0

Created: June 2024

Next review: June 2025

In-house sessions which are delivered by a member of the Health Centre are valuable in signposting pupils to the confidential health and wellbeing services available to them. Learning for Life teachers are offered support and guidance about the delivery of sensitive topics.

#### **4. Methodology and Resources**

A wide range of teaching methods are used so that pupils can participate actively in their own learning. Quizzes, case studies, scenarios, role plays, guest speakers, group discussion and debate are all utilised throughout the RSE programme.

Teaching resources are kept up to date and are selected carefully for their appropriateness to the pupils. If a teacher is uncomfortable with delivering part of the curriculum, support is offered by the Head of Learning for Life.

#### **5. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The programme is regularly evaluated by the Head of Learning for Life and Assistant Head: Pastoral and the views of pupils and teachers are used to make changes to the programme on a regular basis. Current issues/news items are also incorporated into the curriculum to make it relevant to pupils. Each half term, pupils are provided with a Culford Learning Characteristic grade which shows the pupils engagement, participation and attitude towards Learning for Life lessons. Pupils can be awarded Excellent, Very Good, Satisfactory or Below Satisfactory.

#### **6. Inclusion**

##### **Ethnic and Cultural Groups**

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups.

##### **Students with Special Needs**

We will ensure that all young people receive Relationships 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 sex and relationship education is relevant to them. LGBTQIA+ content is included throughout our curriculum from the Fourth Form upwards and fully integrated into our lessons and resources. Our pastoral support will also take into account the needs of gay, lesbian, transgender or bi-sexual students. We shall actively tackle any homophobic bullying.

##### **Gender**

Both boys and girls have the right to equal RSE and we consider topics and approaches that actively engage both. We shall also be proactive in combating sexism and sexist bullying. By delivering selected parts of the curriculum in mixed sex groups, pupils are able to listen to, and engage with the views of people of differing genders to themselves.

#### **7. Working with Parents/carers and the wider community**

Culford School works closely with parents/carers when planning and delivering RSE sessions and aims to inform parents in advance of what will be covered in Learning for Life lessons. Parents are given opportunities to fill in surveys and participate in forums when necessary.

V1.0

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## 8. Right of Withdrawal of Students from Sex Education within RSE

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. This does not include those parts which are in the wider statutory curriculum (i.e. in the Science curriculum). Parents are encouraged to discuss their decisions with the Assistant Head: Pastoral and the Head of Learning for Life at the earliest opportunity. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, Culford School will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, Culford School will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Assistant Head may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. They will consult with the Head of Learning Development in this circumstance.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, Culford School will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

Parents are welcome to review any RSE resources the school uses.

## 9. Safeguarding, Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.

It is recognised that effective RSE may give rise to disclosure and any safeguarding or child protection concerns arising within, or as a result of RSE should be reported immediately to the DSL or a member of the Safeguarding team.

In a case where a teacher learns from an under 16 year old that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

- the young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice
- child protection issues will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead under the school's procedures.
- the young person will be properly counselled about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

In any case where Child Protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the School's confidentiality policy.

### Support available to pupils

The school takes its role in the promotion of pupil welfare seriously. Staff endeavour to make themselves approachable and provide caring and sensitive pastoral support to pupils.

Staff may be approached through the pastoral system and offer support if appropriate. Health care is provided on site and if necessary, pupils can be referred to internal or external counselling provision. The school will keep up to date with the development of local services and national agencies/helplines.

V1.0

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Year Group	Topics covered within the Learning for Life Programme
Fourth Form	Commitment Respect Friendships Peer pressure Healthy and Unhealthy relationships Abusive relationships Long term commitment and marriage Parenting Adolescence and puberty Self esteem, body image and social media
Lower Fifth	Relationships with role models Community cohesion Sexism and gender prejudice Conflict management Harassment and stalking Revenge Porn Forces and arranged marriages Same sex relationships Gender and trans identity Contraception STIs
Upper Fifth	Types of relationship Consent and sexual assault Relationship break ups Pregnancy and fertility
Sixth Form	Staying safe on a night out Pornography and using the internet safely Sex and consent Expectations and Experiences at University Pregnancy and childbirth