DULWICH COLLEGE
FOUNDED 1619

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY (YEARS 7 TO 13)

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other College policies, in particular the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy and the Wellbeing Policy (Years 7-13).

The aim of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, and not just intimate relationships.

The teaching of RSE is a partnership between home and school. The College aims to provide a safe and respectful environment to learn about RSE which supports the vital role of the parent or carer/guardian. RSE at the College aims to promote healthy relationships and to allow pupils space to explore their own thoughts, feelings and experiences and to develop empathy towards, and an understanding of, others. It is delivered alongside other components of the Wellbeing and Physical Education programmes, facilitating an integrated approach that aims to keep the focus on healthy relationships, and to encourage our pupils to make healthy, considered and informed choices.

We recognise that our pupils, come from a diverse variety of families. All teaching at the College, including the specific RSE education, will aim to support all pupils equally and to encourage the celebration of diversity.

Mode of delivery and themes covered

The content and delivery of the RSE curriculum also acknowledges the College's requirement to work within the law of the Equality Act 2010.

RSE is taught most directly through Wellbeing lessons and is usually delivered by Form Tutors, and it is important that this Policy is read in conjunction with the Wellbeing Policy (Years 7-13). It is also covered in a range of other lessons, talks, workshops and assemblies, for example in Biology, Religion and Theology and Form Tutor periods, and is also embedded at all times through our ethos, Code of Conduct, and other policies. At times, RSE education is enhanced through employing the services of external providers and experts such as It Happens, Beyond Equality, M-Path, GAM-Ed and others. The College's Medical Centre plays a key role in the provision of physical and sexual health, including offering confidential advice on sexual health within all relevant safeguarding children guidelines and delivering First Aid lessons to students.

The following list of themes is intended to give an overview of the key components of the RSE education at the College but is not exhaustive. Our provision of RSE is inclusive and developed in consultation with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Department that includes staff and students, and other student focus groups. It will respond to the age of pupils, the needs and questions of pupils in addition to current issues and events affecting our community and beyond:

- Developing healthy, happy and respectful relationships and how to recognise, refuse, report or reject unhealthy ones;

- The consequences, benefits and risks associated with sexual behaviour including sexual health and making responsible choices about the use of contraception;

- The physical and neurological changes that occur in young people during puberty and their impact on emotions, relationships, and behaviours of young people and those around them;

- The importance of consent in relationships, including how it is given and refused;

- Developing healthy and safe online relationships and being aware of risks in this area, including communicating with strangers, viewing pornography, and publishing or sharing personal information, including but not limited to sexual content;

- The importance of informed, safe and legal use of social media and other online platforms, where students are encouraged to develop their critical thinking skills to counter mis/disinformation and other harmful themes. This includes but is not limited to the impact on personal relationships and understanding of consent after viewing sexist, misogynistic or violent content, mental health and excessive use, body image, bullying, data collection, fake accounts and sexual imagery, abuse and harmful content, violence and upsetting content, the selling of drugs and weapons.

- The safe and legal use of artificial intelligence, including but not limited to regarding deepfakes, chatbots, medical advice, attachment to an AI personality and mental health;

- Celebrating diversity as well as understanding and responding to prejudice, including but not limited to discrimination based on the protected characteristics;

The law relating to sexual activity as well as producing, viewing and sharing sexual images, and in particular the law as it relates to young people. An overview of the topics covered by each year group is sent to parents at the start of every term, along with details of the contents of every lesson and talk that will take place. Examples from the schemes of work in which RSE is taught, along with ways to access opportunities for consultation about the content and delivery of RSE, are available to parents through the online parent portal.

The Role of Parents

We are well aware that the primary role in children's RSE lies with parents and carers/guardians. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with parents through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In pursuing this objective, we:

- Inform parents about the College's Relationships and Sex Education Policy and practice;

- Answer any questions that parents may have about the Relationships and Sex Education of their child;

- Provide support and training for parents on specific RSE topics and how to discuss them with their children through webinars and information events;

- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers about this policy or the arrangements for Relationships and Sex Education in the College.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy

Teacher assessment will inform discussion about the successful implementation of the policy. Judgements about the success of the policy can also be made through gathering evidence from staff about how the policy supports them in the delivery of RSE, from parents about the clarity of the information provided, and from pupils about how the RSE provision is meeting their needs.

Participation

All pupils are expected to participate fully in RSE lessons, though we are sensitive to the needs of each individual pupil and family: we work with parents and guardians/carers to ensure that all pupils feel comfortable in their Wellbeing lessons. Anyone with concerns should contact the Head of Wellbeing in the first instance.

The College communicates to parents their right to request that their child be excused from sex education lessons. If a parent makes this request, they (and where suitable, the pupil) will meet with a member of the Head of Wellbeing and a member of the pastoral team to discuss details of the course for the relevant year, the parents' legal rights and which areas the student is to be opted out of. Parents should be reminded that this is a yearly process and requests must be made again once the next academic year has begun. In accordance with DfE guidance, discussions and meetings will take place (with parents, and where possible, the pupil as well) except in exceptional circumstances, and the College 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, the College will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. If a pupil is excused from sex education, the College recognises its responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal, and that there is no right to withdraw from relationships education or health education.

Where a pupil has been withdrawn from sex education, teachers will respect that withdrawal in their classroom practice. If such a pupil asks a question that relates directly to the content from which they have been withdrawn, the teacher will acknowledge the question with care and sensitivity, advise the pupil that this is a topic their parents have requested be discussed at home, and — where appropriate — suggest that the pupil speak with a parent, carer, or a trusted adult outside the classroom.

Teachers will not deliver sex education content to a withdrawn pupil in a one-to-one or group context as a consequence of incidental questioning but may signpost to support services where needed, recognising that children whose questions go unanswered might instead turn to inappropriate sources of information, including online.

However, where a question or disclosure raises a safeguarding concern, the school's safeguarding and child protection policy takes precedence over the parental withdrawal request. In such circumstances, the teacher will follow the school's standard safeguarding procedures, regardless of withdrawal status. Teachers will be clear that a withdrawal from sex education does not limit a pupil's ability to seek help or report a concern, and pupils will be reminded of how to access support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead at any time.

Where questions arise in a whole-class context that cannot easily be separated from withdrawn content, the teacher will use professional judgement and, if in doubt, will refer the matter to the PSHE Lead.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs or disabilities ("SEND")

We need to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are met. This may mean additional support within lessons, small group or individual lessons and an adapting of resources to enable access. The Learning Support and EAL Departments have access to all the RSE teaching materials and can revisit topics in their one-to-one sessions. Parents may need to be consulted individually with regard to pupils with SEND.

GUIDANCE

This policy has been informed by the following documentation:

- *The Independent School Standards – Guidance for independent schools* (Department for Education, April 2026)
- *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education* (Department for Education, (July 2026)

Policy Owner:	Deputy Master Pupils & Safeguarding
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