

RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Hereford Cathedral School takes very seriously its responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education to all its pupils as part of the school's personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum. The School wants parents and pupils to feel assured that sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both the age and development of pupils, and that it is safe to voice opinions and concerns relating to the sex education provision.

This policy has been developed in consultation with parents, pupils and staff from the School. The policy is available on the School website and is regularly reviewed and approved by the governing body.

1 Policy aims

Through the delivery of high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate RSE and Health Education, the School aims to help prepare pupils for the onset of puberty, give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene, create a positive culture in relation to sexuality and relationships and to ensure pupils know how and when to ask for help and where to access support. By the end of their education, the School hopes pupils will have developed resilience and feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy in preparation for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

2 Definitions

Relationships & Sex Education (as taught in the Senior School)

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. The teaching of RSE in the Senior School builds upon the teaching of Relationships education in the Junior School. It includes teaching sex, sexuality and sexual health in a way that gives pupils the confidence to make sound decisions when facing risks and other challenges. It includes teaching about friendship, the importance of caring, stable and mutually supportive relationships with another person, and how to control and understand feelings that come with being in a relationship.

RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It teaches children and young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others, to build self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity so that they can develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

RSE will outline that there are different types of committed stable relationships; the importance of marriage as a relationship choice and why it must be freely entered into; the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships; how relationships

might contribute to human happiness and their importance for raising children, as well as highlighting the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children; characteristics of successful parenting and how to judge when relationships have become unsafe as well as how to seek help or advice and report concerns about others.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

Governors will monitor and evaluate the impact of the policy by reviewing pupils' progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes. They will hold the Head to account for the implementation of the policy.

Head

The Head will ensure that RSE and Health Education is taught consistently across the School. He will ensure that senior staff receive regular professional development training in how to deliver RSE and that staff are supported and up to date with policy changes. He will ensure that RSE and Health Education is well led, effectively managed and well planned across various subjects (to avoid unnecessary duplication of topics) and that the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation. The Head will ensure that teaching is age-appropriate, delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND and that the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled appropriately. He will ensure that teaching delivered by any external organisation is age-appropriate and accessible for pupils and will liaise with parents regarding any concerns or opinions regarding RSE and Health Education provision and will manage parental requests for withdrawal of pupils from non-statutory, non-science components of RSE.

Staff

Teachers of RSE and Health Education will ensure that they are up to date with school policy and curriculum requirements regarding sex education and will attend and engage in professional development training. Teachers will encourage pupils to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal and emotional development in confidence, listen to their needs and support them seriously.

Parents

The School expects parents to share the responsibility of sex education and support their children's personal, social and emotional development. We encourage parents to create an open home environment where pupils can engage, discuss and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through school PSHE. Parents are also encouraged to seek additional support in this from the School where they feel it is needed.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend RSE and Health classes that are in their school timetable and take them seriously. Although they are not assessed through examination, these classes are still a very important part of the curriculum and a tool to aid personal development and the school expects pupils to recognise this.

Pupils should support one another with issues that arise through RSE. They should listen in class, being considerate of other people's feelings and beliefs. Pupils are expected to comply with confidentiality rules that are set in class with regard to personal disclosures made by their peers. Pupils who regularly fail to follow these standards of behaviour will be dealt with under the school *Behaviour and Sanctions Policy* and *Discipline and Exclusions Policy*, both of which can be found on the appropriate page of the school website.

We also hope that pupils will feel comfortable to talk to a member of staff, in confidence, regarding any concerns they have in school related to relationships, sex education or otherwise.

4 Implementation and curriculum

It is important that the School implements the RSE and Health Education Policy consistently throughout the School and provides effective provision throughout classrooms. We encourage teachers to provide classes that are specific to the needs of the pupils in that class, and responsive to their behaviour and development.

Through this aspect of our curriculum we aim to explore different attitudes, values and social labels, and develop skills that will enable our pupils to make informed decisions regarding RSE and Health Education. It is important that pupils know the difference between fact, opinion and belief.

In the Senior School the RSE and Health Education, which is delivered in PSHE, Science and PE lessons, builds on the foundation of the RSE delivered in the Junior School.

The School wishes to promote pupils' health and well-being by encouraging self-control, their ability to self-regulate and strategies for doing so. This will enable pupils to become confident in their ability to achieve well and persevere even when they encounter setbacks or when their goals are distant, and to respond calmly and rationally to setbacks and challenges. The School believes that an integrated, whole-school approach to the teaching and promotion of health and wellbeing will have a positive impact on behaviour and attainment.

Dealing with difficult questions

Staff training will include sessions on how to deal with difficult questions. There may still be times when staff are faced with a difficult question in class that they feel uncomfortable or ill equipped to answer. In this case, they may wish to put the question to one side and seek advice from the Head of PSHE or one of the Senior Leadership Team.

Ground rules in class are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter. Some strategies staff may use to support this might be:

- an anonymous question box which will enable pupils to feel more comfortable to ask questions without being identified;
- stressing the need for confidentiality with regard to whatever that is discussed in the classroom; we hope this will give pupils the sense that they are in a safe zone to speak freely about sex and relationships.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

The School works hard to ensure that all aspects of the school curriculum are inclusive and support the needs of pupils of all ranges of abilities. Staff should differentiate lessons to ensure that all members of the class can access the information fully, and this is no different when it comes to RSE and Health education.

Withdrawal from RSE

The School hopes that parents will feel comfortable with, and understand the importance of, the education provided to their children as described in this policy.

Parents of children in the Senior School have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education aspects of RSE.

Before withdrawing or making a request, the School strongly urges parents to carefully consider their decision as sex education is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports child development. Parents are not permitted to withdraw their child from Relationships or Health Education or the elements on human growth and reproduction which fall under the science element of the National Curriculum.

Any parent wishing to withdraw their Senior School child from sex education should put their request in writing and send it to the Head of PSHE who will arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the 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, the School will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. If a pupil is excused from sex education the School will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Complaints

Parents or carers who have complaints or concerns regarding the RSE curriculum should contact the School and follow the Complaints Policy.

Equal opportunities

The School has duties under the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that pupils are not discriminated against because of their sex, race, disabilities, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity. RSE and Health Education lessons provide a good background for talking openly and freely about the diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences. Prejudiced views will be challenged, and equality promoted. Any bullying that relates to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be dealt with swiftly and seriously. This is the case for bullying of any kind and the procedures regarding this are outlined in the school's *Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour and Sanctions Policy and Discipline and Exclusions Policy*.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

We hope to provide a safe and supportive school community where pupils feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at school or at home. Training around confidentiality will be provided to all teachers.

It may be the case that discussion around what is acceptable and not acceptable in relationships may lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. If this is the case, the School's safeguarding procedures will be followed.

If a staff member is approached by a pupil under 16 who is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, the teacher should:

- Ensure that the pupil is accessing all the contraceptive and sexual health advice available and understands the risks of being sexually active
- Encourage the pupil to talk to their parent or carer. Pupils may feel that they are more comfortable bringing these issues to a teacher they trust, but it is important that children and their parents have open and trusting relationships when it comes to sexual health and the School will encourage this as much as possible
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to clarify whether there is a child protection issue

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) may be more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to protect themselves from harmful influences. If staff are concerned that this is the case, they should seek support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead to decide what is in the best interest of the child.

5 Monitoring, review and evaluation

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and economic change. Our aim is to provide RSE that is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our pupils, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason, we regularly review the RSE curriculum, and will inform parents of any revisions to the school policy or sex education curriculum.

We aim to monitor the effectiveness of our sex education provision through:

- periodic feedback from pupils
- periodic feedback from parents
- feedback from staff
- classroom observations

The School will regularly review this policy, evaluating its effectiveness by taking into account feedback from pupils, staff and parents, as well as what has come to light through classroom observations and information we receive from national reports and curriculum reviews.

6 Support

We hope that pupils will feel safe in the school environment to talk to any member of staff in confidence about any areas of concern regarding their personal, social and emotional development, including matters raised by or relating to sex and relationships education. We promote the school ethos as one of inclusion and acceptance throughout all areas of school activity and hope that pupils respond to this by feeling comfortable to ask questions and continue their learning both in and outside of the classroom.

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