



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction and Background Information

Stour Valley Community School is a rural Academy which opened in September 2011. The school has approximately 595 students who are mainly white and Christian. At any one time there are approximately 17% of students with Special Educational Needs, ranging from School Support to those with an EHC Plan.

The content is taught within the moral framework and ethos of the school's principles as stated in the school's Mission Statement. The school's approach to RSE is balanced and takes account of, and is sensitive to, different viewpoints.

Definition of Sex and Relationships Education

Sex and Relationship Education (RSE) is an educational entitlement for all children and young people. It is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development and sex, sexuality and sexual health. It enhances the self-worth and confidence of each individual and encourages mutually respectful relationships and empathy for others. It has three main elements:

Attitudes and values

- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral consideration.
- Recognition of the value of family life, marriage and other forms of committed stable and loving relationships, for the nurture of children.
- Respect for self and others.
- Exploration of moral dilemmas.
- Development of critical thinking.

Personal and social skills

- Self-confidence, self-esteem and empathy for others.
- Managing emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Skills of choice to manage responsibility and developing an appreciation of the consequence of choices made.
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Managing conflict.
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and Understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services.
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits gained from such delay.
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.
- Knowing about the relevant laws governing sex and sexual behaviours.
- Knowing about online risks, opportunities, responsibilities and rights.

The Relationships and Sex Education Policy has been developed in accordance with the current requirements of the law, taking into account the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance which takes effect from September 2020, as well as the Equality Act 2010.

Aims and Objectives

The school provides a setting in which students can be offered appropriate teaching about RSE. The purpose of RSE is to assist children and young people to prepare for adult life by supporting them through their physical, emotional and moral development and helping them to understand themselves, respect others and form and sustain healthy relationships, and equip with the knowledge to make informed decisions. RSE is supported by the school's Personal, Social and Health Education (Futures) curriculum and is inclusive of all students to ensure that they;

- Receive their sex education in the wider context of relationships.
- Are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.
- Develop positive attitudes to sexuality.
- Know how to access appropriate support.

RSE is taught across all year groups as part of timetabled Futures lessons for one hour each fortnight. The school nursing service and other visiting specialists act as advisors and also contribute to lessons. Content is also delivered as part of the Science, Religious Studies and Computer Science curriculum.

The programme is designed to support and complement the role of parents who have the main responsibility in this sensitive area.

Content

Science:

The Science curriculum studied during Years 7 and 8 looks at the physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty/adolescence; as well as the biology of human reproduction which includes the study of the menstrual cycle and the process of fertilisation. Students will later go on to study how the foetus develops and how factors such as smoking, and alcohol can impact on foetal development.

The Combined and Triple GCSE Science course includes the study of the role of hormones in controlling the menstrual cycle, methods of contraception and their relative efficacy. Additionally, the genetics of how sex is determined in humans is explored by studying the work of Gregor Mendel. Students studying Triple Science study the medical use of hormones to promote fertility. The Combined and Triple Science course also exposes students to the methods of bacterial growth and infectious disease, and how the spread of pathogens can affect human health.

Religious Studies:

In Key Stage Three, students investigate relationships and family life across different faiths and worldviews. They consider various beliefs and their own opinions on marriage, divorce, and homosexuality. Students investigate marriage ceremonies in different religions and consider why discrimination and prejudice in all its forms are wrong.

Key Stage 4 GCSE RS students study Edexcel Religious Studies Spec B from Christianity and Islam. The Marriage and the Family unit looks at marriage, divorce, sex, homosexuality, contraception, equality in the family, gender prejudice and discrimination and how the Church supports families.

All students consider interfaith marriage, homosexuality and arranged marriages as part of core RS lessons.

Computer Science:

The Computer Science curriculum covers all aspects of online/social media safety; including that related to material of a sexual nature that can be accessed/shared online. Students are taught about their rights and responsibilities in an increasingly 'connected' world. Risks associated with inappropriate use of the internet for sharing/viewing personal information and compromising material is discussed. Students are taught about what to do if somebody's online behaviour is causing concern, as well as the law governing sexual behaviours online, such as the sharing of indecent images.

The curriculum content covering online/social media and e-safety is covered during the Autumn term, with refresher lessons delivered during the summer term.

Futures:

- The Futures programme includes the following topics across both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, with age appropriateness/relevancy of topics taken into account:
- Puberty & Body Changes
- Body Image
- Media
- Relationships (including 'Healthy' Relationships
- Coercive Controlling Behaviour and Abusive Relationships)
- The Family
- Sexual Relationships
- Contraception
- Safe Sex
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Consent and 'Saying No'
- LGBT relationships
- Transgender issues
- Seeking Health Advice & the Importance of Health Screening
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Sexual Harassment in schools and elsewhere
- Protected Characteristics.

The majority of this content will be delivered in lessons. Some topics will be considered more than once, but from perspectives appropriate to the age of students. E.g. 'Relationships' in Year 9 and Year 10.

Some elements of the programme may be delivered by external agencies. E.g. Bespoke workshops/assemblies from the School Nursing Service (or similar).

By the end of Year 9 students will have considered:

- The benefits of sexual behaviour within a committed relationship.
- How they see themselves affects their self-confidence and behaviour.
- The importance of respecting difference in relation to gender and sexuality.
- How it feels to be different and be discriminated against.
- Issues such as the costs of early sexual activity.
- The unacceptability of prejudice and homophobic bullying.

- What rights and responsibility mean in relationships.
- The concept of consent.

By the end of Year 11 students will have considered:

- The influences and pressures around sexual behaviour and appropriate responses.
- How to confidently seek professional health advice.
- How to manage emotions associated with changing relationships with parents and friends.
- The management of conflict resolution.
- How to say no and deal with pressure situations assertively.
- Making informed choices about the pattern of their lifestyle which promote well-being.
- Ways to assert themselves and challenge offending behaviour.
- Ways to demonstrate of empathy and sympathy and the ability to respond emotionally to the range and depth of feelings within close relationships.
- How to work co-operatively with a range of people who are different from themselves.
- Consent in the context of sexual activity.

Equal Opportunities

The RSE programme responds to the needs of individual students and takes the cultures, faiths and family backgrounds of all students into consideration. We strive to ensure that all students are treated fairly and that there is no discrimination or bullying on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion. Casual or 'everyday' sexism, misogyny, homophobia or transphobia is not tolerated. Students with Special Educational Needs may be given extra support from SEN staff where appropriate.

Organisation

RSE is delivered through the Science, Computer Science, Religious Studies and Futures curriculum. RSE is co-ordinated by the subject leaders in these areas, who are responsible for the planning, implementation and review of the teaching and learning. Outside agencies and specialists deliver aspects of the curriculum. RSE is monitored through book scrutiny, lesson observations and feedback from students. In other subject areas of the curriculum occasions may arise when moral and ethical issues are addressed.

Specific Issues within RSE

The Right to Withdraw

Most of a student's informal sex and relationship education occurs within the family and the school's programme will complement and build on this learning. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the Sex and Relationships Education programme that is not taught in the Science or Computer Science curriculum, 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.

Any parent wishing to withdraw a child from the programme should inform the Headteacher, in writing, of their decision. Students who are withdrawn will be accommodated separately and will be set appropriate, alternative work to complete.

Safeguarding

RSE may bring about disclosures of safeguarding children issues and all staff are aware of how to report concerns. In these cases the school's safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Confidentiality

Nurses working within the school will be guided by the Fraser Guidelines, that provide guidance for health professionals and details of these are provided in the DfE document Sex and Relationship Education (2000). The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have a discussion about safeguarding with any health professional or other adult before they start work with SVCS students. This is to ensure they are familiar with the relevant policies and expectations regarding correct practice and responding to issues, including those that may relate to Child Protection Matters.

All staff and visitors will work in accordance with the school's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy; produced in line with the most recent version of the document Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff should ensure that students understand that they are not in a position to guarantee confidentiality. The school will make it clear to students that some information cannot be kept confidential and that, if certain disclosures are made, the school may need to involve outside agencies. This will be particularly relevant in cases where students are engaging in, or intending to engage in, sexual activity below the legal age of consent or any case where the member of staff and the Designated Safeguarding Lead may judge that the student is at risk. Students will be offered sensitive and appropriate support in the event of such disclosures. Whilst it is the school's policy to inform and involve parents, there is no legal responsibility for teachers to do so if this is against the express wishes of the student concerned.

Explicitness and Delivery

Staff should make it clear that lessons will cover essential knowledge as well as the opportunity for reflection and discussion. It is important that teachers can present the course information with a sense of openness but that the opportunity for students to ask questions is there. Questions about individual contraceptive advice cannot be dealt with by teaching staff and referral will be made to a relevant external agency. Staff will try to respond to students' questions providing answers that are framed in terms of factual accuracy. Ground rules will be used in all RSE lessons and technical vocabulary will be used to replace slang words as part of the learning.

Accessing Sexual Health Services

Staff will make referrals to appropriate health professionals, through consultation with the Year Leader. The drop-in service based at the school is provided by a school nurse who is qualified to counsel young people on sexual health matters, distribute condoms, prescribe emergency contraception and support the delivery of RSE through the Futures programme.

Communication of this Policy

The policy will be made available on the school website. The Curriculum for Science, Computer Science, Religious Studies and Futures can also be found on the website. Training will be regularly delivered to staff. A printed copy of the policy will be available on request. Resources will also be viewable on request. Please contact info@stourvalley.org if you would like to see this information.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Governing Body, following consultation with parents, students, staff and relevant external agencies.

Ratified by Governing Body	SVCS LGB
Date	December 2025