

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction and Aims

Pupils at Tring Park are growing up in an increasingly multifaceted world as all young people live their lives seamlessly on and offline. For them, both are real and important ways of validating their worldview. This online world presents many opportunities as well as challenges and risks. Our aim is to ensure that in this environment, children and young people know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, vocational, personal and social lives in a positive way. At Tring Park we are always seeking to ensure that our pupils are ready for their next step.

The topics covered within the RSE curriculum are wide-ranging. We aim to teach RSE sympathetically and inclusively, with respect for the range of backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents, whilst always providing pupils with the knowledge they need, especially regarding the law and the legal implications of their actions.

In the Prep Department we aim to put in place the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online. In the Lower School, Middle School and Sixth Form, teaching will build on the knowledge acquired in the younger years. It will further develop pupils' understanding, with an increased focus on areas such as intimate relationships and sex in Year 9 onwards.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental wellbeing is central to our pupils' ability to thrive and it enables them to build positive relationships, both now and in the future. We know that children and young people are increasingly experiencing challenges. Mental health has a higher visibility in the modern world. Young people are at particular risk of feeling defined by peer pressure, especially via online material. Our RSE curriculum is designed to promote positive mental health and wellbeing and help them to build positive relationships.

Impact of Lockdown

This is the generation that faced lockdown. It was scary for them, it strained family life for many and online learning became the norm. For some, this was better than their usual school experience and for some it was much worse. The RSE curriculum will give pupils a greater insight into how to care for themselves and receive support if problems arise.

RSE is taught in the wider context of helping to develop pupils' wellbeing. We seek to instil resilience and character that we know are fundamental to pupils becoming happy, successful and creative members of society. Central to this is our pupils' ability to:

- believe that they can achieve goals academically, vocationally and personally.
- work on a range of tasks that will help them achieve those goals; sometimes these will be challenging and demanding. It is about having faith in both the journey and destination.
- learn to be resilient.

- be positive members of the Tring Park family, showing kindness (to both themselves and others), empathy, integrity, generosity, and honesty.

Under the provisions of the Equality Act, Tring Park will not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation, and the delivery of RSE will reflect this. When planning and delivering the RSE curriculum, we take account of the SEND Code of Practice.

RSE Policy and Curriculum Development and Review

The RSE policy and curriculum has been produced in line with statutory guidance from the Department for Education, with input from our expert staff. We are clear that parents and carers are the prime educators for children on many of these matters; however we are mindful of our context as a boarding community. We aim to work in collaboration with parents and carers, building on what pupils learn at home. This policy and the RSE curriculum reflect our School's context and diverse nature as well as recognising that the role of educating every pupil is a partnership between home and school. We aim to always deliver the subject in a sensitive, objective and balanced manner to enable pupils to comprehend the range of social attitudes and behaviours in modern-day society. This will empower pupils to consider their own attitudes and actions and make informed, reasoned and responsible decisions while they are at school, at home and in adult life.

RSE Curriculum Overview

The RSE curriculum is part of the whole school PSHE curriculum, which is planned and designed to be age appropriate, under the following themes:

The DfE recognises five elements to Relationships and Sex Education. These are woven through our provision.

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

In Key Stage 3, pupils will learn about:

- Being respectful in relationships and what healthy relationships look like
- Being discerning online
- Understanding illegal substances
- First aid foundation
- Gangs and extremism
- Body image

- Mental wellbeing
- Consent
- Foetal development

In the 4th to 6th Form we seek to build on this, often in workshops during the Post Exam Programme or specialist days/ afternoons. See the PSHE and Post Exam Schemes of Work for more details. The RSE topics fall under all of these themes and are taught within the PSHE curriculum, but may also be covered across the curriculum in subjects such as science.

Overlap and the Role of Science

Learning about ‘the changing adolescent body’ is part of statutory Health Education. National Curriculum Science is also a statutory requirement. At Key Stages 3 and 4 this includes teaching about human reproduction, for example the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycles, gametes, fertilisation, gestation, birth and HIV/AIDS.

Provision

This school has a caring ethos that models and supports positive relationships between all members of the school community. The age-appropriate, spiral RSE programme within Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) is taught as a discrete KS3 subject, and through targeted workshops in KS4-5, as well as:

1. Within Science as stipulated by the national curriculum.
2. Through other curriculum areas, for example Drama, English etc.
3. Through weekly assemblies, delivered in Key Stages.
4. Through Mentor time (Tutor groups).
5. Through pastoral support both individually and for groups. We have school counsellors as well as a Medical Centre that works closely with all stakeholders.
6. By the provision of appropriate leaflets and other information sources.
7. Via e-safety briefings every three weeks.
8. Via regular Head of School communication to both parents and their cohorts.
9. Via targeted intervention, where appropriate, with vulnerable individuals.
10. Targeted delivery in response to incidents.

Teaching Methods, Resources, Training

All of the following teaching methods, resources, training and monitoring are essential elements in providing quality RSE. Key to this is a safe learning environment.

A Safe Learning Environment

In order for PSHE or RSE to be conducted safely the following will be in place:

- Group agreements or ground rules are negotiated, explained, displayed and referred to wherever appropriate. (When receiving external visitors, they will have sight of and understanding of the ground rules/group agreement.)
- No one in the classroom will be expected to answer a personal question.

- Distancing techniques such as the use of scenarios will be used to help to keep pupils safe. There will be no need for anyone to discuss their own personal issues.
- Confidentiality will be clearly explained. Pupils will understand how disclosures will be handled.
- The meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.
- Care will be taken not to use materials or approaches that may trigger trauma or distress. Pupils at risk will be identified and arrangements made for them to access the learning in a comfortable way.
- Signposting to sources of support when dealing with sensitive issues.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching and learning best practice will be applied. Active learning methods that support participation and encourage reflection will be used including group work, talking, negotiation and using thinking skills.

Asking and Answering Questions

We recognise that where young people's questions go unanswered they may turn to inappropriate sources of information. Therefore teachers will attempt to answer pupils' questions and concerns in a sensitive, age and development appropriate way. Individual teachers will use their skill and discretion in these situations and, if necessary, refer to the PSHE Coordinator for advice and support. If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk in any way, including sexual abuse or exploitation, the usual safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Teachers will apply the following principles:

1. Clear guidance will be established about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Group agreement/ground rules will help to achieve this.
2. If a pupil's question is inappropriate to address to the whole class, the teacher will acknowledge the question and attend to it later on an individual basis.
3. Personal questions should be referred to the ground rules/group agreement.
4. Teachers will set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that pupils discuss issues in a way which encourages thoughtful participation.
5. If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk in any way, including sexual abuse or exploitation, the usual safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Groupings

RSE takes place within mixed gender classes or single gender groups as deemed appropriate and relevant with the pupil's usual teacher. There may be times when choosing particular mixes of genders may be useful. It is important to note that although separated genders may have different activities on occasions, the messages and information they receive will be consistent.

Guest Speakers

We sometimes use outside speakers to complement our teaching of the RSE content. In this instance, speakers are asked to work within the framework of our RSE policy and adhere to the policy for visiting speakers. A teacher will be present throughout these lessons.

Right to Withdraw

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of the statutory RSE. Parents must state their request in writing to the Principal. Parents will then be invited into School to discuss the request to ensure that their wishes are fully understood. We will clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum alongside the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on their child, e.g. the emotional and social effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the pupil hearing the peers' version of what was learned in the class rather than what was delivered by the teacher.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the School will respect the parents' request to withdraw their child. Requests from parents must be made annually for consideration. However, three terms before the pupil turns 16 years old they are legally able to make their own decision as to whether they receive sex education. The School will make arrangements to provide the pupil with sex education during one of those terms and a parental request of withdrawal will not be granted.

There is no right to withdraw from relationship education.

Quality Assurance

The quality of RSE at Tring Park is monitored through our Quality Assurance cycle. This consists of regular pupil voice sessions and learning walks by the PSHE Coordinator, the Senior Leadership Team and the governing body.

Training

The PSHE Coordinator is responsible for the organisation and delivery of staff training. This is delivered through staff inset, sharing of good practice and distribution of literature and resources. This is supported by the use of Brooks Online CPD for RSE.

Approval of the Policy

This policy is reviewed annually by the Steering Group and Head of the Junior School, with input from the PSHE Co-ordinator. Ultimate approval of the policy rests with the Head.

Linked Policies:

Curriculum Policy

PSHE Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Inclusion Policy

Accessibility Policy

Learning Support Policy

Visiting Speakers Policy