

## Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

### Introduction and Aims

*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.*

*From the Introduction to the Statutory Guidance for RSE by the DFE*

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, whether that be vocational or along more traditional academic lines/ further training. Thus though there are essential core elements, we are aware that there are also key aspects of the performing arts world that present both opportunities and specific challenges e.g. body image and online issues including grooming and trolls.

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Promote a culture of safeguarding whereby pupils understand what positive relationships look like and which parts of their body are private
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

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.

## Roles and responsibilities

**The Governing Body:** The Governing Body ensures that the School has appropriate policies and procedures in place relating to safeguarding, including for RSE.

**The Principal :** The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school in regularly timetabled lessons, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE .

**Staff:** Staff are responsible for:

1. Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way
2. Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
3. Monitoring progress
4. Responding to the needs of individual pupils
5. Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/nonscience] components of RSHE
6. Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSHE are encouraged to discuss this with their Line Manager.

**Pupils:** Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSHE and, when discussing issues related to RSHE, treat others with respect and sensitivity. Concerns regarding an individual's attitude and approach can be followed up with their HOY, pastoral team and the safeguarding team. The guidance regarding disciplinary matters can be found in the School Handbook if individual behaviour choices are impacting the learning.

At Primary school level, RSHE is taught by the Tring Park Prep teachers.

At Secondary school level, RSE is mainly delivered through the PSHE curriculum with overlap with the Science Department.

**Overview of Tring Park Preps:** We aim to put in place the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online.

**Futher up the school:** 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.

In accordance with KCSIE, over the years RSE and the PSHE curriculum will tackle at age-appropriate stages issues such as:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- boundaries and consent
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling

behaviour

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse,

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grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and

- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.

### **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. In the last decade, 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. Staff training has focused much on this and is updated regularly.

### **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. This will help pupils move on from their lockdown experiences or be able to contextualize it through the range of activities with RSE and of course the wide curriculum.

**Inclusion** We ensure RSE is inclusive and meets the needs of all our pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), by adapting our curriculum to consider:

- Their level of vulnerability.
- Their need to learn and demonstrate appropriate behaviour.
- Their need to develop self-esteem and positive body image.

We value the different backgrounds of our pupils and, in addressing different views and beliefs, seek to promote tolerance and understanding. There are many different faith and cultural aspects of RSE. As a school, we will deliver RSE in a factual, non-judgemental way ensuring that teachers do not promote one faith or cultural point of view, but rather provide a balanced approach that acknowledges the wealth of views and opinions of our community and teaches tolerance. Parents and carers can then contextualise learning within their own faith and values framework in their discussions with children following teacher led lessons. A range of different families and relationships will be explored within RSE. All children, whatever their family background, need to feel that RSE is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. In order to ensure the RSE curriculum meets the needs of all:

Last updated by SB 12 August 2022 – further updates by AB 18 August 2022

Date of next review August 2023

- We will not promote a particular lifestyle over another.
- We will not seek to gain consensus, but will accept and celebrate difference.
- We will encourage respect and discourage abuse and exploitation.
- We will not ask children to represent the views of a particular religious or cultural group to their peers, unless they choose to do so.
- We will ensure that the learning is both age-appropriate and suited to the learning needs of all.

### **What the pupils will take away**

Central to every curriculum area including RSE 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 more resilient, discover more about who they are and where they fit
- Learn where to seek out help and support
- become 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

**By the end of primary school, pupils will have been taught content on (appropriate to the Key Stage):**

- families and people who care for me
- caring friendships
- respectful relationships
- online relationships
- being safe

The School community comes from a range of settings. Other than our intake from Tring Park Preps, every child is from a different setting, including international ones. Also, we are mindful that the curricula offered may have varied considerably for pupils who were in different settings during lockdown.

- **In Key Stage 3, pupils will learn about:**
  - The importance of communication on and offline
  - Being respectful in relationships and what healthy relationships look like
  - Being discerning online and what to do if things go wrong e.g. sharing of images
  - Understanding illegal substances and their effect on relationships
  - First-aid foundation
  - Gangs and extremism, including County Lines
  - Body image especially in relation to online material
  - Mental wellbeing in a relationship and how to discern if it has become toxic
  - Consent
  - Contraception and decision making around sexual activity
  - STIs
  - Where to seek help and support

As per the PSHE Association guidance and recommendations, at key stage 4, students deepen knowledge and understanding, extend and rehearse skills, and further explore attitudes, values and attributes acquired during key stage 3. PSHE education reflects the fact that students are moving towards an independent role in adult life, taking on greater responsibility for themselves and others.

By the end of key stage 5, many young people will leave home for the first time and live independently, possibly in distant locations. There is a balance throughout this Programme of Study between preparing students to manage their current lives and laying the foundations for managing future experiences. As students progress through the key stages, this balance shifts towards teaching related to young people's current experiences; this ensures students continue to learn about issues with real-life relevance to them, at a crucial transition point in their lives.

The learning opportunities at key stage 5 assume that students have already covered those in key stage 4. However, students entering key stage 5 from different feeder schools may bring a range of experience and understanding, so it may be appropriate to also draw on learning opportunities in key stage 4.

This key stage represents the last opportunity to ensure that students have the knowledge and understanding, skills, strategies and attributes they need for independent living and the next stage in their education or career.

### **Overlap with other curriculum area**

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. It overlaps with other too; the Theatre Studies, Film Studies and English courses will explore much of this also as the content forms the basis of a lot of human drama.

### **Overlap with 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, foetal development/ gestation, birth and HIV/AIDS. A correct core scientific understanding is the basis for other work; it is recognised as best practice.

### **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 KS3,4-5, as well as:

1. Through weekly PSHE lessons
2. Within Science as stipulated by the national curriculum.
3. Through other curriculum areas, for example Drama, English etc.
4. Through weekly assemblies, delivered in Key Stages.
5. Through Mentor time (Tutor groups).
6. Through pastoral support both individually and for groups. We have school counsellors as well as a Medical Centre that works closely with all stakeholders.
7. By the provision of appropriate leaflets and other information sources.
8. Mediated meeting and other supportive measures held by the pastoral team including the Anti-Bullying Coordinator.
9. Via e-safety briefings every three weeks.
10. Via regular Head of Sixth Form, Middle School and Lower School communication to both parents and their cohorts.
11. Via targeted intervention, where appropriate, with vulnerable individuals.
12. 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.

### **Lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT)**

In teaching Relationships Education and RSE, schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and The Equality Act 2010: advice for schools, under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.

### **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.

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Date of next review August 2023

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. Online CPD has also been used e.g. Educare and Brooj.

## **Approval of the Policy**

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

## **Linked Policies:**

Curriculum Policy

PSHE Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Inclusion Policy

Accessibility Policy

Learning Support Policy

Visiting Speakers Policy

Safeguarding Policy