

**NORTHFLEET SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING TRUST**

POLICY ON

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)

Date of Policy:	September 2020
Member of staff responsible:	Mr C Norwood
Review Date:	December 2021
Reviewed:	December 2023

This policy covers Northfleet School for Girls' whole school approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

We believe that through providing high quality RSE, we are upholding the ethos and values of our school and its commitment to equality and celebration of difference.

This policy was produced in consultation with our staff, board of governors, pupils and parents. We will ensure the policy is effectively communicated to staff and parents, including through publishing the policy on our school website.

The information below complies with our statutory obligations to deliver RSE under sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It will have due regard for the DfE's statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance and other relevant guidance which is also covered throughout the PSHE curriculum.

We will review the policy on a regular basis to ensure that it is in line with current Government guidance and legislation and to ensure that our RSE programme continues to meet the needs of our pupils.

1. What Is Relationships and Sex Education?

Northfleet School for Girls has a central vision to 'dream big and achieve'. To achieve future life success students need to be well prepared for all aspects of adult life including safe and healthy relationships.

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care, for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

The school is aware of the need to ensure that key learning is sensitive to student age and is able to inform parents of when aspects of RSE are delivered; this information can be found on the school website and each student receives a copy of the PSHE yearly learning plan in September. Students also receive a unit overview for every unit in PSHE which includes SRE. These are shared on the google classrooms as well as in student folders.

We define Relationships Education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human relationships including friendships, intimate, sexual and committed relationships and family life.

We define Sex Education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections and sexual health.

We take the approach that Relationships and Sex Education are best approached in an integrated way and using a gender equity and human rights framework.

We will take care to highlight lessons that contain what we define as sex education so that we can respect the wishes of parents who have withdrawn their children from this content.

Simultaneously, we will seek to nurture children's curiosity about the world around them, supporting their development and their respect for themselves and each other

2. Principles and Values

Northfleet School for Girls believes that RSE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people.

- Equip students with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, respectful and enjoyable relationships and empowers them to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.
- Encourage every student to contribute to make our community and aims to support each individual as they grow and learn.
- Be set within this wider school context and supports family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.
- Encourage all in the school to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure. The important values are love, respect and care for each other.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- Recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents and students, consulting them about the content of programmes.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

Relationship and Sex Education in this school has three main elements:

Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices;
- learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships, and marriage;
- learning about the nurture of children;
- learning the value of respect, love and care;
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour.

Personal and Social Skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice;
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- managing conflict;
- empower students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter)

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 to be gained from such delay;
- the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.
- learning and understanding about sexual exploitation and the links that this has to online safety

3. Aims

The aim of RSE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSE programme aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships.
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity.
- understand the reasons for having protected sex.
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships.

Whilst Northfleet School for Girls, wants to create a learning space that feels safe for children and young people to disclose, we also want to protect children's privacy. We do this by using a number of teaching techniques including the use of a working agreement, where rights respecting ground rules are created with pupils on what makes a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Once ground rules have been set, we will check they are in place throughout the scheme of work and actively referred to. Through the use of ground rules and other approaches, we believe the school can create a supportive environment for discussions that can be sensitive or difficult.

4. Organisation and Content of Sex and Relationship Education

Northfleet School for Girls specifically delivers Sex and Relationship Education through its PSHE Programme and Science lessons at KS3 and KS4.

Much of the Relationships and Sex Education at Northfleet School for Girls takes place within PSHE lessons. Specialist teachers generally deliver the PSHE Curriculum with support from other professionals where appropriate. RSE lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction are also included. The Science National Curriculum is delivered by staff in the science department. These lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten.

RSE will address aspects of relationships and sex in an integrated way within a single topic. We will take care to highlight lessons that contain what we define as sex education so that we can respect the wishes of parents who have withdrawn their children from this content.

The PSHE Programme and Science National Curriculum is taught in every year.

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

Assessment is carried out at the end of every module and involves teacher, pupil and peer assessment of knowledge and understanding, interpersonal skills, and attitudes.

We regularly monitor our RSE schemes of work to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, that the curriculum is meeting the new national requirements under the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance, and that learning outcomes are reflective of pupil need.

5. Inclusion

RSE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from pupils. We view questions as a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others. As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group. There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class.

Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way and take into account whether a parent/carer has requested their child to be removed from sex education lessons.

School staff will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their students that could make either party vulnerable.

We believe that an open approach to answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and older students. We believe exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSE.

Importantly, we believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they are able to discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

We believe that RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice.

Our RSE is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes and sexism and sexual harassment in schools. We take these issues seriously and ensure that we embed content on gender equality throughout the curriculum.

We are also committed to an RSE that makes every pupil feel valued and included and is relevant to them. This means we are committed to an LGBT+ inclusive and SEND inclusive curriculum and are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice 2014 when planning for this subject.

We will also ensure that we take into account the religious and cultural background of our pupils when teaching RSE.

An inclusive RSE at Northfleet School for Girls will seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

Ethnic and Cultural Groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items. We will respond to parental requests and concerns.

Students with Special Needs

We will ensure that all young people receive sex and relationship education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them.

Vulnerable Students

We also recognise that some children may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes to their personal life. For those children, additional support will be given to prevent them being affected by the scenarios or topics in their planned lessons.

6. Right of Withdrawal of Students from Sex and Relationship Education

As outlined within the Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSE (within PSHE lessons).

Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education.

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum, which includes elements of sex education such as puberty and reproduction.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education.

All children will have the right to opt into sex education three terms before they turn 16 and the school will make arrangements for this to happen. In practice, this means that when a child turns 15 they have the right to be taught sex education if they want to.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of Relationships Education, it is our aim to encourage parents to see the value of RSE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice.

Should a parent/carer decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the Subject Leader responsible for RSE to discuss their concerns. The Subject Leader for RSE will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum in an in person meeting where lessons and resources will be discussed and shown. The Subject Leader for PSHE/RSE will also present reasons why the school believes children should not be withdrawn from these lessons. In this meeting, the Subject Leader for PSHE/RSE will also highlight exactly what lessons constitute Sex Education and therefore what lessons parents/carers can remove their child from.

If parents/carers still decide that they want to withdraw their child, they should inform the Headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this.

Except in exceptional circumstances, we will respect the parents' request to withdraw their 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.

7. Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues

Northfleet School for Girls acknowledges that RSE is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the school and for meeting our statutory obligations as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

RSE helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing abuse, or have experienced abuse.

We recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSE covers, some pupils could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory training around child protection and will follow the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Teachers are not legally bound to inform parents or headteacher of any disclosure unless the headteacher has specifically requested them to do so.

In a case where a teacher learns from an under 16 year old that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

- the young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice.
- child protection issues will be considered, and referred if necessary to the teacher responsible for Child Protection under the school's procedures.
- the young person will be properly counselled about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the school's confidentiality policy.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation of Sex and Relationship Education

We regularly monitor our RSE scheme of work to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, that the curriculum is meeting the new national requirements under the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance, and that learning outcomes are reflective of pupil need.

The School's Leadership Team in conjunction with the Subject Leader of PSHE and Governors on a regular basis will review this policy. If changes are needed, members of staff, parents/carers and pupils will be consulted and any subsequent changes made will be clearly communicated.

It is the responsibility of the Subject Leader for PSHE to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PSHE, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The PSHE programme will be treated as a subject department in this exercise.

The Governors Learning and Progress Committee is responsible for overseeing, reviewing and organising the revision of the Sex and Relationship Education Policy

Ofsted is required to evaluate and report on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. This includes evaluating and commenting on the school's Relationships and Sex education policy, and on support and staff development, training and delivery.

Headteacher signature: _____ C Norwood

Governor signature: _____

Date: _____