



## Brentwood School

### Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Policy

<b>Document Owner:</b>	Director of Wellbeing Senior, Deputy Head Pastoral and DSL Prep		
<b>Relevant to:</b>	Whole School inc EYFS		
<b>Regulatory Body:</b>	Department for Education, Independent Schools Inspectorate		
<b>Relevant Legislation/Guidance:</b>	Independent Schools Standards Regulations DfE Statutory guidance: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Education Act 1996 Equalities Act 2010		
<b>Last reviewed by:</b>	SLT October 2022		
<b>Last approved by and date:</b>	Education Committee 4th November 2022		
<b>Next review due:</b>	Currently under review further to new <a href="#">DfE statutory guidance</a> (July 2025) (comes into force from September 1st 2026)		
<b>Current version published:</b>	7th November 2022		
<b>Circulation:</b>	All Staff	Governors	Website
<b>Related &amp; supporting Policies:</b>	Anti-Bullying Policy	Assessment Policy	Behaviour Management Policy
	Curriculum Policy	Equal Opportunities Policy	Health & Safety Policy
	Safeguarding Policy	SEND Policy	

## **RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY**

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## **Introduction**

This policy outlines our school's commitment to provide effective Relationships and Sex Education for all pupils in support of that offered by parents, who are the first educators of their children in this area. It has been written with regard to the DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance 2019 and other relevant guidance documents and statutory requirements.

Our primary aim in providing RSE throughout the school is to safeguard our pupils. During their time at this school pupils will learn key knowledge and skills to help keep themselves, and others, safe, healthy, and prepare them for the responsibilities of adult life. RSE is taught in a progressive, sequenced, age-appropriate manner throughout the school.

## **Confidentiality, safeguarding and child protection**

Everyone involved in RSE will be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. Teachers will discuss confidentiality with pupils through the development of a group agreement at the start of lessons, making it clear that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Pupils will be informed if confidentiality has to be broken, due to safeguarding concerns, and supported as appropriate. We take seriously all reports of sexual harassment and/or violence and respond according to our safeguarding policy and KCSIE.

Please see our Safeguarding policy for details of how to recognise pupils who may be at risk of abuse or being abused, including child on child abuse, and for the pastoral support network in place.

Through taught lessons, teaching staff will signpost pupils to sources of confidential local and national support services in addition to the support available through the pastoral team which includes tutors and year teams, School nurses, School counsellors, Pastoral Mentors and the Designated, Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.

## **Policy development and availability**

The RSE policy has been developed following consultation with the whole school community. Consultation took place in the following ways: discussion at staff briefing; pupil council discussion; and, parent workshops and surveys.

The RSE policy is available on the school website and a hard copy can be requested via School Reception. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

## **What is RSE?**

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. Through RSE pupils learn about healthy relationships, diversity, respect, love and commitment, healthy

lifestyles, safety both on and offline, puberty, sex, sexuality and sexual health. At the Senior School, we are building on the foundations of skills and knowledge that pupils have learnt at the Prep School.

### **Why RSE is important in our school**

We teach the progressive RSE program across the Prep and Senior School in line with our school values of Virtue, Learning & Manners so that we may promote safe, well-informed and healthy relationships of all kinds that develops the holistic wellbeing of our students.

There is often concern that RSE will encourage sexual experimentation however, evidence shows that those who receive comprehensive RSE at school are more likely to delay their first sexual activity and to use contraception when they do have sex.

We acknowledge that not all parents feel confident or comfortable talking to their children about this area therefore our work in school ensures that all pupils have a standard level of education about key aspects needed to keep safe and make positive, informed and healthy choices.

### **Key Components**

Our RSE programme will focus on three elements: exploring attitudes and values; developing skills; and, improving knowledge and understanding. We aim to develop well-rounded individuals who respect themselves and others, are able to communicate effectively and take responsibility for their actions.

The key components of our RSE programme are:

- Developing knowledge and understanding of what positive and healthy relationships look like and the skills to form nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships
- Enabling pupils to recognise unhealthy relationships and abuse, including child on child abuse, and have the knowledge and skills to seek help for themselves or others
- Developing a culture where discrimination including sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes are not tolerated
- Giving pupils the knowledge and skills to make informed, healthy decisions about their mental and physical health
- Preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life
- Developing an awareness and understanding of relevant laws, for example those around consent, sexual violence, rape, drugs, and image-sharing
- Developing knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and sexual health, including Sexually Transmitted Infections, sexual orientation, contraception and reasons for delaying sexual activity
- Supporting pupils to develop a positive sense of their own identity, showing respect for themselves and others, and having resilience
- Supporting pupils to keep safe, both online and offline, including assessing the risks and benefits of their actions and recognising that pressures and influences

- come from a range of sources
- Providing pupils with the knowledge and skills to access appropriate support

The RSE programme is based on the needs of pupils in the school. We consult with pupils around the programme and respond to pupil feedback which informs our decision-making with regard to the curriculum, with learning outcomes appropriate to their age, ability and level of maturity. In addition to feedback from classes and workshops, there is a student focus group. RSE is embedded within our broader curriculum areas, in addition to more focused learning through RSE sessions, tutor-time and assemblies.

## **Equality, Inclusion and Support**

We are required to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Our school values diversity, encourages respect for all and promotes tolerance for, and celebration of, difference. We do not discriminate against pupils because of any protected characteristic (age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation). At times, when there is an identified need, we may take positive action through our planning and delivery of RSE to deal with disadvantages facing those with a particular characteristic. When planning and delivering RSE, we take into consideration identified SEND or additional needs and each pupil's learning plan which outlines strategies for support as well as explanation of specific areas of need.

RSE will be accessible to all regardless of their gender. Through the delivery of RSE teachers will explore gender stereotypes and how they may limit a person's potential and ensure that people of all genders receive information that is relevant to their needs.

There are many different faith and cultural perspectives on aspects of RSE. As a school we will deliver RSE in a factual, non-judgmental way ensuring that teachers do not promote one faith or cultural viewpoint but rather provide a balanced approach that acknowledges the wealth of views and opinions of our community and teaches tolerance. Parents and carers are key partners in RSE and are best placed to support their children to understand how learning at school fits with their family's faith, beliefs and values. To support this process we will ensure that parents are made aware of what will be taught in our RSE programme and when.

We will use a range of materials and resources that reflect the diversity of our school population and encourage acceptance and tolerance. We want every pupil and family to feel included, celebrated, respected and valued.

Teachers will plan in different ways and use a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs of individuals. For some pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities, a differentiated approach may be necessary to ensure learning outcomes are met – this will be shared with parents/carers and a plan developed. Some pupils may have experienced adverse childhood experiences that may impact on their ability to engage with RSE in a variety of ways. Care will be taken to ensure that, where this is the case, parents/carers are consulted about the most appropriate way for the pupil to access the

curriculum.

A range of different families and relationships will be explored within RSE, including same-sex relationships. Referencing a range of relationships will be integral to our programme of RSE. All pupils, whatever their identity, developing identity, or family background need to feel that RSE is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. This means that resources and books used will reflect both our school community and wider society.

#### Menstrual wellbeing

Key facts about the menstrual cycle are included in the curriculum content. We recognise that the onset of menstruation can be a difficult time and we offer support to pupils in the following ways:

- Sanitary disposal units are available in female and unisex/accessible toilets.
- Pupils can access emergency sanitary products from the SAN, Learning Support and Pastoral Managers.
- For those experiencing period poverty, free sanitary protection can be accessed from the SAN and Learning Support.

### The Curriculum

RSE will be taught in each year group throughout the school. The curriculum we deliver is age-appropriate and progressive, building the pupil's knowledge, understanding and skills year on year. There is repetition of key themes and these elements will be delivered through timetabled Wellbeing sessions, drop-down days, tutor time and assemblies. Learning will also be supported through cross-curricular approaches.

In addition to the Science curriculum we work towards objectives in each year group that support the achievement of outcomes outlined in the government RSE (and health) Guidance under the following headings:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health
- Mental wellbeing
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy Eating
- Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco
- Health and Prevention
- Basic First Aid
- Changing adolescent body

The curriculum will be evaluated and reviewed by pupils and teachers on a regular basis through pupil and staff surveys and small working parties.

Details of the material delivered as part of the RSE curriculum is available to parents on request via the Deputy Head Pastoral in the Prep School or Director of Pupil Wellbeing in the Senior School.

## **Prep Curriculum**

In the Prep School, RSE is taught as part of the PSHE Curriculum. Timetabled lessons are supplemented with discussion during Form Time/Circle Time, Assemblies, other curriculum subjects, especially IT, PE, RE, Enrichment Activities and Science, or special theme days such as Safer Internet Day and Anti-Bullying Week.

In KS2 Science, subject content includes the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. These topics, as well as Relationships Education, are a compulsory part of the curriculum.

It is not compulsory for Sex Education to be taught in primary schools but The Department for Education continues to recommend that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. At Brentwood School, we teach children how a baby is conceived and born in Year 6.

## **Senior Curriculum**

In the Senior School, some elements of RSE are delivered through national curriculum Science. At KS3, pupils are taught about reproduction in humans, including the reproductive system, menstruation, fertilisation and birth. At KS4, teaching content includes reducing and preventing the spread of infectious diseases, and hormones in human reproduction.

## **Resources**

As with any other subject, the breadth of the RSE curriculum necessitates the use of a wide variety of age-appropriate activities, textbooks and resources. In the Senior School, the Department for Education's recommended resources are used to create shared curriculum content resources for all Teachers of Wellbeing - namely from the PSHE Association. Annex B of the DofE's RSE Statutory Guidance provides further resources, found [here](#).

In the Prep School, we use the Cambridgeshire PSHE Scheme as the framework for our planning but this is supplemented with other resources from the PSHE Association and 1Decision Scheme. Together, these provide a comprehensive and engaging programme of age appropriate activities which cover all elements of the statutory requirements for RSE.

If any other resources are introduced, they will be checked to ensure they are consistent with the ethos and values of the School, support our aims and objectives, and meet the needs of our pupils.

We offer opportunities for parents to familiarise themselves with the content of RSE through Wellbeing Newsletters, introductory evenings, parent meetings and open evenings. We also inform parents of what will be taught in each term through letters home.

If you would like to discuss any of the resources used in more detail please contact the Deputy Head Pastoral in the Prep School or, Director of Wellbeing in the Senior School.

## **Teaching and Learning**

The Director of Wellbeing in the Senior School and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in the Prep school are responsible for planning lesson content and providing relevant resources and training to all teaching staff who deliver RSE lessons. Everyone involved in the teaching of RSE will follow the school policy.

The personal beliefs and attitudes of staff will not influence the delivery of RSE. A balanced and non-judgmental approach will be taken. Teachers, and all those contributing to RSHE, will work to the agreed values within this policy.

To ensure that all pupils feel able to contribute effectively to RSE a number of teaching strategies will be used, including:

- Establishing a group agreement with pupils;
- Using 'distancing' techniques (eg. Case studies and role-play)
- The provision of a 'question box' during each planned session
- Dealing with questions in an age-appropriate manner
- Using discussion and appropriate materials
- Encouraging reflection.

RSE will be delivered all year round – parents/carers will be informed of what will be covered when via parent letters, and curriculum booklets and newsletters.

## **External speakers**

We may use outside visitors to enhance the RSE provision delivered by teachers. We plan these inputs carefully to ensure effectiveness. All visiting speakers will:

- be suitably qualified to deliver RSE sessions
- be aware of the school policy on RSE and work within this
- be supervised by a member of staff at all times when on school premises
- alert the teacher to any safeguarding concerns
- understand their contribution they make to the broader RSE programme
- be suitably vetted prior to being booked

## **Safe learning in RSE**

It is important that all pupils feel safe and able to participate in RSE lessons. To support the involvement of all pupils, teachers will create a group agreement with each class outlining expectations around rights, responsibilities and respect. The group agreement will be a working document that all pupils agree to follow.

As with any topic pupils will ask questions during RSE to further their understanding. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic teachers will employ strategies to ensure that questions are

asked and answered in a factual, balanced and age-appropriate way. The group agreement will remind pupils that personal questions of the teacher or other pupils are not appropriate.

Some staff may feel it is appropriate to use a 'question box' to allow all pupils an opportunity to write questions down if they do not choose to ask these in front of the whole class.

Teachers will use the following strategies to deal with unexpected questions:

- If a question is personal, the teacher will remind pupils of the rules set in the group agreement
- If the teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, the teacher will acknowledge this and will research the question and provide an appropriate answer later.

Sometimes pupils may ask questions about issues that are not part of the planned programme, this could show that the taught curriculum is not meeting their needs. These questions will be answered in a factual and balanced manner appropriate to the age of pupils. The questions will also be fed back to the Coordinator as part of the evaluation and monitoring process.

## **Staff training**

All staff delivering RSE will receive training. If a staff member has additional learning and development needs these will be supported either through mentoring from a more experienced staff member in school, team-teaching, observations, or attendance at an internal or external training event. Training on more specific RSE topics will take place as and when required to support the needs of teachers, pupils and the school as a whole.

## **Assessment and tracking pupil progress**

Please refer to the Assessment Policy for details on how we assess and track pupil progress against Relationship and Sex Education.

## **Parents**

We believe that RSE is a partnership between school and parents/carers. We recognise that parents are the first teachers of their children and welcome their engagement with our RSE programme. It is important that RSE delivered in school is explored in more detail within the context of individual families. Parents will be routinely informed about RSE through the school website and letters/emails to explain when RSE will take place in different year groups and what will be covered.

In order to consult parents, regular feedback comes on an annual basis about any needs they may have in relation to our RSE programme. This includes our Parent satisfaction surveys, Wellbeing Newsletters and letters home prior to content delivery that invite parents to view, share and ask about our resources used.

Any parents wanting more information about our RSE curriculum can contact the The Director of Wellbeing in the Senior School or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in the Prep school.

### **The right to be excused from sex education:**

Whilst we always try to work with parents to explore their views, we also accept that parents can exercise their right to excuse their child from the sex education elements of our programme (other than that which comes within the Science curriculum). There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. The RSE we provide is planned to meet the needs of all pupils and give them the knowledge and skills they need to lead healthy lives. Withdrawing pupils from RSE can be detrimental and lead to them receiving less accurate, second-hand information from peers.

In the Prep school parents should write to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) if they wish to withdraw their child from Sex Education. The Deputy Head will arrange to speak with parents to explore their views and ensure that the nature and purpose of RSE is understood. A written record will be kept of this discussion, after which parents still wishing to withdraw their child from Sex Education will have this request automatically granted by the Head of the Prep School.

In the Senior School, parents should make the request that a pupil be excused from Sex Education parents directly to the Headmaster. The Director of Wellbeing in the Senior School will then arrange to speak with parents to explore their views and ensure that the nature and purpose of RSE is understood. A written record will be kept of this discussion. Except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect a parent's right to excuse their child up until three terms before a pupil's sixteenth birthday when the child can choose to be included in Sex Education.

This process is the same for pupils with SEND, however in exceptional circumstances the headteacher may take account of a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND when agreeing or not any application to be excused.

Teachers will plan appropriate, purposeful education for pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

### **Monitoring and Review**

We regularly review the PSHE and Wellbeing curriculum to ensure that the content we deliver is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our pupils, depending on their age and stage of personal development. Teachers will continually reflect on the effectiveness of provision and pupil voice will also be used to inform reviews and updates to planning, resources and activities. Parents will be informed of any revisions to the school policy or curriculum as required.

### **More Information**

If you would like to discuss our provision of RSE further please contact the Director of Wellbeing in the Senior School or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in the Prep school.

If you have a complaint about any aspect of our RSE provision please follow the School's complaints procedure.