

GORDON'S SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIP & SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

The core principle that guides everything we do is **Putting Students First**.

1. INTRODUCTION

Relationships and sex education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Some aspects are taught in science, and others are taught as part of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and a carefully planned assembly rota. A comprehensive programme of RSE provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex, and sexual health. It also gives students essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline.

Quality RSE helps Gordon's to create a safe school community in which our students can learn, grow, and develop positive and healthy relationships. This is essential as it ensures:

- Students have good quality education, as set out in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
- Students are prepared for physical and emotional changes they undergo at puberty, and they are given the opportunity to explore different types of relationships in a timely manner
- The school is meeting its safeguarding obligations – our students learn about safety and risks in relationships and how to report and get advice and support
- We maintain our statutory obligation under the Children Act (2004) to promote students' wellbeing, and under the Education Act (1996) we prepare our students for the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities of adult life
- We promote the spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development of our students

A carefully sequenced RSE curriculum, based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance that includes sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online. This should include time for open discussion of topics, relevant to the age group, that students tell us they find particularly difficult, such as consent and the sending of nudes.

Our relationships and sex education programme of study is designed to have a positive impact on our students' health and wellbeing, including their ability to achieve.

2. LEGISLATION (statutory regulations and guidance)

We are required to teach relationships and sex education (RSE) as part of the Department for Education 2019 statutory guidance (revised in July 2025) and this informs our timetabled PSHE Programme of Study at Gordon's School. Current regulations and guidance from the Department for Education state that all secondary schools must deliver relationship and sex education.

The 1993 Education Act requires Governors of maintained secondary schools to provide relationship and sex education for all registered students, to maintain a Policy of relationship and sex education and to make this policy available to parents and Ofsted.

Under the Education Act 2002 / Academies Act 2010 all schools must provide a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The RSE policy supports and complements the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Equality Diversity Cohesion
- SEND

Documents that inform the school's RSE policy include:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014)
- Keeping children safe in education – Statutory safeguarding guidance (2016)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)

3. AIMS OF THE RSE POLICY

a. Attitudes and Values

- i. Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.
- ii. Learning the value of stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- iii. Developing critical thinking as part of decision making

b. Personal and Social Skills

- i. Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- ii. Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- iii. Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- iv. The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy

c. Knowledge and understanding

- i. Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- ii. Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- iii. Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services
- iv. Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- v. The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The relationships and sex education programme will be led by the Head of PSHE and taught by a team of timetabled PSHE teaching staff. It will be supported by the school nurses, SEND Department and external speakers where appropriate. Teaching staff are all encouraged to complete relationships and sex education training on the topics they are expected to deliver during the academic year to support students in the effective delivery of relationships and sex education.

The Head of PSHE works closely with Heads of Department to ensure relationships education, RSE and health education programmes of study compliment and do not duplicate the content covered in national curriculum subjects such as Science, RE, Computing, Food Technology and PE.

The Head of PSHE will check prior knowledge and understanding of new students, Y7, to ensure a smooth transition between primary and secondary school.

5. DELIVERY

Our guiding principles are that all of the compulsory subject content is age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. This will be carefully monitored and lessons and information from third parties will be objectively filtered and reviewed before use. Statistics will be corroborated, and wherever possible information and resources used will be provided from a local/British evidence base.

Lessons are taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of students and parents while always with the aim of providing students with the knowledge they need of the law.

- a. Relationships and sex education at Gordon's School is delivered as part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme of study and is also part of National Curriculum Science. Responsibility lies with the Head of PSHE and is monitored and evaluated by the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Academic).
- b. A variety of active learning approaches are employed in the delivery of the curriculum. The choice of method is matched to the needs of the group and the suitability for the issue being addressed. In some cases, visitors may be invited into the school and the school nurses may be involved.
- c. Lessons are taught in mixed gender groups; however certain parts of the curriculum may be taught in single sex groups.
- d. The names of students who are absent from sex education lessons will be reported to the Head of PSHE and recorded to ensure that students receive the information missed.

Students are naturally curious about growing up, how their bodies work, change and how humans reproduce. Their questions need to be answered honestly, using language and explanations appropriate for their age and maturity, thus avoiding unnecessary mystery, confusion, embarrassment, and shame. RSE addresses the questions and concerns raised by the biological fact. It provides balance to sometimes distorted messages about sex and gender roles in the media, and helps protect students by explaining boundaries and safety, and developing the language and understanding needed to recognise abusive behaviour and seek help. It also helps students to develop respectful and consensual attitudes and behaviours.

Our school has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that teaching is inclusive and accessible to all students, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). Inclusive RSE helps foster respect and understanding, challenges prejudice—including homophobia—and supports positive relationships among students. This approach reflects both the requirements and the spirit of the Equality Act.

In line with the 2025 guidance, our RSE curriculum places greater emphasis on biological accuracy, consent, and protecting students from harmful ideologies.

6. TEACHING STRATEGIES

It is essential that we help our students to develop confidence in talking, listening, and thinking about relationships and sex. Partnership between school and parents is the key to success.

The following can help this: -

- Establishing ground rules with pupils
- Using 'distancing' techniques
- Knowing how to deal with unexpected questions or comments from pupils
- Knowing how to deal with sensitive issues

7. SAFE AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

At Gordon's School we will ensure a safe learning environment by establishing ground rules at the start of every PSHE lesson and remind students about confidentiality within PSHE lessons. Teachers and students will agree ground rules by discussing as a class and agreeing on a class consensus. Many of the lesson resources we use to deliver RSE at Gordon's School also provide guidance to PSHE teaching staff on creating and establishing a safe and inclusive environment.

Distancing techniques are used to ensure personal experiences and issues, of staff and students, are not discussed within the classroom and sensitive issues will be handled by the teacher ensuring students have access to the curriculum overview for the year in advance. Students are informed and reminded in advance of any topics approaching that might be considered sensitive. Students who are upset in a lesson will be given time out and teachers will be asked to follow up with an email to DSL/Deputy DSL and or HoH.

Students are encouraged to ask questions; however they are reminded that questions should not cause offence and the teacher will approach Q&A honestly, indicating they are not experts and may have to return to a question with an answer in due course. Students are given the opportunity to raise questions in PSHE lessons anonymously, including RSE lessons. Students have access to post-it notes / ask it basket in lessons and may RSE lessons build opportunities for students to ask anonymous questions which are visited during the lesson / scheme of work.

All staff teaching RSE at Gordon's School are supported by the Head of PSHE and CPD is offered to all staff to ensure they are confident in delivering quality and inclusive RSE lessons to all students, including access to PSHE Association resources through our School membership. Where a member of staff expresses a concern in delivering particular elements of the RSE curriculum, plans are put in place to ensure a member of staff who is confident can deliver these lessons. This can typically be covered by the Head of PSHE, school nurses or an external guest.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

The classroom is never a confidential place to talk, and that remains true in RSE PSHE lessons. Our students are reminded that their PSHE lessons are not a place to discuss their personal experiences and issues, or to ask others to do so, through the establishment of ground rules, which are revisited every lesson.

Any visitor to the classroom is bound by Gordon's School's policy on confidentiality, regardless of whether they have, or their organisation has, a different policy. Students are reminded throughout their PSHE lessons where they can access confidential support after the lesson if they need it.

When necessary, students will be made aware that confidentiality is not guaranteed, although their best interest will be maintained.

Disclosures from students should be referred to the Safeguarding Lead.

9. ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

Parents will be informed about the relationship and sex education policy through School Comms (policy of the week) and the policy will be available to parents through the school website. We are committed to working with parents by ensuring they are equipped with up-to-date information relating to RSE changes and statutory guidelines. We inform parents through parent information evenings and have also previously worked with the GSPA to ensure parents are fully aware of the 2020 statutory changes and what we are required to teach by law. We ensure parents are fully aware of what is being taught by publishing our PSHE curriculum map on the school website.

The Head of PSHE also communicates with parents, via School Comms, regarding RSE topics that are coming up and will send additional resources to support / facilitate conversations at home. Regular letters to parents typically inform them of the content of the forthcoming RSE lessons and any parents' booklets and links to websites that they might find helpful, should they wish to follow up these conversations at home with their child.

A parent survey is also sent in the summer term to collate feedback from parents about their knowledge and understanding of our RSE policy and the feedback gathered helps to shape our provisions.

Governors will be informed of the RSE policy and PSHE curriculum through their termly meetings.

Student voice is used to review and tailor our RSE programme of study to ensure we meet the needs of our student body. Academic Council Meetings provide students an opportunity to discuss the curriculum and RSE focus groups are established to ensure we are meeting the needs of our students. Boarders' Council also provides our students with an opportunity to discuss matters they deem to be important.

10. MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATING

Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RSE through regular meetings with the Head of PSHE. They can also request CPD to further support and enhance their delivery of these lessons through organisations such as the PSHE Association.

Students will have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lessons as baseline assessments and plenary opportunities allow students to reflect on their progress in terms of their knowledge and understanding and identify any changes in their thoughts, views and opinions. Students will also be asked to identify sources of support and suggest where they can get additional help and support on RSE matters.

Student voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities to ensure lessons are pitched correctly, based on our students' needs. Student focus groups and surveys will enable the Head of PSHE to collate feedback on the quality of lessons, content, students views in relation to gaps in current provisions and any additional services that we can offer to fully support the delivery of RSE in PSHE lessons.

Whereby a visitor / external agency has contributed to the delivery of RSE provisions, students will be sent a survey to evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of the workshop / talk. This feedback will be used to determine future supplementary provisions.

11. RIGHT TO BE EXCUSED FROM SEX EDUCATION

Gordon's School is required to provide relationships and sex education for all registered students. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the sex education aspects of the curriculum, which are not included by law with the National Curriculum. Parents wishing to exercise this right should apply to the Head Teacher in writing. The school will document this request and ensure a record is kept. Parents wishing to see more details of the relationships and sex education materials and curriculum should contact the Head of PSHE.

Should a parent wish to withdraw their child from sex education lessons, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before a student turns 16. After that point, if a child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will plan to provide them with sex education during one of those terms.

The process is the same for SEND students, however there may be exceptional circumstances whereby the Head Teacher may wish to take the student's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

If a student is excused from a sex education lesson, we will ensure the student receives appropriate and purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw a student from relationships or health education.

Mr James Butler
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