

## RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

### 1 Rational and Ethos

- 1.1 This policy covers the school's approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). It was produced by the Head of PSHME through consultation with students, parents, teaching staff, the leadership team and Governors of the school. The Head of PSHME liaises regularly on curriculum matters with the Head of PSHCE at RGS Prep School. The approach is consistent with that taken in the delivery of the school's commitment to providing a broad, balanced and impartial Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Education and in the context of the delivery of Personal, Social, Health and Moral Education (PSHME). As such this policy should be read in conjunction with the SMSC and PSHME policies respectively.
- 1.2 This policy embodies the aims of the school (Academic Opportunity, Sustainability, Widening Access, Well-being). The School has a statutory obligation under Children's Act 2004 to promote well-being and evidence suggests that a comprehensive RSE program can have positive impact on students' well-being and health as well as their ability to achieve.
- 1.3 At the RGS, Relationships and Sex Education is defined as the process of life-long learning about the emotional; social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health, within a value driven framework. It should equip young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, stable and fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and wellbeing, and that of others.
- 1.4 The school values of Inclusivity, Scholarship, Integrity, Respect, Courage and Collaboration are taught directly in the PSHME program and are intrinsically intertwined with the teaching of RSE. The partnership between home and school is vital in providing the context for these values and it is important for students to be able to make their own informed and healthy choices and to prepare for the challenges and responsibilities of adult life (Education Act 1996).
- 1.5 RSE is delivered throughout the lower, middle and upper schools in an age-appropriate way and in the context of relevant legislation including the Equality Act 2010. RSE is inclusive and meets the needs of all our pupils by careful resource selection, lesson planning and teacher training as well as the use of specialist staff to deliver elements of RSE such as the Economics department, Biology department, the Wellbeing Practitioner, the School Counsellor and the School Nurse.

- 1.6 Due regard is given to the protected characteristics. Provisions within the Equality Act allow the school to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting one group because of protected characteristics.
- 1.7 Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. Instead, it aims to build pupils' self-esteem and confidence to respect themselves and others. RSE is an entitlement for all young people and must:
  - 1.7.1 Be accurate, factual and contemporary, covering a comprehensive range of information about sex, relationships, the law (having regard to the Gillick competencies and Fraser guidelines) and sexual health in order to make informed choices.
  - 1.7.2 Be inclusive and relevant in terms of gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, religion, belief, or other life experience.
  - 1.7.3 Prepare young people for the physical and emotional changes that they face at puberty and adolescence and to support them through it.
  - 1.7.4 Include the development of skills to support healthy and safe choices in relationships.
    - 1.7.4.1 Promote a critical awareness of the different attitudes and views on sex and relationships within society, such as peer norms and those portrayed in the media, giving pupils the skills to make their own informed choices, about how and whether to engage in an intimate or sexual relationship and to understand the nature of consent.
    - 1.7.4.2 Have due regard to the distinctive perspectives on relationships and sex held by different faith groups.
  - 1.7.5 Provide opportunities for reflection in order to nurture personal values based on mutual respect and care.
  - 1.7.6 Be part of lifelong learning, starting early in childhood and continuing throughout life. It should reflect the age and level of the learner.
  - 1.7.7 Ensure that the young people are clearly informed of their rights such as how they can access confidential advice and health services within the boundaries of safeguarding.
  - 1.7.8 Be relevant and meet the needs of young people, and actively involve them as participants, advocates and evaluators in developing good quality provision.
  - 1.7.9 Be delivered by competent and confident practitioners.
  - 1.7.10 Be provided within a learning environment which is safe for the children, young people and adults involved, and based on the principle that prejudice, discrimination and bullying are harmful and unacceptable.

## **2 Roles and Responsibilities**

- 2.1 Responsibility for the school's RSE policy lies with the school Governors.

- 2.2 The RSE program will be led by the PSHME co-ordinator in consultation with the Assistant Head (Pastoral and Wellbeing) and the Senior Deputy Head liaising with the three Heads of Section, the Head of Integrated Science and with the Head of Religion and Philosophy. The Head of PSHME, in conjunction with each Head of Section takes responsibility for the PSHME curriculum for their respective sections, whilst the Head of Religion and Philosophy is responsible for those aspects that are taught through the general Religious Education program and advises on key issues elsewhere. The Head of Integrated Science oversees the delivery of Reproduction in First Form.
- 2.3 It will be taught by:
- 2.3.1 Subject specialists, for example:
- 2.3.1.1 Science teachers. RSE is supported through Integrated Science and Biology lessons, particularly reproduction in humans (e.g. the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycles, gametes, fertilisation, gestation, birth and STIs, introduction to contraception).
- 2.3.1.2 Religion and Philosophy teachers e.g. for dealing with loss and family breakdown.
- 2.3.2 Form Tutors, where the program is delivered in timetabled weekly lessons. Positive and trusting relationships enable the creation of the 'safe space' needed for sensitive discussions.
- 2.3.3 Heads of Year and Heads of Section will deliver lessons and assemblies that support the delivery of the RSE curriculum.
- 2.3.4 Wider expertise within the school. This includes, but is not limited to, the School Nurse and members of the Religion and Philosophy department.
- 2.3.5 Outside agencies where appropriate.
- 2.4 Those responsible for delivering the RSE program receive briefings and lesson plans from the relevant Head of Section, within which they have latitude to use their professional judgement regarding depth of content and timings.
- 2.5 Staff training is available through dedicated sessions in Staff Development days and Staff can elect to attend external training sessions relevant to their role.

### **3 Legislation (Statutory Regulations and Guidance)**

- 3.1 Current regulations and guidance from the Department for Education state that from September 2020 all secondary schools must deliver relationships and sex education. The RGS already has a well-established RSE program and is well placed to deliver this, but the delivery of the program will be regularly evaluated in the light of new statutory guidance, and the changing needs of young people.
- 3.2 This RSE policy complements the SMSC Policy and the PSHME Policy and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
- SMSC Policy

- PSHME Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

3.3 Documents that inform the school's RSE policy include:

- [Education Act](#) (1996).
- [Learning and Skills Act](#) (2000).
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education updated July 2020.](#)
- [Equality Act](#) (2010) and [The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance](#) provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts.
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) – statutory safeguarding guidance (2024).
- [SEND Code of Practice](#) – Statutory Guidance.
- [SMSC Requirements for Independent Schools](#) guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- [Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools](#) guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC).
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying.
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) advice for schools.
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#) advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils.

## 4 Curriculum Design

4.1 The RGS RSE program is delivered as an integral part of a comprehensive and wide ranging SMSC and PSHME provision. Therefore, there is flexibility to deliver content and to practise skills with due consideration to the developmental ages and needs of the students, building on what has gone before. Individual topics may be met several times throughout the RGS experience, but with increasing depth of information and intellectual engagement.

4.2 The RGS curriculum builds upon what has already been taught in the primary phase of education and will cover:

- 4.2.1 Clear and impartial scientific information on the physical and emotional changes at puberty, with due consideration to wide range of developmental stages that may be concurrent in any RGS classroom.
- 4.2.2 Accurate and up to date information on reproduction, including the facts and choices around pregnancy and assisted conception.
- 4.2.3 Clear and impartial scientific information on the full range of contraceptive choices, sexual health and sexually transmitted infections.
- 4.2.4 Information about the law e.g. on sexual activity, sexual consent, forced marriage, FGM.

- 4.2.5 The student's right to confidentiality.
- 4.2.6 An understanding of the protected characteristics and being respectful of a wide range of views. As an example, RSE will be fully inclusive and relevant to those who identify as LGBT.
- 4.2.7 Consideration of the mixed messages from the media, including issues around mental health, body image and pornography.
- 4.2.8 Information about support services including links to school based and community health services and organisations.
- 4.2.9 An understanding of the meaning of consent, and the skills to enable its effective use. The emphasis is on being able to actively communicate and recognise consent from others.
- 4.2.10 An understanding of both the positive impact and potential dangers inherent in using digital devices. Matters such as sexting, establishing a positive digital footprint, viewing or posting inappropriate online content, cyber-bullying and exploitation are highlighted. This includes sign posting to support services.
- 4.2.11 An understanding of the benefits to physical and mental health of positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships.

## **5 Safe and Effective Practice**

### **5.1 Safe Learning Environment**

- 5.1.1 The RGS will ensure a safe learning environment by providing trusted, professional and expert practitioners to deliver the content.
- 5.1.2 Ground Rules will be established by the practitioner with pupils at the start of each year, to ensure both respect and confidentiality.

### **5.2 Dealing with sensitive issues:**

- 5.2.1 Research shows that attempts to scare or shock young people into making healthy choices rarely works. Pupils will be reassured that the majority of young people make positive, healthy lifestyle choices.
- 5.2.2 Distancing techniques are used to ensure that vulnerable students can reflect in a way that is sympathetic to their situation without putting themselves at risk.
- 5.2.3 Pupils will be given the opportunity to questions directly or anonymously, which will be answered sympathetically, honestly and factually.
- 5.2.4 The session leader may refer the student to other sources of information and support, both inside and outside of school, if necessary.

### **5.3 Confidentiality:**

- 5.3.1 Pupils will be made aware that some information cannot be held confidentially and will be informed that, if certain disclosures are made, the information may be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **5.4 Students with SEND:**

- 5.4.1 The school will ensure that RSE is accessible for all its pupils.
- 5.4.2 The school will be mindful of preparing for 'adulthood outcomes' as set out in the SEND code of practice when teaching RSE to those with SEND.
- 5.4.3 The school is aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to their SEND. Such factors will be taken into consideration in the delivery of RSE.
- 5.5 Support for students:
  - 5.5.1 Pupils are made aware of counselling, mentoring and health support services available within the school and through external agencies.
- 5.6 Trusted resources for RSE at the RGS are provided by the following, amongst others:
  - Brook [www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)
  - NSPCC [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
  - PHSE Association [www.phse-association.org.uk](http://www.phse-association.org.uk)
  - Sex Education forum [www.sexeducationforum.org.uk](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk)

## **6 Safeguarding**

- 6.1 RSE in and of itself plays a vital part in meeting safeguarding obligations. It is preventive program where pupils learn about safety and risks in relationships.
- 6.2 Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. In this case, the teacher will follow the school's safeguarding procedures.
- 6.3 Visiting Speakers:
  - 6.3.1 Where visiting speakers are invited to deliver aspects of the RSE curriculum (for example the RAP Project), testimonials will be sought from other schools and a member of staff will brief them in advance regarding the schools safeguarding procedures.
  - 6.3.2 Visiting speakers will be accompanied by a member of RGS staff when delivering RSE content. All visiting speakers are logged on the SMSC Register.
  - 6.3.3 Observations can be undertaken by Governors, members of the Senior Leadership Team, and the Head of PSHME to ensure consistency of teaching and the safety of pupils.
  - 6.3.4 Prior to delivery from an external speaker, a discussion or meeting will be organised with the external speaker, so that the school are aware of and happy with the content and tone of the presentation, in line with the SMSC requirements.

## **7 Engaging Stakeholders**

- 7.1 This policy will be available to parents on the school website should parents wish to raise any issues with the School.
- 7.2 The RGS recognizes that parents and/or guardians are the key people in teaching their children about relationships and sex. As part of our whole school approach to RSE, we work in partnership with parents, guardians and carers to support them in preparing their children for happy and fulfilled relationships in adult life.
  - 7.2.1 Information is provided through newsletters and information evenings throughout the year. Specific materials and resources are often recommended.
- 7.3 Parents Right to Withdraw their child
  - 7.3.1 Parents/carers will be notified by letter when there is a specific focus on sex education within the RSE provision, usually in the Lent term of the Fourth Form. The letter will outline the specific arrangements and content and also advise parents on their right to withdraw their child from Sex Education that is not part of the Science Curriculum.
  - 7.3.2 However, a child has the right to opt into sex education without the consent of their parents/carer from their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday (specifically three academic terms before they turn 16).
  - 7.3.3 Before granting such a request the Headmaster will meet with the parents or guardian and, as appropriate, with the student to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.
  - 7.3.4 The school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the student up to and until 3 terms before the pupil turns 16. After that point, rather than be withdrawn, if a pupil wishes to receive sex education, the school will make the provision.
  - 7.3.5 If a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, the school will ensure that the student receives purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
  - 7.3.6 The school will keep a record of all such decisions.
  - 7.3.7 There is no right to withdraw from the Relationships aspect of RSE as the government believes the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online) – are important for all children to be taught.

## **8 Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation**

- 8.1 Pupils will have the chance to review and reflect on their learning in RSE lessons by peer discussion, by feedback questionnaires and by question-and-answer sessions.
- 8.2 Pupils' knowledge and understanding can be assessed through classroom discussion and formative assessment activities. Evidence of learning should be collected, but not to the detriment of the learning outcomes themselves. Evidence could include presentations, written evidence, group work, observations, Microsoft Forms or work on One-Note. It may also include end of topic summary forms (particularly in the Middle School).

- 8.3 Pupil voice will be used to ensure that the needs of the pupils are adequately met, in this changing landscape. It will be influential in adapting planned learning activities.
- 8.4 The coordinator of PSHME will annually review current provision of content against that recommended by the PHSE Association to ensure that best practice in RSE is being implemented.
- 8.5 Teachers will reflect on their professional practice in delivering RSE through personal development conversations with their Head of Year or the PHSE Coordinator. They will take and provide opportunity to share best practice by skilled and focussed observation of their peers and seeking out training to keep their professional practice up to date.

## **9 RSE Policy Review Date**

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed in Trinity 2026, by the Head of PSHME in consultation with the Heads of Section, Assistant Head (Pastoral & Wellbeing), Senior Deputy Head and the Education Committee of the Governing Body.

**Reviewed by: Head of PSHME and Senior Deputy Head**

**Date of last review: Trinity 2025**

**Date of next review: Trinity 2026**