



Soham Village College

# Relationship and Sex Education Policy

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**Staploe Education Trust**  
*Excellence through partnership*



## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Aim of RSE education .....	3
What is effective Relationships and Sex Education? .....	3
Attitudes and values .....	3
Personal and social skills .....	3
Knowledge and understanding .....	3
What is the moral and values framework of Relationships and Sex Education? .....	4
How is Relationships and Sex Education organised? .....	4
How does Relationships and Sex Education relate to equal opportunities? .....	5
How is Relationships and Sex Education taught? .....	5
Right of withdrawal .....	6
Procedure for Monitoring and Evaluating .....	6
Useful policies and references .....	6
Appendix 1: By the end of secondary school students should know .....	8

## Introduction

Soham Village College believes that relationships and sex education makes an essential contribution to every student's health, wellbeing and preparation for adult life in society.

The students in our school come from diverse backgrounds, expressing a spectrum of beliefs and values. Together with our Advisory Body, we have considered and developed a familiarity with the beliefs and attitudes which our range of families have about issues such as relationships and sex education, abortion, contraception, LGBT+ and sex outside marriage. We recognise that we need to educate and support young people to manage 'real world' interactions as well as those that happen in the online virtual environment. We are committed to responding to national trends and emerging issues such as those around mental wellbeing, consent, gender and sexual identity, online pornography, sexting, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. These issues have a high profile within DfE guidelines in such documents as *Keeping Safe in Education (September 2022)* and form the motivation behind the statutory guidance published under the revised Relationships and Sex Education curriculum.

The stage of development and the experiences of any group of young people of the same age will be diverse and varied. This fact has clear implications for curriculum content, teaching approaches, and the creation of an appropriate learning environment based on the need to develop in young people respect for each other's differences.

The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the general ethos of the school, will seek to persuade students in need of support to come forward.

## **Aim of RSE education**

The aim of this policy is to communicate to staff, Advisory Body members, parents/guardians, visitors and students the manner in which RSE will be delivered and supported at Soham Village College, in accordance with the statutory 2020 Relationships and Sex Education curriculum.

As a secondary academy we must provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. In teaching RSE we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996 and the Relationships Education and Sex Education and Health Education Statutory Guidance (2020)

At SVC we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

## **What is effective Relationships and Sex Education?**

It is part of lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, gender identity, emotions, relationships and sexual health. It promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the school and of society. As well as preparing them at school for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. In our view, effective Relationships and Sex Education incorporates:

### **Attitudes and values**

Students are helped to examine their own and other people's attitudes and values, particularly related to sexual matters, and to respect the rights of others to their own opinions and identities. RSE can help students to develop a good self-image, body confidence and high self-esteem, responsibility, understanding of consent and the ability to make informed decisions.

### **Personal and social skills**

RSE encourages the acquisition of skills so that students' relationships with others may be positive, fulfilling and respectful. It helps them explore how to be themselves in terms of beliefs, culture and traditions and to respect others. It provides opportunities to develop communication skills and assertiveness within a range of different situations, emboldening the students to recognise opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle.

### **Knowledge and understanding**

RSE provides information on puberty, personal safety, friendship and love, family life and relationships (including friendships), gender issues, conception and birth processes, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, prejudice and stereotyping, online and media and sex and the law. Thus giving an understanding of the nature and diversity of

relationships and sexuality. Soham Village College strives to provide an objective and balanced view of sexual matters, correcting any misinformation students may have gained. It will give them the information and understanding they need, in accordance with the student's background and beliefs.

## **What is the moral and values framework of Relationships and Sex Education?**

RSE is taught within and confirms the moral and values framework of the whole school. This draws on the statement of values by the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community contained within the National Curriculum.

- We value ourselves as unique human beings capable of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth and development.
- We value others for themselves, not only for what they have or what they can do for us. We value relationships as fundamental to the development and fulfilment of ourselves and others, and to the good of the community.
- We value truth, freedom, justice, human rights, the rule of law and collective effort for the common good. In particular, we value families as a source of love and support for all their members, and as the basis of a society in which people care for others.

It is expected of teachers that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not influence their teaching of RSE. They will address students' questions with due regard to the beliefs and values of the child's family. The teaching of RSE respects and refers to the beliefs of the child's home background. RSE is also part of the school's provision for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development. It encourages each student to develop confidence and a clear awareness of their own beliefs and values and to develop mutual understanding and respect between students for their diverse beliefs and values.

## **How is Relationships and Sex Education organised?**

RSE is not an isolated subject: it permeates the whole school curriculum, the ethos of the school, the pastoral system and is informed by the role models given by teachers. Opportunities should be used as they occur for answering students' questions and exploring issues as they arise.

All subjects, but particularly Science, Religious education, English and Drama provide a focus for exploring some elements of RSE.

RSE is also taught within the PSHE education curriculum through sessions within tutor time, fortnightly PSHE lessons delivered at KS3 and whole school drop down days (three per year). Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the Science curriculum.

Students may also receive standalone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional

The PSHE Co-ordinator alongside the pastoral team and heads of faculties jointly co-ordinate Sex Education and are jointly responsible for the overall planning, implementation and review of the programme.

## **How does Relationships and Sex Education relate to equal opportunities?**

The school's policy for equal opportunities also underpins the teaching of RSE. Relationships and Sex Education can act as a basis for promoting equality between individuals and groups. It necessarily involves an exploration of human and social diversity, and a fostering of self-esteem and self-worth in a learning environment that recognises and respects difference. We work to ensure that our relationships and sex education is relevant and accessible to all our students, it is respectful of how students choose to identify themselves, and that it is appropriate for all levels of understanding and maturity. This means that relationships and sex education is sensitive to the different needs of individual students and may evolve and adapt over time.

## **How is Relationships and Sex Education taught?**

The school recognises the need to begin with students' own experiences, beliefs and values and, therefore, places a high importance on creating a supportive and secure atmosphere where they can develop the confidence needed to talk, listen and think about relationships and sex. In order to do this, teachers:

- Establish ground rules with students
- Emphasise the importance of mutual respect
- Require no open personal disclosures in a class setting
- Use distancing techniques
- Provide for anonymity by using a question box (this also gives the teacher time to consult with colleagues on how to answer unexpected questions from students)
- Encourage reflection within lessons, across a year of teaching and through revisiting topics throughout KS3 and KS4

The school also draws on a range of teaching methods in order to encourage exploration of attitudes, values and beliefs, using active learning methods which involve students and help them to personalise information. This also increases the likelihood of the learning being relevant and effective. The school includes activities where students' can practise and develop confidence in using communication, negotiation and decision making skills. Students are consulted about issues they wish to explore, how they wish to work together, how well lessons are going and what changes need to be made.

The school recognises that some aspects of RSE are a whole school concern and that some aspects can be covered by subject teachers across the curriculum. However, there are aspects which need to be taught separately in PSHE, including those specifically relating to sexual matters such as contraception and STIs. Not all teachers are best suited to teach some of these. Therefore, some RSE topics may be delivered by a panel of teachers who are particularly trained and confident in teaching this subject. In addition, the school draws on the expertise of, faith communities and a representative spectrum of national specialist agencies. Students are given a choice about their participation in learning activities related to sexual matters such as contraception and STIs. Resources are chosen from agencies

which represent diverse beliefs, which are appropriate to students' age, maturity and religious and cultural background.

All teachers are given training on handling sensitive topics and are made clear about confidentiality boundaries and know where/who to refer students for confidential advice and support.

### **Right of withdrawal**

Relationships and Sex Education is part of all students' education and it is hoped that all will participate. However, the school acknowledges that, under the Education Act 1993 and 2020 guidelines, parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the relationships and sex education programme, up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange it. Students cannot be withdrawn from that part which occurs in the National Science Curriculum. Parents need to be aware, however, that relationships and sex education can occur at any time if it arises naturally from class discussion. They also need to consider whether they want their child withdrawn from all relationships and sex education or just that part which deals explicitly with sexual intercourse and related issues. Discussions on feelings, values and relationships may well not be of concern. Parents wishing to exercise the right of withdrawal should write to the Headteacher.

### **Procedure for Monitoring and Evaluating**

The policy and teaching programme will be reviewed every year, based on the outcome of monitoring and evaluation. Advisory Body members and senior staff will take a key role in monitoring the progress of the policy. Advisory Body members, teachers, parents, and students will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy as a working document. Evaluation could include:

- Assessments of knowledge and understanding of information and issues addressed in RSE
- Students' responses to teaching content and methods
- Teachers' responses to teaching content and methods
- Evidence of students' increased self-responsibility and respectful attitudes to opposite sex monitored by senior pastoral staff
- Decrease in recorded instances of expressions of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, bullying, sexist graffiti, casual use of derogatory language, particularly with sexual or gender meanings, monitored by senior pastoral staff

### **Useful policies and references**

*Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Soham Village College, Autumn 2022)*

*Behaviour Policy (Soham Village College, Autumn 2022)*

*ICT, Internet, Cyber Security and Acceptable Use policy (Staploe Education Trust, Summer 2022)*

*Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE, 2019)*

*Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, updated September 2022)*

[www.pshecambridgeqshire.org.uk](http://www.pshecambridgeqshire.org.uk)

[www.thekitetrust.org.uk](http://www.thekitetrust.org.uk)

[www.dhiverse.org.uk](http://www.dhiverse.org.uk)

[www.Youthoria.org](http://www.Youthoria.org)

<http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/>

<http://www.ncb.org.uk/> <http://www.brook.org.uk/>

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/>

## Appendix 1: By the end of secondary school students should know

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships</li> <li>• How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children</li> <li>• What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony</li> <li>• Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into</li> <li>• The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships</li> <li>• The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting</li> <li>• How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed</li> </ul>
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</li> <li>• How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)</li> <li>• That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help</li> <li>• That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control</li> <li>• What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable</li> <li>• The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal</li> </ul>



TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online</li> <li>• About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online</li> <li>• Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them</li> <li>• What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online</li> <li>• The impact of viewing harmful content</li> <li>• That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners</li> <li>• That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail</li> <li>• How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online</li> </ul>
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships</li> <li>• How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)</li> </ul>

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship</li> <li>• That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in relationships and sex, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing</li> <li>• The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women</li> <li>• That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others</li> <li>• That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex</li> <li>• The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available</li> <li>• The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage</li> <li>• That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)</li> <li>• How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing</li> <li>• About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment</li> <li>• How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour</li> <li>• How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment</li> </ul>