

Relationships and Sex Education Policy – Westminster (Secondary) Campus

Summary

Southbank Westminster considers that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is an integral part of the Personal Social Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) curriculum. We aim to offer students a carefully planned programme on human development, relationships, sexuality and family life within a safe, comfortable atmosphere and in a relaxed relationship between teachers and students. The programme is set within a moral framework and matched to the students' level of maturity. This policy reflects the requirements of the DFE RSE Relationship Education and Relationships Education and Health Education Guidance (Sept 2021).

Delivery of RSE

Why is Relationships and Sex Education important?

1. Effective relationship and sex education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives and should not be delivered in isolation. It should be firmly rooted within the framework for PSHEE.
2. The objective of relationship and sex education is to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. A successful programme will help young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.
3. Students will need to be given accurate information and helped to develop skills to enable them to understand differences and respect themselves and others and for the purpose also to preventing and removing prejudice.
4. Relationships and sex education should contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at school and of society. It should prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
5. Effective relationships and sex education does not encourage early sexual experimentation.

It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for sexual activity. It builds up knowledge and skills which are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on young people.

Definition of relationships and sex education

RSE is lifelong learning process of acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs and attitudes about sex, sexuality, relationships and feelings' (Sex Education Forum, 1999). Effective RSE can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by students if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables children and young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and well-being.

RSE helps children understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships and equips them with the skills to get help if they need it.

Teaching and Learning including delivery of the Curriculum

The PSHEE curriculum at Southbank includes, celebrating differences, personal safety, hygiene, physical and sexual development, growth and change, dreams and goals, puberty, human reproduction, pregnancy and childbirth and child development and parenting. Personal and social development, including relationships with family and friends, self-esteem, emotional development, gender roles and stereotyping.

Since RSE incorporates the development of self-esteem and relationships, students' learning does not just take place through the taught curriculum but through all aspects of Westminster campus life including the academic curriculum, the pastoral programme and the extra-curricular activities (ECA) programme. It is important that all staff understand they have a responsibility to implement this policy and promote the aims of the school at any time they are dealing with children.

RSE is taught as part of our PSHEE curriculum. The PSHEE course is delivered to all students through dedicated PSHEE lessons taught by the Westminster faculty. There is one weekly lesson of PSHEE for all students. Elements of the curriculum are supported by additional expertise such as outside speakers including trained health professionals, or by the use of teachers with a particular interest or knowledge in a specific area. In addition to these dedicated lessons, PSHEE is also embedded throughout the wider academic curriculum (e.g. social issues through the teaching of English; health in science and PHE lessons; and citizenship issues in the Individuals and Societies curriculum. Introductory lessons units are planned to assess baseline understanding of key subject areas and the data is used to plan future lessons and assess knowledge and understanding. The involvement of student Advisors in RSE supports close communication with the SENCO and Grade Leaders to ensure that the needs of all students are met, including any special provision for support to enable understanding.

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2 and our Curriculum Policy.

The Role of Parents

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's RSE lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. In promoting this objective we:

- Inform parents about the school's RSE policy and practice
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RSE of their child
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers about this policy or the arrangements for RSE in the school

Right of Opting Out

Parents have the right for their child to be removed from RSE provided within the PSHEE curriculum.* Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from the science aspects of relationships education.

**If a parent wishes to request that their child is withdrawn it is good practice for the Principal to discuss the request with the parent and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Good practice is also likely to include the Principal discussing with the parent the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal may have on the child.*

The Role of the Senior Leadership Team

It is the responsibility of the SLT to:

- Ensure that parents and staff are informed about our RSE policy;
- The policy is implemented effectively;
- Ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity;
- Monitor this policy on a regular basis.

Language

Children should be introduced, at appropriate stages, to the correct terminology in their programme of sex education. It is important that acceptable and unacceptable terminology is clarified. After initial discussion, correct biological terms will be used at all times for teaching.

Students' Questions

Teachers will reply to, and answer children's questions sensitively and openly. They will ensure that balanced information is provided which will take into account the different faiths' views and avoid any negative impressions.

Teachers will need to answer questions that may arise through the direct teaching of sex education, as well as those that may be asked at other times. All questions will be handled sensitively and set within a general context.

Questions which teachers feel uncertain about answering should be discussed with a senior member of staff and answered at a later date. Consideration should be given to religious or cultural factors, and to parents' wishes before questions are answered.

Harassment and bullying

Students come from a variety of backgrounds and all are entitled to learn in a supportive environment, free from fear. Students may use language related to sexuality and gender as a way to harass other students. This is unacceptable and will be dealt with as any other form of harassment, through the school behaviour and discipline procedures. An understanding of human difference, including sexuality, is an important aspect of education and will be addressed as appropriate through the curriculum.

Confidentiality

Teachers conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. In these circumstances, the teacher will talk to the child as a matter of urgency. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw these to the attention of the designated person responsible for child protection, or the Principal.

Legally, the school cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. We aim to ensure that students' best interests are maintained and try to encourage students to talk to their parents or carers to provide support. If confidentiality has to be broken, then students are informed first and then supported by the designated teacher throughout the whole process.

Special Needs

Students with special educational needs will be given the opportunity to fully participate in RSE lessons, and a differentiated programme will be provided where necessary, to ensure that all students gain a full understanding.

Equal Opportunities

RSE will be given to ensure quality of access for all students, regardless of gender, race or disability, so giving equal opportunities and avoiding discrimination.

Related Policies

In conjunction with this policy, please also see:

- Behaviour policy and procedures
- Safeguarding policy
- PSHEE policy

Appendix: Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum Summary

The Grade 6-12 PSHE curriculum, including RSE, reflects the guidance from the Tri-borough local authority framework from the Healthy Schools partnership, the PSHE Association curriculum guidance for Key Stages 3-4, and consultation with “Brook Young People”.

Grade	Overarching Topics
6	My changing body, Healthy Relationships, consent & FGM
7	Healthy relationships, consent, positive online relationships, self-esteem and body image
8	Healthy relationships, consent, STI & Condom use and Gender identity
9	Healthy relationships, Online safety (pornography), consent and the law.
10	STI, contraception and empowerment to give consent
11	Sex and the law - consent and the role of intoxication.
12	Pleasure, clinics and support - getting ready for the ‘next step’.