

Relationship & Sex Education Policy

Policy Title	Relationship & Sex Education Policy
Purpose	To ensure that all students receive age-appropriate, balanced, and inclusive education about relationships, health, and personal development. This policy supports students in developing the knowledge, skills, and values they need to make informed decisions, build healthy relationships, and stay safe both online and offline.
Author	Head of Personal Development
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Document History	

1. Principles

Knutsford Academy believes that Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education makes an essential contribution to every student's health, wellbeing, and preparation for life in society. This policy enables the school to achieve its statutory duty which comes into effect from 2020.

Effective relationships, sex education and health education are essential in allowing young people to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. Our guiding principles are that content must be age and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of students and parents/carers whilst always with the aim of providing students with the knowledge they need of the law.

A comprehensive programme of RSE and Health Education provides accurate information on the body, reproduction, sex, sexual health, sexuality, and consent. It also gives young people essential skills to build positive, enjoyable, respectful, and non-exploitative healthy relations and staying safe both on and offline. It is an integral part of the Personal Social Health Citizenship and Economic (PSHCE) Education curriculum. Relationship and sex education are compulsory and is a statutory subject. It also builds on what students have learnt at Primary School.

Teaching about mental wellbeing is central to these subjects and the school's vision of students leading happy and successful lives.

Central to this policy is student's ability to believe they can achieve goals, stick to tasks, and recover from challenges they may face.

This policy is underpinned by the Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education Regulations 2019 (updated July 2020) which makes RSE and Health Education compulsory in secondary schools.

The Head of Personal Development (LHS) takes overall ownership of the curriculum content, and oversees the delivery of this curriculum. It is acknowledged that this includes other subjects such as Science and PE.

The school ensures that the policy meets the needs of students and parents/carers and our community.

2. Aims and Objectives

To endorse the entitlement of all pupils to sex and relationship education.

To encourage the capacity to make decisions in managing relationships so that choices are informed, responsible, and appropriate and minimise any risks to the individual.

To discuss, openly, moral values and explore those held by different cultures and groups.

To encourage honesty and respect in all relationships and nurture sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others.

To prepare students adequately for adult life: its decisions, responsibilities, experiences, and opportunities and to teach the taking on of responsibility and the consequences of one's actions in relation to sexual activity and parenthood.

To help equip students to develop fully as emotionally mature human beings.

To present the biological facts about sex, reproduction, contraception, and sexually transmitted diseases in an objective and balanced manner.

To help students distinguish between fact and opinion in relation to relationship issues.

To equip students with an understanding of the law surrounding relationships and sex and to have a knowledge of their rights regarding relationships and sex.

To promote understanding of the emotional and physical changes related to puberty and develop and raise self-esteem.

To understand the laws around sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, harassment, and domestic abuse.

To investigate strategies to enable students to become accountable for their own behaviour.

To understand what consent means, how to both give it and recognise it in others.

To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various methods of family planning; the need for preventative healthcare and the availability of support for relationships from organisations such as Brook.

To teach about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood as well as sex.

To ensure that appropriate guidance and support is given to any staff delivering RSE in school.

To focus on both sexes equally.

To deliver RSE in a way that is inclusive of all sexual orientations and avoids heterosexism.

To link sex and relationship education with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol.

To specify the right of parents/carers to withdraw their child from sex education.

To encourage honesty and respect in all relationships and nurture sensitivity and consideration of others' feelings.

To develop an understanding of the legal issues surrounding sex and sexuality and avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex. (This includes discussing child sexual exploitation and consent).

The school also educates students on how to use the internet and social media discriminately. For example, how some websites collect data and target individuals, how social media may not always portray the truth and can be hugely exaggerated. In addition, we will educate our students that criminals can operate online scams, use fake websites or emails to extort money and personal information.

3. What is Relationship & Sex Education and Health Education?

RSE is part of lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships, and sexual mental and physical health. It contributes to the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of students and prepares them for the experiences, rights, and responsibilities of adult life.

4. Organisation and Implementation

Relationships and sex education and health education is not an isolated subject. It permeates the whole school curriculum, the ethos of the school, and the pastoral system. Many subjects, but particularly PSHCE explore some elements of sex and relationship education and health education.

Much of the relationships and sex education takes place within PSHCE lessons, assemblies or in drop-form time.

RSE lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHCE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction are also included in Science lessons. Education on sensitive and specialist topics such as child exploitation, consent, honour-based violence, and female genital mutilation are all covered.

Students explore RSE in a way that is relevant and sensitive to all sexualities and irrespective of gender.

The Science curriculum is delivered by the Science Department. These lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction.

The Religious Studies curriculum is delivered by Religious Studies teachers. These lessons focus on the social aspect of RSE including, for example, the role and function of marriage within different religious groups. Matters such as child-rearing and sexuality are considered as well.

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson.

When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions and our school values. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

During years 7 to 9 students will receive relationship and sex education through the PSHCE curriculum, in particular exploring:

- Relationships: friends and families, marriage, coping with rejection and relationship conflict
- Sexual relationships: law, consent, safe sex
- Female genital mutilation
- Child sexual exploitation
- Sexuality and sexual orientation
- Online safety in relation to relationships
- Unhealthy relationships
- Social media and its impact on relationships
- Anti-bullying including cyber bullying and homophobia
- Online safety, the media, and the law

During years 10 and 11 students build upon the knowledge and concepts learnt in years 7 to 9. However, these are explored in a deeper manner, considering not only the personal impact of the issues concerned but also the impact of wider societal responses to relationships and sex. For example, exploring in greater depth the impact social media has had upon the expectations within relationships. This encompasses a range of aspects relating to RSE. In Years 10 and 11 RSE is delivered through PSHCE lessons which are weekly. Other topics covered during years 10 and 11 include:

- Parenting, contraception methods, pregnancy, fertility and abortion
- Consent – what can impact upon it
- Sexual harassment – what it is and the law
- Abuse in relationships; including exploitation, coercive control, emotional and physical abuse
- Pornography – what it is and the law, including non-consensual pornography

Health education is delivered through PSHCE lessons and other subject areas to all year groups.

The SENDCo and Student Support team will work with the relevant staff and students when necessary to make sure that aspects of RSE and Health Education are accessible for all. If necessary, content will be tailored.

Teaching will reflect the law including the Equality Act as it applies to relationships, so that young people understand what the law does and does not allow.

Other external websites may be recommended to students.

The school will pay due regard to taking positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate; to deal with particular disadvantages affecting one group because of a protected characteristic. The school will work to foster healthy and respectful peer to peer communication and behaviour challenging any perceived limits due to particular characteristics.

The school will continue to be aware of issues which exist such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not

tolerated, and any occurrences are both identified and tackled. Other policies will be referenced should any issues occur

The school will teach LGBTQ+ content within the curriculum.

5. Confidentiality

Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality in some matters and students will be made aware of this. The school is aware that effective relationships and sex education can lead to the disclosure of a safeguarding/child protection issue and this will be acted on in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy. Students will be informed of the sources of confidential help available which currently include the Student Support team, pastoral staff, the school nurse, and local advice centres.

6. Parents' Right of Withdrawal

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from some or all sex education. Should a parent/carer wish to withdraw their child from the sex education part of the RSE curriculum, they should put this request in writing to the Head of Personal Development.

The Head of Personal Development will then discuss with parents/carers, and the student to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

Once these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will grant the parents' request to withdraw the child up to and until 3 terms before they turn 16. After that point, the child's wishes will be followed.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationship or Health Education.

7. Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing

The aim of teaching students about physical health and mental wellbeing is to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. It should enable them to recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others and, when issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

The school acknowledges that physical and mental health are interlinked and that students should be taught the importance of both. The school also acknowledges the importance of a strong behaviour and attitudes to learning culture in order to enable students to succeed. For example, teaching and supporting students to respond calmly and relationally to setbacks and challenges.

Through the teaching of this area, the school seeks to reduce any stigma attached to health issues and to engender a culture that encourages openness where students feel able to talk about their physical and mental health.

Students will be taught the importance of being able to make well informed and positive choices for themselves. They should understand how their bodies are changing, how they are feeling and why, to further develop the language that they use to talk about their bodies, health, and emotions and to understand why terms associated with mental and physical health difficulties should not be used pejoratively. This knowledge should enable students to understand where normal variations in emotions and physical complaints end and health and wellbeing issues begin.

The school will promote the importance of extra-curricular activities, hobbies, and interests in the teaching of the curriculum and stress that being involved in such activities in their own lives and in their community can contribute positively to theirs and others' wellbeing.

The school will not shy away from teaching students that problems and challenges will occur in daily life and equip them with skills on how to overcome these. They will also be taught about factual information

such as prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental and physical health conditions, drugs, alcohol, and information about effective interventions.

Staff will be made aware of adverse childhood experiences and how they might affect students. They will also be made aware of the impact of time spent online, the positive aspects of online support and negotiating social media.

Students will be taught how to judge when they, or someone they know, needs support and where they can seek help if they have concerns. This will include details on which adults in school (e.g., pastoral team), and externally can help.

Staff will be aware of the importance of raising any concerns as per the Safeguarding Policy. They should also be aware that children may raise topics including self-harm and suicide and that they should seek advice on how to tackle this as appropriate, always following safeguarding processes and procedures.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Senior Leadership will liaise with curriculum areas to ensure that the relationships and sex education programme is being covered appropriately and that the biological, social and emotional elements of relationships and sex education and health education are properly co-ordinated.

The programme will be evaluated and monitored by the Head of Personal Development (LHS) through the usual school review processes.

The school may use external organisations to deliver contents. In this case, these organisations will be appropriate, and the visiting speaker policy will be adhered to.