



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL**

# Relationship and Sex Education (RSHE) Policy

Policy Owner: Sandeep Athwal

| Full Name      | Position | Signature                                                                             | Date                                                  | Review Cycle |
|----------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Sandeep Athwal | Director |  | V1 – 01/01/2024<br>V2 – 02/01/2025<br>V3 – 15/06/2026 | Annual       |



Within a nurturing environment, we strive to enable each child to achieve their utmost potential. We uphold British Values and ensure that all children are equipped for their future endeavors.

### **Definition of Relationship and Sex Education**

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) encompasses understanding the emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality, sexual health, healthy lifestyles, diversity, and personal identity. When referring to 'relationships' in this policy, we include both online and offline relationships. It involves sharing information and exploring issues and values. While certain aspects are covered within the science curriculum, others are integrated into Wellbeing (PSHE). This policy should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour, and Anti-Bullying policies. The Department of Health has outlined its aspiration for all children and young people to receive high-quality relationship and sex education in its statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Health Education (2019). This policy also aligns with guidance provided under the Children and Social Work Act 2017. RSE does not endorse the promotion of sexual activity.

### **Statutory Guidance**

Since the Summer Term of 2021, it has been a legal requirement to provide relationship and health education (RHE) to all pupils under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Relationships and sex education is now mandatory in all secondary schools in England, while relationships education is compulsory in all schools. In accordance with statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Health Education, it is recommended that age-appropriate sex education is also taught in all schools.

In line with the Children and Social Work Act 2017, relationships and sex education should consider the age and religious background of the pupils. It must include:

- i. Safety in forming and maintaining relationships,
- ii. The characteristics of healthy relationships, and
- iii. How relationships may impact physical and mental health and well-being.



Key documents informing the school's RSHE 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 (2023)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)

At SOC Independent Schools, we deliver RSHE as outlined in this policy. The Department for Education guidance stipulates that from September 2020; all schools must provide Relationships and Health Education. While the teaching of Sex Education in schools remains non-statutory, certain elements are recommended for inclusion. These elements include the main external body parts, the human life cycle (including puberty), and reproduction in some plants and animals, as outlined in the science national curriculum. Other related topics falling within the statutory requirements for Health Education, such as puberty and menstrual well-being, will be included within PSHE education lessons.

Within the statutory guidance document for RSE and Health Education, the DfE also encourages schools to deliver age-appropriate sex education if they believe their pupils require this information. It is important to support pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively, particularly during the transition phase before moving to secondary school.

### **Our Approach**

At SOC Independent Schools, we aim to:

- Provide a framework for sensitive discussions.
- Cultivate positive values and a moral framework guiding pupils' decisions, judgments, and behavior.
- Foster understanding of consequences and responsible behavior within relationships.
- Develop knowledge to avoid exploitation or pressure into sexual interactions.
- Prepare pupils for puberty and promote understanding of sexual development and health and hygiene importance.
- Encourage feelings of self-respect, confidence, and empathy.
- Foster a positive culture around relationship and sexuality issues, challenge sexism and prejudice, promote LGBT and gender equality, and address gender identity issues.
- Teach pupils appropriate terminology for describing themselves, their bodies, and relationship and sex issues.

## **Aims of this Policy**

- To meet the requirements of the DfES guidance on RSHE.
- To aid and support children in their physical, emotional, and moral development.
- To foster in children the skills and understanding necessary to approach their relationships positively.
- To empower children to transition confidently from childhood through adolescence to adulthood.
- To enable children to lead confident and healthy lives.
- To comprehend the changes that occur to the human body during puberty.
- To understand the process of conception and childbirth.
- To ensure children are aware of personal space and their right to privacy.

## **RSHE in the Curriculum**

At SOC Independent Schools, we believe that RSHE should form an integral part of the lifelong learning journey, commencing in early childhood and extending into adulthood. RSHE lessons are integrated within the broader context of the PSHE curriculum, addressing emotional and physical aspects of development, relationships, puberty, and reproduction. Biological aspects of RSHE are taught as part of the Science curriculum, focusing on physical development and reproduction.

In each Year Group, children engage in discussions concerning key safeguarding issues related to personal space and privacy. The school utilizes NSPCC resources to raise children's awareness of these issues in an age-appropriate manner. Teachers sensitively ensure that children are aware of and understand boundaries concerning the private areas of their bodies.

## **Curriculum Content**

Year 9 (ages 13/14)

- Maintaining personal hygiene
- Understanding the process of aging and changing needs
- Recognising and respecting differences and similarities among people
- Emphasising care within families and friendships
- Recognising that animals, including humans, have offspring that grow into adults

#### Years 10/11 (14-16)

- Acknowledging individual worth
- Challenging stereotypes
- Understanding different risks in various situations and making responsible decisions, including road safety and appropriate physical contact
- Recognising various types of relationships, including marriage, friendships, and family, and developing skills for effective relationships
- Identifying sources of help and support for individuals, families, and groups
- Understanding emotional changes during puberty and dealing positively with associated feelings towards oneself, family, and others
- Learning about bodily changes during puberty
- Recognising pressure from various sources and acquiring skills and language to resist negative influences
- Understanding the human life cycle from conception to old age
- Understanding human reproduction (conception and birth)

The curriculum is a progressive, age-appropriate program delivered by school staff with support and guidance from health professionals. Parents will be informed about lessons on puberty and human reproduction, and teaching materials will be shared with parents.

#### **Children with SEND**

Teaching and resources will be tailored as necessary to address the needs of all children, ensuring full access to RSHE content.

#### **Equal Opportunities**

The provision of RSHE adheres to relevant requirements of The Equality Act 2010. All pupils aged three and above are entitled to RSHE, regardless of ability, gender, race, or religious belief. It is our intention for all pupils to experience an RSHE program suitable for their age and physical development, with differentiated provision as needed. We ensure equality of opportunity between individuals with and without protected characteristics, including sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, and age.

#### **Safeguarding**

Teachers recognise that effective RSHE, which fosters an understanding of acceptable relationships, may lead to safeguarding disclosures. Under common law, young people are entitled to confidentiality, and personal information should not be shared without permission, except for safeguarding purposes as detailed in the Safeguarding Policy.

### **Right to Withdraw**

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw pupils from relationships education. However, parents/carers may withdraw their children from some or all sex education within RSHE. Parents/carers should contact the Education Quality Manager in writing to request withdrawal. This exclusion does not apply to science curriculum topics. Parents/carers who choose to withdraw their child from sex education lessons will be advised to provide the information at home using resources available from the DfE. Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss this decision with staff and are welcome to view RSHE resources used by the school.

### **Questions and Issues**

RSHE lessons may address sensitive questions or issues. Ground rules are established before these discussions, prohibiting inappropriate personal information disclosure. Teachers aim to answer questions honestly within established ground rules. Teachers are not obligated to answer all questions, and any inappropriate knowledge or concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Safeguarding**

There may be instances when a query raised by a pupil should be directed to a parent or guardian. It is considered best practice to speak to the pupil(s) involved before involving a parent or guardian, explaining that it is in their best interests to converse with their parent(s) or a trusted adult. If a child expresses reluctance for their parent or guardian to be contacted, this concern should be taken seriously and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

It is important to note that a disclosure regarding sexual orientation or gender identity does not constitute a safeguarding issue and does not require reporting unless it is believed that sharing a concern would promote the health and happiness of the child in question. Staff would refer to the Safeguarding Policy and document any concerns appropriately.

### **Teaching**

Teachers ensure that RSHE lessons are conducted in an environment where questions and discussions on sexual matters can occur without stigma or embarrassment. We acknowledge that parents play a crucial role in educating their children about

relationships, sex, and growing up. Therefore, we aim to collaborate with pupils and parents. Before conducting any lessons on puberty or reproduction, for instance, parents receive a written outline of the lesson's content.

Homosexuality is discussed at a level suitable for children's age. Children are reminded that 'loving relationships' can exist between a man and a woman or people of the same sex. Teachers exercise discretion in responding to children's queries in these situations. Children are taught to respect the life choices of others (including their sexuality). Homophobic bullying is addressed at a level appropriate for the children's age.

In Year 9, teachers may, where appropriate, divide the group by gender to discuss issues related to puberty and sex; however, this is not always the case.

RSHE encompasses three main elements:

#### **Attitudes and Values**

- Understanding the values of family life and stable relationships.
- Emphasising the importance of respect, love, and care.
- Examining moral dilemmas and fostering critical thinking in decision-making.
- Promoting the significance of values, individual conscience, and moral choices.
- Challenging myths, misconceptions, and false assumptions about 'normal' behavior.

#### **Personal and Social Skills**

- Developing the ability to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Cultivating self-respect and empathy for others.
- Making choices based on an understanding of differences and without prejudice.
- Providing opportunities for young people to understand the consequences of their decisions and actions and manage conflict.
- Empowering pupils with skills to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter).

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

- Providing information about healthier, safer lifestyles.
- Understanding the importance of appropriate, respectful, and consensual relationships.
- Learning about physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human emotions, relationships, reproduction, and sexuality.
- Learning about and understanding the importance of online safety and developing healthy, consensual online relationships.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Governors**

The Governors annually approve the RSHE policy. They delegate the responsibility for implementing this policy to the Headteacher.

### **Staff**

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE sensitively.
- Demonstrating positive attitudes towards RSHE.
- Monitoring progress.
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils.
- Appropriately responding to pupils whose parents wish to withdraw them from non-statutory/non-science RSHE components.

### **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to fully engage in RSHE and, when discussing RSHE-related issues, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

Assessment, Reporting, and Recording

## **Monitoring Arrangements**

Teachers assess progress and understanding in sex and relationships education through pupil discussions and responses in their written work. Teachers may keep brief records of pupils' understanding and progress as part of the overall progress records in PSHE.

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by senior staff through:

- Reviewing work.
- Observing lessons.
- Regular key stage meetings.
- Meeting with individual teachers delivering the program.
- Conducting pupil surveys.

The school aims to collaborate with parents in planning and delivering relationship and sex education. This is accomplished through:

- Consulting parents on policy development.
- Inviting parents to review resources and engage in discussions about the RSHE curriculum.
- Assisting parents in supporting children with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up.
- Arranging alternative provisions for pupils withdrawn from RSHE lessons.
- This policy will undergo an annual review.