



Blenheim

# Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Committee: Community Assessment and Learning (CAL)

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[www.blenheim.surrey.sch.uk](http://www.blenheim.surrey.sch.uk)

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## 1. Policy Overview

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is primarily taught through the Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education (PSHCE) curriculum. At Blenheim High School this is branded as 'Life Skills & Wellbeing' (LSW). As such, this policy should not be read in isolation.

The Governors and staff at Blenheim High School believe that RSE is: 'Learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and health.' Some aspects are taught in Science and others are taught as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE).

A comprehensive programme of RSE provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex and sexual health. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline'

(Brook, SEF, PSHE Association 2014)

Attitudes and values include:

- Learning the value of family life, marriage and stable loving relationships for the nurture of children;
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.

Personal and social skills include:

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.

Knowledge and understanding include:

- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction sexual health emotions and relationships;
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice and support services;
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancies.

The policy reflects the DfE's 2000 SRE Guidance and Guidance from the PSHE Association, the Sex Education Forum and the Local Authority.

### **Morals, Values, Equalities and Safeguarding**

The RSE Programme at Blenheim reflects our ethos and encourages our value of respect for each other. It supports the school's duty to promote the development of our students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness in line with the Equality Act 2010 and Blenheim High School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

All School staff, parents/carers and pupils have been made aware of this policy. The policy is available to all parents and stakeholders through the school website.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The RSE Policy is also supported by the following:

- PSHE Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Uniform Policy
- Ending Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Equality Policy
- Home and School Partnership Agreement
- School Visits Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Sex and Relationships Education Guidance – Department for Education, 2018
- PSHE Association

## **2. Aims and Outcomes**

The overall aim of RSE in the curriculum is to foster a positive notion of lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development including how to look after physical and mental health. It aims to support the development of self-respect and empathy towards others and promotes their development of skills and understanding necessary to manage conflict peacefully and learn how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Additional aims include:

- Promoting the development of informed, reasoned and responsible decisions;
- Delivering a programme designed to be age appropriate and focus on both physical and emotional maturity;
- Helping develop self-esteem and self-confidence in young people as the foundation for responsible and caring relationships;
- Ensuring knowledge of the relevant laws;
- Helping young people be positive and confident about the physical, emotional and moral aspects of achieving sexual maturity;
- Giving young people the knowledge and information to enable them to assess risks and make informed decisions about their behaviour and wellbeing;
- Discussing the nature of marriage and stable relationships and their importance for family life and the upbringing of children;
- Teaching about love, care and mutual respect in healthy relationships;
- Making students aware of the responsibilities of parenthood both as a consequence of chosen behaviour and part of a loving relationship;
- Making Relationships and Sex Education fully inclusive. Blenheim recognises that for many students the School provides the only source of Relationships and Sex Education;
- Making students aware of the link between issues of peer pressure on choices made and the link to other potentially risky behaviours such as drug/alcohol use.
- Understanding the importance of respecting difference in relation to gender and sexuality;

- Promoting the difference between ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ relationships, both online and offline;
- Understanding what is meant by consent (see Appendix 1);
- Understanding the unacceptability of prejudice-based bullying and discrimination – homophobic, bi-phobic, trans-phobic, disablist, racist, sexist, both on- and offline;
- Being aware of how to access the statutory and voluntary agencies which support relationships in crisis;
- Discussing and reflecting upon the arguments around moral issues such as abortion, contraception and the age of consent (Key Stage 4).

### 3. Content and Organisation

Please see the PHSCE curriculum on the relevant page on the school’s website:

<http://www.blenheim.surrey.sch.uk/page/default.asp?pid=123>

Please also see

<http://www.surreyhealthyschools.co.uk/the-four-themes-ofhealthy-schools/pshe-including-relationship-and-sex-education-and-drugeducation/>

Social, ethical and moral issues are delivered through PSHCE in all years, and as a part of Religious Studies.

Other curriculum areas, such as Drama, English and the Humanities, also provide opportunities to discuss aspects of personal, social and ethical development where appropriate to the subject.

Students will be taught to:

- understand the biological aspects of sex education; (this work may be supported by presentations from the Health Team and small group work);
- recognise the importance of personal choice in managing relationships so they do not represent risks to health or personal safety;
- understand that there are sexually transmitted diseases including HIV;
- discuss moral values and explore those held by different cultures and groups;
- recognise positive relationships and manage changing relationships;
- be aware of the range of sexual attitudes and behaviours in contemporary society;
- understand that people have the right not to be sexually active;
- understand that parenthood is a matter of choice;
- know broadly the biological and social factors, which influence sexual behaviour, and their consequences;
- understand what constitutes exploitation including sexual exploitation;
- explain the relationship between their self-esteem and how they see themselves;
- be aware of and tolerant of the diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences in relationships;
- develop empathy with the core values of family life in all its variety of forms;

- know and understand about consent, including sexual consent;
- know and understand the law relation to sexual behaviour of young people, including the age of consent, and 'sexting';
- understand aspects of the law on sexual behaviour;
- consider various methods of family planning in terms of personal preference and social implications;
- be able to consider sensitive issues such as contraception, abortion, sexually transmitted infections and diseases including HIV/AIDS, and sexual orientation;
- have respect for the values and opinions of others;
- be aware of organisations that offer support in relationships;
- be aware of partnerships, marriage, divorce and the impact of the breakdown of relationships;
- be able to discuss issues such as sexual harassment and how they might be affected.

#### **4. Confidentiality& Support**

Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality in some matters and students will be made aware of this.

Blenheim is aware that effective Relationships and Sex Education can lead to the disclosure of a Child Protection issue and this will be acted on in accordance with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

Students will be encouraged to talk to parents and carers and will receive support to do so. However, it is recognised that this is not always possible. In order to be able to take responsibility for their actions students need to have an awareness of the law in relation to sexual activity.

Students will be informed of the sources of confidential help available which currently includes the School Nurse, School Counsellors, visiting CAMHS Practitioners and relevant local advice centres. These sources of support are also published on the School website.

Health professionals will be bound by their professional code of conduct in a one to one situation but will abide by the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

As part of an effective PSHCE programme, ground rules will be explained by the teacher at the start of the academic year, as well as before the start of any sensitive discussion(s).

## 5. Specific Issues

Students will have access to trained staff, including members of the Health Team, who will be able to provide students with additional information and guidance individually regarding contraception. The Health team will be able to offer treatment if necessary and work within the agreed boundaries of confidentiality.

Care will be taken to ensure that the personal beliefs of teachers will not influence the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education. Staff are expected to work within the agreed values framework as outlined in the policy and in line with current legislation.

All staff delivering the Relationships and Sex Education programme need to be aware of the Social Exclusion Report on Teenage Pregnancy and the role of effective Relationships and Sex Education in helping to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy.

<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/15086>

## 6. Resources

A wide range of teaching resources is available for use by staff. This includes written materials, video clips, and lesson outlines. These resources are easily accessible digitally, via the School file storage platform.

All materials used will be within the PSHE Association framework and the law.

Where material deemed to be challenging is to be used, relevant training will be offered, or sessions may be delivered by more experienced staff. Trainers may be invited into the school, as may external speakers.

## 7. Parental Partnership & Right of Withdrawal

The School is very happy to discuss any concerns a parent may have in an open and sensitive manner.

The School recognises the importance of parental guidance in the development of their child to adulthood. Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, and in light of the RSE guidance issued by the Department for Education, 2018, parents have the right to withdraw their child(ren) from the additional elements of the 'Sex Education' curriculum, with the exception of the biological aspects taught in the Science Curriculum.

There is no parental right of withdrawal from aspects of the curriculum deemed to fit under 'Relationships Education'.

A list of those aspects which are included in the additional 'Sex Education' material is available on request.

Those students, whose parents have exercised their right of withdrawal, are legally permitted to self-opt-in to the additional 'Sex Education' material 3 academic terms before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Addressing moral and ethical issues in National Curriculum subjects is not considered part of the Relationships and Sex Education programme, provided the discussion is in the context of the subject material. It therefore does not form part of the parental right to withdraw their child from the lesson.

The School hopes that parents would support the School with the teaching of topics in this area. Those parents, however, who wish to exercise the right of withdrawal should contact the PA to the Headteacher, in writing, to discuss further. The final decision on withdrawal from aspects of the RSE curriculum rests solely with the Headteacher. Simple, alternative provision will be made.

Parents will be made aware that the RSE curriculum supports the School's statutory duty to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of their children;
- advance the Equality Act 2010;
- encourages the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils;
- fosters British Values;
- prepares students for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

The School may be able to offer support for families who are experiencing difficulties in coping with their child's sexual and/or relational behaviour.

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

Relationships and Sex Education will be monitored by the Student Development Committee and reviewed, together with the Headteacher, in consultation with Governors; through line management structure and in conjunction with the Link Governor for Child Protection.

This policy is also closely monitored and evaluated by the Head of PHSE at Blenheim High School and additional topics may be added in line with current and local issues, as well as emerging safeguarding concerns.

## **9. Consultation**

The policy is regularly reviewed, taking any related issues ensuing from Local and National guidance and policy into account.

New parents to the School will be sent a copy of this policy, along with the latest Curriculum Map for PSHCE (attached as Appendix 2) and encouraged to raise concerns they may have regarding the provision.

As part of the initial publication of this policy, all current parents of the school were consulted concerning the provision, and encouraged to provide feedback.

## **Appendix 1: Consent**

### **How does the law define 'consent'?**

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 states that a person has consented 'if she or he agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice'.

There are three important parts to this. Firstly, there is the emphasis on choice – a deliberate, active decision; secondly, there is the question of capacity to consent: is the person old enough, are they capable of understanding what is happening, are they intoxicated by alcohol or affected by drugs, do they have a mental health problem or learning difficulties, and are they conscious? Finally, the law asks whether a person makes their choice freely, that is to say without manipulation, exploitation or duress. This may include the use or threat of force or may be more subtle, to do with whether the person seeking consent is in a position of power or authority, or is significantly older than the other person.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) states that the law does not allow a person's consent to sexual activity to have effect in the following situations:

- where the person giving consent did not understand what was happening and so could not give informed consent, for example in the case of a child or someone suffering from a severe mental disability;
- where the person giving consent was under the relevant age of consent

This reference to severe mental disability obviously has significant implications. These cannot be fully covered in this document; however The Family Planning Association provides comprehensive advice and support in relation to sexual health services for people with learning disabilities and can provide more information if needed, see their website for further details.

In all cases, the law is clear that it is the responsibility of the person seeking consent who has the responsibility to ensure that the other person agrees by choice and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. The CPS is clear that the seeker of consent must seek continuing consent, rather than treating it as a one off.

### **What is the legal age of sexual consent?**

Despite what young people may feel in a given situation, there are legal boundaries to their ability to give consent, so any voluntary agreement to sexual activity by someone under 16 cannot be defined as consent in law, according to the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

It is important for pupils to understand that in cases where a person over the age of 16 has sex with someone under 16, it is the person over 16 who commits the offence, not the younger person, assuming there is no other offence being committed by the younger person (i.e. in the case of a violent sexual attack on a 16-year-old by a 15-year-old, the 16-year-old would clearly be the victim).

### **According to the law, when has an offence been committed?**

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 states that certain things must have happened to prove that an offence has taken place. Person A is seen to have committed an offence against Person B when:

- 1) Person A does the relevant act
- 2) Person A acts intentionally
- 3) Person B does not consent
- 4) Person A does not reasonably believe that Person B consented.

Deciding on 'reasonable' belief means taking into consideration factors such as whether Person A has the capacity to determine consent and what steps they have taken to assure themselves that Person B consents and continues to consent.

In relation to many other offences there is no requirement to prove an absence of consent. Only the act itself and the age of the victim or other criteria need to be proved. They include:

- rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault of a child under 13
- inciting or causing a person to engage in sexual activity with a child under 13
- child sexual offences involving children under 16
- children under 18 having sexual relations with persons in a position of trust
- children under 18 involved with family members over 18
- persons with a mental disorder impeding choice, who are induced threatened or deceived or
- who have sexual relations with care workers

### **Sharing sexually explicit images without consent**

It is both a gross violation and a very serious offence to take or share sexual images of another, without their consent. Depending on the circumstances, sharing such images can be an offence under various different pieces of legislation including the Sexual Offences Act (2003), Malicious Communications Act (1988), Obscene Publications Act (1959) and the Protection of Children Act (1978). If the victim is under 18, it could also lead to the perpetrator being subject to the notification requirements under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, commonly referred to as the Sex Offender Register.

Pupils should also learn that it is illegal to produce, possess or distribute an indecent image of a person under the age of 18 – even if it's a picture of themselves. These laws have been created to protect children and young people. It is therefore unlikely that the police would prosecute a young person for taking or sharing pictures of themselves, unless they were concerned that images were being used to harass or coerce, or shared with intent to harm. For further information see advice from the Youth Justice Legal Centre:

<https://yjlc.uk/recent-developments-and-guidance-on-sexting-and-children/>

## **Appendix 2: Curriculum Map**

PSHCE Curriculum Map – Updated November 2020

Full details of the Curriculum by Year Group can be found on the schools website: [Click here](#)