

311. RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Policy statement:

Definition of RSE – from *Sex Education Forum*

Relationships and sex education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

Sutton High School GDST takes its responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible relationships and sex education (RSE) to all its pupils as part of the school's personal, social, health and economic education curriculum (PSHE) very seriously. At our school we want parents and pupils to feel assured that sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both age and development of pupils.

This teaching is not intended to replace advice or guidance which is ideally received at home, but to supplement and broaden knowledge and understanding.

This policy is drafted by the Head of PSHE in consultation with the Deputy Head: Pastoral and Pastoral lead in Prep school.

Parents are consulted on this policy annually and given the opportunity to discuss this policy content.

Aims of policy:

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching sex, sexuality and sexual health in a way that is fully understood and effectively retained by pupils in our care. This includes emphasis on good health, the value of self - esteem in making choices and judgements, the nature of healthy and consensual relationships, and knowledge about how the body works, all within a context of moral issues and values.

RSE will outline the importance of marriage and family life and the raising of children, as well as highlighting the role of marriage and other stable relationships as building blocks for community and society.

We want our pupils to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle and to care and respect their bodies and we provide them with the right tools that will enable them to seek information or support, should they need it, both during their school years and after.

This policy has been developed through consultation with teachers, pupils, parents and governors and is to be understood and implemented in relation to the following documents:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Cyber Bullying Annex
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy

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Provision:

We subscribe to the Department of Education guidance that was mandatory in England from September 2020: *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance* and updated for September 2026

Taught PSHE has also been part of the Independent Schools Standards since 2014. We aim to provide a relevant, broad and balanced curriculum that not just fulfils, but exceeds externally set standards.

The Sutton High School PSHE curriculum is spiral, so that topics can be re-visited in later years. Although the topics below are listed specifically, we treat relationships and sex education as part of the wider PSHE curriculum. We support equal opportunities in education, seeing it as enabling and encouraging all our students to build self-esteem through discussion and activities in a safe environment. We are equipping them with decision-making skills irrespective of gender roles and stereotyping.

Sutton High School aims for pupils to:

- learn about relationships, including feelings and values
- build personal self-esteem and show respect for others
- learn about taking on responsibility for themselves and others
- understand the importance of stable relationships as key building blocks of the community and society
- receive information about contraception, safe sex and how they can access further information
- make informed and sensible decisions about their own sexual behaviour.

The main topics covered in relationships and sex education are:

- Establishing healthy relationships.
- Puberty and menstruation
- Consent and how to communicate this to others.
- Contraception
- Sexual health
- Understanding bodies
- Sexting and nudes' awareness
- Safer intimacy including recognising relational abuse
- Sexual exploitation
- Porn awareness

As part of the PSHE programme, Relationships and Sex Education is taught by the lead coordinator of PSHE and members of the pastoral team as part of their timetabled lesson in years 7-11, using a range of activities with materials and support provided by health professionals, the PSHE Association, GDST PSHE team and the wider pastoral team at Sutton High.

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- The programme is developed and reviewed in consultation to ensure that it meets the needs of the whole school community.
- We ensure that RSE is age relevant and appropriate across all year groups; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as our pupils do and meets their needs.
- We ensure that staff are given regular and ongoing training on issues related to RSE including confidentiality, setting ground rules and establishing positive behaviour, handling controversial issues and responding to questions.
- We ensure that all staff are up to date with policy changes, and familiar with the school policy and guidance relating to relationships and sex education.
- We ensure their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSE in school.

Terminology:

Pupils will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang and everyday terms used in social situations will be discussed; this will be part of the discussion about what is and what isn't acceptable language to be used.

Ground rules are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter and staff will use strategies to enable pupils to feel comfortable to ask questions. If controversial questions are asked, the teacher will use professional judgement about how to answer them.

We recognise that because of the nature of the subject, sensitive and controversial issues are likely to arise. These may include, for example, abortion, gender identity, sexuality and sexual abuse. These are dealt with within the framework of the aims of the school and of the Relationships and Sex Education policy as a whole. Any cause for concern will be dealt with in accordance with our pastoral systems and safeguarding arrangements.

Guest speakers:

We sometimes use outside speakers to complement our teaching of this content, who are asked to work within the framework of the school's Relationship and Sex Education policy and adhere to the policy for Visiting Speakers. Teachers will be present throughout these sessions.

Withdrawal from RSE:

The school aims to keep parents informed about all aspects of the RSE curriculum and urges parents to review this policy. RSE is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports the whole development of the child. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education. Any parents considering withdrawing their child from sex education should contact the Head / Pastoral Deputy Head to discuss their concerns. According to *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance* paragraph 13-16 of the *2026 Curriculum* pupils can opt into sex education from three terms before their 16th birthday.

Review and evaluation:

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and other changes. For this reason, we regularly review our RSE curriculum. This policy will be reviewed annually.

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