

# Relationship and Sex Education Policy



## Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) Policy

As a college, we place a high value on the relationships that staff have with students and their parents and the relationships that students have with their peers. Our pastoral care is based on caring, respectful and enriching relationships. We value personal development in our students and ensure that our RSE is up-to-date, regularly evaluated, engaging and relevant to our students.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Relationship and Sex education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, sexuality and sexual 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 students essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline.

Quality RSE helps St Clare's to create a safe college community in which our students can learn, grow, and develop positive and healthy relationships. This is essential as it ensures:

- Students have a good quality education, as set out in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
- Students are prepared for the physical and emotional changes they undergo at puberty and they are given the opportunity to explore different types of relationships in a timely manner
- The college is meeting its safeguarding obligations – our students learn about safety and risks in relationships and how to report and get advice and support
- We maintain our statutory obligation under the Children Act (2004) to promote students' wellbeing, and under the Education Act (1996) to prepare our students for the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities of adult life
- We promote the spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development of our students

Our comprehensive relationship and sex education programme of study is designed to have a positive impact on our students' health and wellbeing, including their ability to achieve

### 2. LEGISLATION (statutory regulations and guidance)

We are required to teach relationship and sex education (RSE) as part of the Department for Education statutory guidance, as of September 2020, and this informs our timetabled PSHE Programme of Study. Current regulations and guidance from the Department for Education state that all secondary schools must deliver relationship and sex education.

Under the Education Act 2002 / Academies Act 2010 all schools must provide a balanced and broad-based curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the school and of society, and prepares students at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The RSE policy supports and complements the following policies:

- St Clare's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- College Regulations

Documents that inform the college's RSE 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  
 Children and Social Work Act (2017)

### 3. AIMS OF THE RSE POLICY

#### 1. Attitudes and Values

1. **Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations**
2. **Learning the value of stable and loving relationships for the nurture of students**
3. **Developing critical thinking as part of decision making**

#### 2. Personal and Social Skills

1. **Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages**
2. **Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships**
3. **Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay**
4. **The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy**

#### 3. Knowledge and Understanding

1. **Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages**
2. **Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships**
3. **Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services**
4. **Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay**
5. **The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy**

### 4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The relationships and sex education programme will be led by the Assistant Principal Pastoral and taught by a team of timetabled PSHE teaching staff/personal tutors. It will be supported by the College Nurses, College Counsellor, Head of Learning Difficulties and Disabilities, and external speakers. Teaching staff are all encouraged to complete relationship and sex education training on the topics they are expected to deliver during the academic year to support students in the effective delivery of relationship and sex education.

### 5. DELIVERY

Our guiding principles are that all the compulsory subject content is age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. Lessons are taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of students and parents while always with the aim of providing students with the knowledge they need of the law.

1. Relationship and sex education at St Clare's is delivered as part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme of study. Responsibility lies with the Assistant Principal Pastoral and is regularly monitored and evaluated by the Vice Principal Pastoral.
2. A Sex Education Day takes places annually (September) for first year IB students and it is delivered by external speakers. A follow-up session takes place in their second year of the IB Diploma Programme.
3. A variety of active learning approaches are employed in the delivery of the curriculum. The choice of method is matched to the needs of the group and the suitability for the issue being addressed. In some cases, visitors may be invited into the college and the College Nurse or the College Counsellor may be involved.
4. Lessons are generally taught in mixed gender groups; however, certain parts of the curriculum may be taught in single sex groups (e.g. sexual health for women, sexual health for men, masculinity).

The names of students who are absent from sex education lessons will be reported to the Assistant Principal Pastoral and recorded to ensure that students receive the information missed.

Students are naturally curious about growing up, how their bodies work and change and how humans reproduce. Their questions need to be answered honestly, using language and explanations appropriate for their age and maturity, thus avoiding unnecessary mystery, confusion, embarrassment, and shame. RSE addresses the questions and concerns raised by biological fact. It provides balance to sometimes distorted messages about sex and gender roles in the media, and helps protect students by explaining boundaries and safety, and developing the language and understanding needed to recognise abusive behaviour and seek help. It also helps students to develop respectful and consensual attitudes and behaviours.

As a college, we have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that teaching is accessible to all students, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+). Inclusive RSE fosters good relations between students, tackles all types of prejudice – including homophobia – and promotes understanding and respect, enabling us to meet the requirements, and live the intended spirit, of the Equality Act 2010.

### **RSE Curriculum**

RSE is delivered through PSHE, PT hour discussions and off-timetable curriculum days throughout all three year groups. These sessions form part of a broader holistic PSHE program.

### **Pre IB**

#### **Making positive health choices**

Learning about how to make active choices around health, including sexual health

#### **Contraception**

The purpose, importance and different forms of contraception. How and where to gain advice – how to use a sexual health service)

#### **STI**

About specific STIs, their treatment and how to reduce transmission. How to respond if someone has or may have, an STI. Long term consequences of STIs (such as infertility)

#### **Looking after your sexual health**

Checking for lumps, accessing sexual health services, smear tests etc.

#### **Consent**

This will cover 2 PSHE sessions and the PT hour in between them. There is a video to watch, discussing what consent is, and then looking at how you develop a healthy and consensual relationship.

#### **Diversity**

Building tolerance and acceptance – cultural diversity and also looking at LGBTQI+ rights

#### **Presentations**

Students research and present on a series of topics, some of which may be RSE related.

### **IB1**

#### **Off timetable Sex Education Day**

The students spend all day engaged in workshops and talks on topics including:

- Visiting a sexual health clinic
- Consent

- Sexual violence and harassment
- Pornography and pleasure
- Sexuality
- Relationships
- Masculinity (boys only)
- Female health (girls only)

### **Sexual Health Day follow up**

An opportunity for the students to discuss the topics that they addressed in the Sexual Health day having had some time to process this and think about the key issues.

Prompting the students to consider consent, particularly in the context of our boarding school.

### **Sexual Health**

- What makes a positive, healthy relationship?
- To develop and maintain healthy, pleasurable relationships and explore different levels of emotional intimacy.
- To evaluate different degrees of emotional intimacy in relationships, the role of pleasure, how they understand the difference between 'love' and 'lust'.
- To use constructive dialogue to support relationships and negotiate difficulties, including managing the end of a relationship.
- To recognise and manage different forms of abuse, sources of support and exit strategies from unhealthy relationships.

## **IB2**

### **Sexual Violence and Harassment**

Talk focusing on recognising the signs and understanding the law regarding this.

### **Sexual prejudice**

- Ways to celebrate cultural diversity, promote inclusion and safely challenge prejudice and discrimination
- What is sexual prejudice and how does this link to cultural diversity
- Laws/differences in different countries
- Tolerance

## **6. TEACHING STRATEGIES**

It is essential that we help our students to develop confidence in talking, listening, and thinking about relationships and sex. Partnership between college and parents is the key to success.

The following can help this:

- Establishing ground rules with students
- Using 'distancing' techniques
- Knowing how to deal with unexpected questions or comments from students
- Knowing how to deal with sensitive issues

## **7. SAFE AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICE**

At St Clare's we will ensure a safe learning environment by establishing ground rules at the start of every PSHE lesson and remind students about confidentiality within PSHE lessons. Teachers and students will agree ground rules by discussing as a class and agreeing on a class consensus. Many of the lesson resources we use to deliver RSE at St Clare's also provide guidance to PSHE teaching staff on creating and establishing a safe and inclusive environment.

Distancing techniques are used to ensure personal experiences and issues, of staff and students, are not discussed within the classroom and sensitive issues will be handled by the Assistant Principal Pastoral ensuring students have access to the curriculum overview for the year in advance. Students are informed and reminded in advance of any topics approaching that might be considered sensitive. Students who are upset in a lesson will be given time out and teachers will be asked to follow up with an email to DSL/VPP or Deputy DSL/APP.

Students are encouraged to ask questions; however, they are reminded that questions should not cause offence and the teacher will approach Q&A honestly, indicating they are not experts and may have to return to a question with an answer in due course. Students are given the opportunity to raise questions in PSHE lessons anonymously, including RSE lessons.

All staff teaching RSE at St Clare's are supported by the Assistant Principal Pastoral and CPD is offered to all staff to ensure they are confident in delivering quality and inclusive RSE lessons to all students. If a member of staff expresses a concern about delivering particular elements of the RSE curriculum, plans are put in place to ensure a member of staff who is confident can deliver these lessons. This can typically be covered by another teacher, the college nurses or an external guest.

## **8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The classroom is never a confidential place to talk, and that remains true in RSE PSHE lessons. Our students are reminded that their PSHE lessons are not a place to discuss their personal experiences and issues – or to ask others to do so – through the establishment of ground rules, which are revisited every lesson.

Any external visitor to the classroom is bound by St Clare's policy on confidentiality and Code of Conduct, regardless of whether they have – or their organisation has – a different policy. Students are reminded throughout their PSHE lessons and posters displayed on house noticeboards and in common areas where they can access confidential support after the lesson if they need it.

When necessary, students will be made aware that confidentiality is not guaranteed, although their best interest will be maintained.

Disclosures from students should be referred to the DSL/VPP or DDSL/APP.

## **9. ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS**

Parents will be informed about the relationship and sex education policy through the college website. We are committed to working with parents by ensuring they are equipped with up-to-date information relating to RSE changes and statutory guidelines. We ensure parents are fully aware of what is being taught by publishing our PSHE curriculum map on the college website.

Governors will be informed of the RSE policy and PSHE curriculum through their termly meetings.

Student voice is used to review and tailor our RSE programme of study to ensure we meet the needs of our student body. Student Council Meetings and Personal Tutor sessions provide students an opportunity to discuss RSE and PSHE. House Representatives also have an opportunity to discuss matters they deem to be important and feed back to the Assistant Principal Pastoral, House Parents and Personal Tutors.

## **10. MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATING**

Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RSE through regular meetings with the Assistant Principal Pastoral. They can also request CPD to further support and enhance their delivery of these lessons through organisations such as the PSHE Association.

Students will have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lessons as baseline assessments and plenary opportunities allow students to reflect on their progress in terms of their knowledge and understanding and also to identify any changes in their thoughts, views and opinions. Students will also be asked to identify sources of support and suggest where they can get additional help and support on RSE matters.

Student voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities to ensure lessons are pitched correctly, based on our students' needs. The Assistant Principal Pastoral collates feedback on the quality of lessons, content, students' views in relation to gaps in current provisions and any additional services that we can offer to fully support the delivery of RSE in PSHE lessons.

Whereby a visitor/external agency has contributed to the delivery of RSE provisions, students will be asked for feedback to evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of the workshop/talk. This feedback will be used to determine future supplementary provisions.

## **11. RIGHT TO BE EXCUSED FROM SEX EDUCATION**

St Clare's is required to provide relationships and sex education for all registered students. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the sex education aspects of the curriculum, which are not included by law with the National Curriculum. Parents wishing to exercise this right should apply to the Vice Principal Pastoral in writing. The college will document this request and ensure a record is kept. Parents wishing to see more details of the relationship and sex education materials and curriculum should contact the Assistant Principal Pastoral.

Should a parent wish to withdraw their child from sex education lessons, the college will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before a student turns 16. After that point, if a child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the college will plan to provide them with sex education during one of those terms.

The process is the same for SEND students; however, there may be exceptional circumstances whereby the Vice Principal Pastoral may wish to take the student's specific needs arising from their SEND or on safeguarding/pastoral grounds into account when making this decision.

If a student is excused from a sex education lesson, we will ensure the student receives appropriate and purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw a student from relationships or health education.

**Reviewed by: VPP September 2022**

**Reviewed: Next review: August 2023**