RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Date: November 2024	
Review Date: **This policy will be reviewed according to The Mercian Trust's Policy Schedule. If there are any changes in legislation or legal requirements, an earlier review will be conducted to ensure compliance and relevance**	
Adopted by governing body on:	2nd December 2024
Distribution Essential reading for: Information for:	 Teachers of RSE Parents and pupils

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1. Aims of relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

"The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed" (DfE: Relationships, Sex and Health Education Guidance, 2019)

Queen Mary's High School believes that the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) within school will supplement the already good quality conversations happening in the child's home. We believe it is within the entitlement of all pupils and is an integral part of each pupil's journey into adulthood. In preparing the RSE content for this school we have borne in mind the wide ranging cultural and religious beliefs of our pupils and school community.

We Aim:

- to present factual information in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner set within a clear framework of values in which sensitive discussions can take place.
- to foster self-esteem and an understanding that the individual is in charge of and responsible for his or her own body.
- to nurture the skills which enable informed decision making.
- to encourage students to manage their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner recognising the physical, emotional and moral implications and risks of some behaviours.
- to prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- to help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- to create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- to teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

  The aim of this policy is to communicate clearly to parents, staff, pupils and visitors the way in which RSE will be delivered in this school.

2. Statutory Requirements

As a secondary academy, we must provide RSE to all pupils under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we're required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state, as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance

equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At Queen Mary's High School, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy Development

There have been no substantial changes to this policy since the previous review in November 2021. Where substantial changes are made consultation is undertaken with parents and carers as per the statutory guidance. Students and staff are also consulted. The updated policy is then shared with the LGB for their ratification.

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers, amongst other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children or young carers).

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

5. Consent and delivery of RSE

The content of the RSE programme at Queen Mary's High School has been devised to comply with the latest statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education set out by the government in 2019 and reflects the changes to KCSIE Guidance. RSE is taught within the PSHCEE curriculum. Biological aspects

of RSE are taught within the Biology curriculum. At times, some aspects of the RSE content will be covered in other subjects across the school, for example but not limited to Religious Studies and Computer Science.

Our RSE curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary. We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents/carers, pupils and staff, and taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

We share all curriculum materials with parents and carers upon request.

5.1 Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences
- During lessons, makes pupils feel:
  - Safe and supported
  - Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:
  - A whole-class setting
  - Small groups or targeted sessions
  - 1-to-1 discussions
  - Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of adaptive teaching needed

5.2 Use of Resources

We **will** consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

6. Use of external Organisations and Materials

We will make sure that an agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

The school remains responsible for what is said to pupils. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We **will**:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
  - Are age-appropriate
  - Are in line with pupils' developmental stage
  - Comply with:
- This policy
- The Teachers' Standards
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on:
  - What they're going to say
  - Their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use
- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers
- Share all external materials with parents and carers where permitted

We **won't**, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Local Governing Body
The Local Governing Body will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher
The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, for sharing resources and materials with parents and carers, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE.

7.3 Staff
Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE
  Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.
- In the academic year the following staff teach RSE: Mrs Dunn, Miss Lippiatt, Miss Pagett and Miss Toure.

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

8. Parents' Right to Withdraw

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.
Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

A letter will be sent to parents ahead of when the RSE topics are being delivered with adequate time for parents /carers to submit a request for withdrawal in writing. An exemplar letter can be found in Appendix 2. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Head of PSHCE will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action.

9. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The Subject Leader for PSCHE, in partnership with the Headteacher or her delegate, will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Mrs H Broadfield (Subject Leader PSCHE) and Mrs D Connell (Assistant Headteacher) through learning walks, work sampling, student voice and surveys.

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. This policy will be reviewed by Mrs H Broadfield and Mrs D Connell annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local Governing Body.

Appendix 1 – RSE Content

Below is an example of the RSE content taught across PSHCEE and Biology. At times it may be necessary to slightly amend the order of topics or to add additional information as the need arises. The Biology content is statutory as it forms part of the UK National Curriculum for Science (2013).

	PSHCEE	Biology
Year 7	- Healthy and unhealthy friendships - Consent around unwanted physical contact within a friendship - Bullying and peer on peer abuse. - Body changes in girls and boys at puberty including implications for personal hygiene - Biological sex and gender - Menstruation; when, why, what happens, how to cope practically and emotionally. - Brief mention of menopause. - Different types of menstrual products - Understanding of having control over their own bodies. This includes an awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the law. - Naming internal and external parts of the reproductive system	- Naming the external and internal parts of the male and female reproductive system. - Functions of the reproductive organs. - How sexual intercourse leads to the formation of an embryo, - How a small baby is fed in the first few months. - Details of the menstrual cycle and hormonal control. - IVF treatment - How a baby grows into a child and how a child then becomes sexually mature through puberty. - Physical changes which take place during adolescence in both girls and boys.
Year 8	- LGBTQ+ terminology - Different types of family including reference to LGBTQ+ families. - Changing relationships within the family. - Healthy and unhealthy family relationships, with reference to domestic abuse. - Dealing with conflict in the family - Discuss the need for honesty, good communication and careful listening in successful relationships - Talk about maintaining healthy relationships at home, with others and peer on peer abuse. - Internet safety and digital footprints including posting online and sending indecent images.	

Year 9	- Friendships - respect and dealing with conflict - Healthy and unhealthy relationships including peer on peer abuse. - Romantic and sexual relationships including LGBTQ+ relationships - Consent - Laws surrounding sexual activity - Peer pressure - Teenage sexual activity – a choice not a requirement - Choices in a developing relationship and the consequences of choice - Contraception: detailed information on each form of contraception plus practical demonstrations of using a condom - Sexually transmitted infections: What is a STI?, what are the common types of STI?, signs and symptoms, treatment, prevention - The impact of viewing pornography (e.g. unrealistic views of relationships)	
Year 10 / 11	- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and grooming Healthy and unhealthy romantic relationships - Internet safety - Types of contraception - Pregnancy choices including abortion, adoption and being a teenage parent - Fertility, miscarriage and menopause - Types of marriage including same sex, arranged and forced marriage. - Honour based violence, domestic abuse, sexual assault, sexual harrassment and rape - Period poverty and menstrual products	- Steps of IVF and how hormones can be used to increase the chance of pregnancy. - How the HIV (virus) destroys white blood cells, leading to the onset of AIDS - How pregnancy testing works. - Stages of the menstrual cycle, including the roles of the hormones oestrogen and progesterone, in the control of the menstrual cycle - How hormonal contraception influences the menstrual cycle and prevents pregnancy - Hormonal and barrier methods of contraception

Throughout these courses there are areas of overlap. In general Biology will deal with the biological and physical aspects of RSE whilst PSHCEE will concentrate on the emotions, choices, risks and responsibilities. PSHCEE lessons take place throughout the year for Years 7-10 and on a range of topics as well as RSE. Throughout the year, Year 7 receive 3 lessons per fortnight, Years 8 and 9 both receive one lesson per fortnight. Year 10 receives the equivalent of two lessons per fortnight through their form tutor programme. Some aspects of PSHCEE are delivered through enrichment sessions where students are off timetable and these may be delivered by trusted external agencies.

Appendix 2 – Example of parental letter for Parents' right to withdraw their child from RSE

Dear Parent/Carer

As part of the school's Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHCE) programme your child will soon receive lessons on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). The purpose of RSE is to develop understanding and attitudes which will help pupils to form relationships in a responsible, healthy and safe manner. The programme that your child will receive is:

1. Healthy relationships (e.g. trust, friendship, support, respect…)
2. Unhealthy relationships (e.g. emotional bullying, disrespect, lying, controlling, violence…)
3. Consent (e.g. the importance of giving/gaining consent in all aspects, not just sexual consent…)
4. Sex and the law (e.g. sexual activity under 16 is illegal, taking/sharing nude images of a minor is illegal…)
5. **Resisting pressure and waiting for the right time (e.g. importance of delaying sex until mature, married and/or ready. The emotional impact that having sex too soon can have. Defining what "sex" means…)**
6. **Contraception and safe sex (e.g. pros/cons of various methods of contraception and reference to abstinence…)**
7. The dangers of Pornography (e.g. unrealistic views of relationships…)

All teaching materials are appropriate to the age and emotional maturity of the pupils concerned and the teachers will aim to present the programme in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner.

Parents can withdraw their children from parts of Sex Education that do not form part of the statutory Relationships or Health Education. Our RSE policy defines Sex Education as **Points 5 and 6** in the first list of topics. If you wish to withdraw your child from this education, we require a written letter by **Friday 7th March** stating which numbered aspects from the list that you wish your child to be withdrawn from. You are welcome to contact me directly at school to discuss the programme further or to ask any questions that you might have.

If young people can start their transition into adulthood with good information and the confidence and knowledge to understand what is happening to them, they will hopefully grow into confident and healthy adults able to make positive choices. This can start with learning the basics and the sessions in school may reinforce what you are already doing at home.
We share the DfE's view that children should receive the primary source of their RSE education in the home with a parent or carer. We would therefore encourage these discussions in the home and will be encouraging students to have these conversations with parents.
There are many resources available that are aimed at parents or provide detailed and good quality information that you may wish to use. The resources listed below have been recommended for parents

by a variety of trusted sources, but they are not endorsed by QMHS. We would encourage you to take a careful look at them before sharing any content with your child to check for suitability and appropriateness.

- https://www.outspokeneducation.com/
- https://www.scarleteen.com/
- https://www.bishuk.com/
- https://www.brook.org.uk/

Yours sincerely

Mrs H Broadfield
Subject Lead for Religious Studies and PSHCE