



## **Relationships & Sex Education (2023-25)**

Approved June 2023

Approved by School Committee

Date for revision June 2025

Reviewed by Deputy Head Pastoral & PSHEE Coordinator

### **1. Statutory Regulations and Guidance**

This policy has been developed based on the statutory guidance: [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(2019\)](#) and is also informed by the guidance on 'Writing your RSE Policy' provided by the PSHE association.

Teaching of RSE at Old Palace School will reflect the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding (including Child Protection) Policy
- Substance Use and Misuse Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education Policy
- Visiting Speaker Policy

### **2. Policy Availability to Parents and Carers**

The policy will be available to students and parents through the school website and hard copies will be made available on request.

### **3. Aims and objectives**

RSE, as part of Old Palace's PSHEE curriculum, is vital to the health and wellbeing of the young people in our school. The content is designed to help them deal with the social, moral and health-related issues that arise in their lives, and to help them to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy, independent lives as individuals and members of society. Effective RSE is a key component in our approach to safeguarding our pupils through the curriculum.

We strive to ensure that every student feels known, valued and understood, and is able to excel. We aim to encourage the development in each student of self-discipline, responsibility, physical and emotional wellbeing, moral and spiritual values, and consequently the highest possible standards of behaviour, confidence in themselves and consideration for others. We aim to do this working in close and effective partnership with parents and carers.

### **4. Rationale and Values**

We define 'Relationships and Sex Education' as learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Its aim is to 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.

RSE is concerned with attitudes and values, personal and social skills, respect for self and others, family, stable loving relationships, feelings, gender roles and decision-making. It is about the emotional, social, moral and legal dimensions of human sexuality as well as factual teaching about sex, sexuality and sexual health.

We believe it is important to address this area of the curriculum because students have a universal entitlement to learning that will enable them to live safe, fulfilled and healthy lives. The programme contributes to protecting children and young people by addressing national and local health priorities. The programme also acts to protect children and young people from abuse and exploitation. It provides a comprehensive body of knowledge and understanding about sexual health allowing individuals to manage fertility and avoid infection. As such, aspects of RSE are a statutory entitlement for young people at Key Stage 1, Key stage 2, Key Stages 3 and 4.

Through covering these topics in a sensitive and open way, and in conjunction with the rest of Old Palaces PSHEE curriculum, we aim to instil character traits including belief in achieving goals and persevering with tasks, as well as personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice, underpinned by an understanding of the importance of self-respect and self-worth.

## **5. Delivery of RSE Lessons**

The RSE programme will be delivered as part of the school PSHEE programme and through Science.

### **5.1 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

In Reception, relationships and sex education finds its place in Personal, Social and Emotional development (PSE) and is a prime area of the curriculum. We plan and prepare activities and experiences designed to help children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities. The EYFS programme at Old Palace underpins the curriculum at Key Stage 1.

### **5.2 Preparatory School**

Relationships education is provided within class discussions, assemblies and form time and as part of the wider PSHEE programme. It teaches the characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults and their wider community both in person and online.

Specific issues of sex education are covered in the Years 2 and 5 science curriculum which deals with life cycles, reproduction in animals, human growth and development. Towards the end of Year 5, the subject of puberty is introduced which includes personal hygiene and keeping healthy.

### **5.3 Senior School**

In Years 7-13, Relationships and Sex Education is provided through the wider PSHEE programme, delivered by form tutors, the School Health Officer and through the required Science Curriculum. It is set within the context of self-esteem and responsibility for the consequences of one's actions and linked to other related matters such as avoiding peer pressure and risk-taking activities.

### **5.4 Visiting Experts**

Visiting experts may address some of the topics in RSE, such as online safety, and related health topics such as drugs and alcohol education.

Speakers will go through the normal vetting process (as outlined in the School's Visiting Speaker Policy). In addition, our PSHEE Coordinator will discuss the details of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils. This will include reviewing the materials the visitor plans to use as well as the lesson plan in advance, so that she is assured it meets the full range of pupils' needs (e.g. special educational needs).

This discussion will also be used to agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and to ensure that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with school policy.

## 6. Learning Outcomes

### 6.1 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS programme at Old Palace underpins the curriculum at Key Stage 1 with teaching of relationships following the guidance of the EYFS statutory Framework.

### 6.2 Preparatory

As per DfE guidance (*Relationships, Sex and Health Education in Secondary schools – 2019*), the teaching of RSE should allow students to have a thorough understanding of healthy relationships, in order to ensure the following:

- Pupils learn what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them.
  - Pupils learn how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy.
  - Pupils establish their sense of personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact – these are the forerunners of teaching about consent, which takes place at secondary
  - Pupils understand the features of relationships that are likely to lead to happiness and security.
  - Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online safety and what is appropriate behaviour online.
- 
- Pupils to understand how information and data is shared and used in all contexts, including online; for example, sharing pictures, understanding that many websites are businesses and how sites may use information provided by users in ways they might not expect.
  - Pupils learn about positive emotional and mental wellbeing, including how friendships can support mental wellbeing.

**By the end of primary school:**

Topic	What Pupils Should Know
<b>Families and people who care for me</b>	That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability.
	The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.

	<p>That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.</p>
	<p>That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up.</p>
	<p>That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.</p>
	<p>How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.</p>
<b>Caring friendships</b>	<p>How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.</p>
	<p>The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.</p>
	<p>That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.</p>
	<p>That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right.</p>
	<p>How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.</p>
<b>Respectful relationships</b>	<p>The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.</p>
	<p>Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.</p>
	<p>The conventions of courtesy and manners.</p>
	<p>The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.</p>
	<p>That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority.</p>
	<p>About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help.</p>
	<p>What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive.</p>
	<p>The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.</p>
<b>Online relationships</b>	<p>That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not.</p>
	<p>That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous.</p>
	<p>The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them.</p>
	<p>How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met</p>
	<p>How information and data is shared and used online.</p>

<b>Being safe</b>	What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context).
	About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
	That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.
	How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know.
	How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult.
	How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.
	How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
	Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

### 6.3 Senior School

As per DfE guidance (*Relationships, Sex and Health Education in Secondary schools – 2019*), the teaching of RSE should allow students to have a thorough understanding of healthy relationships, in order to ensure the following:

- 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.
- It should cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure).
- It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. 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.
- Alongside being taught about intimate relationships, pupils should also be taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult.
- This teaching should enable pupils to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful.
- They should be taught that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing.

The statutory content will be covered to ensure that by the end of secondary school, students know the following:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>What Pupils Should know</b>
<b>Families</b>	That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
	How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
	What marriage is, including their legal status – for example, that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
	Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
	The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
	The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
	How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships), how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

<b>Respectful relationships including friendships</b>	The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.
	Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
	How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
	That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs
	About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
	That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
	What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
	The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal
<b>Online and Media</b>	Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
	About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
	Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
	What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
	The impact of viewing harmful content
	That specifically sexually explicit material, for example pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
	That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
	How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
<b>Being Safe</b>	The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
	How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online
<b>Intimate and Sexual Relationships including sexual health</b>	How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
	That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing

	The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause
	That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressuring others
	That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
	The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
	The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
	That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)
	How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
	About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
	How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
	How and where to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

## 7. Legal Context

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people, and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

Therefore, in keeping with the government guidance, key aspects of the law relating to sex which will be taught include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy. Students will also be made aware of relevant level provisions when relevant topics are taught, including:

- Marriage
- Violence against women and girls
- Online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- Pornography
- Abortion
- Sexuality
- Gender identity
- Substance misuse
- Violence and exploitation by gangs
- Extremism and radicalisation
- Criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- Hate crime
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)

## **8. Right to Withdraw from Sex Education**

Parents do not have the right to withdraw students from **Relationship Education or Health Education** and therefore, there will be no right to withdraw from any sessions delivered in reception or Preparatory.

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of **sex education** delivered as part of statutory RSE, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the School will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

At least two weeks prior to the teaching of sex education topics, the Deputy Head Pastoral will write to parents of the students in the relevant year group to inform them about the upcoming lessons and ask them to respond in writing if they wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child. As per DfE advice in *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019)* the Head or the Deputy Head Pastoral will discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. This conversation will cover the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal may have on the child, which could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was said by the teacher. It is noted that the detrimental effects may be mitigated in the parents proposed to deliver sex education to their child at home instead.

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the School will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child. A record of the discussion and outcome will be kept by the School.

## **9. Assessing Student Progress**

Assessing student learning on RSE topics is important because it provides information that indicates their progress, and it informs the future development of the programme.

Student learning will be assessed through a range of methods, such as in class question and answer sessions, contributions to class and group discussions, the outcome of group work, quizzes and multiple-choice questions.

Young people do not pass or fail in this area of learning, grades are not assigned, and formal written reports are not produced. Instead students have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning and personal experiences, and to consider personal goals and strategies by which they might reach them. This process of reflective self-assessment has a positive impact on young people's self-awareness and self-esteem, and the consolidation of knowledge and understanding gained through these lessons.

## **10. Inclusion and Differentiation**

Our RSE and PSHEE programmes recognise that young people will bring prior learning and real-life experiences to their engagement with and understanding of these topics. Our programmes respect and build on these, taking into account the needs of our students and allowing for students' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances. This may include their own sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture, or the sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture of their immediate family, close friends and wider community. We recognise that a student's personal identity and their individual concerns may change over time and, in any of these areas, may be emerging or not yet considered and that all of this will depend on their age and maturity.

In planning lessons, teachers will consider SEND students, ensuring there is capacity for stretch and challenge, as well as support. Teachers will apply the requirements set out in students' ISAPs to the teaching and assessment of work in these lessons.



## **11. Tolerance, Respect and Equality**

The teaching of RSE at Old Palace School will take account of social issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, Queer phobia and gender stereotypes, and will form part of the positive action necessary to continue to build a culture where these are not tolerated by students or staff. Any occurrences will be tackled by staff, and referred to the pastoral team as per the Anti-bullying Policy and the Behaviour Management Policy.

In teaching RSE, and in their wider interactions with students, staff will make clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up, as stated in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

In line with DfE advice [The Equality Act 2010 and Schools \(May 2014\)](#), in the development of this policy and in the planning and delivery of lessons, due regard has been and will continue to be paid to equalities implications. Protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity), have and will continue to be considered during the planning and teaching of RSE topics. This will mean, for instance, that efforts will be made to ensure that all pupils feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Sexual orientation and gender identity will be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner. When teaching about these topics, it must be recognised that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. There will be an equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same sex relationships, integrated appropriately into the RSE programme, rather than addressed separately or in only one lesson.

## **12. Safeguarding**

### **12.1 Safeguarding Topics**

A range of Safeguarding topics arise in the teaching of RSE. Covering these topics will help students understand a variety of risks, so as to better protect themselves and/or seek help. Equally, they may bring up concerns that students need to share (see sections 13.2 below).

#### **12.1.1 Grooming, exploitation and abuse**

Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour will be addressed sensitively and clearly.

#### **12.1.2 Female Genital Mutilation**

Age appropriate content will be included on the topic of female genital mutilation (FGM), including the physical and emotional damage caused, where to find support and that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM or fail to protect a person for whom you are responsible from FGM.

#### **12.1.3 Unhealthy or abusive relationships**

As well as addressing this in the context of the law, pupils may also need support to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk.

Teachers will be mindful that for pupils who are or have experienced unhealthy or unsafe relationships at home or socially, the school may have a particularly important role in being a place of consistency and safety where they can easily speak to trusted adults, report problems and find support.

#### **12.1.4 Online Safety**

Internet safety will also be addressed. Pupils will be taught the rules and principles for keeping safe online. This will include how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues.

Pupils should have a strong understanding of how data is generated, collected, shared and used online, for example, how personal data is captured on social media or understanding the way that businesses may exploit the data available to them.

Some pupils are also exposed to harmful behaviours online, and via other forms of media, which may normalise violent sexual behaviours. The risks of harmful content will be discussed as part of the RSE course and in the wider PSHEE curriculum.

### **13. Monitoring, Reporting and Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governors biennially, or anytime DfE or ISI guidance changes.

During review periods, students and parents will be consulted as outlined below.

The PSHEE Coordinator and the Deputy Head Pastoral will work closely with the pastoral team to ensure the programme is targeted and timely.

The RSE programme is monitored by the PSHEE co-ordinator, Deputy Head Pastoral and Heads of Year at Senior School, and Deputy Head, and Head at Prep. This will include keeping up to date with developments and good practice; developing the provision to meet students' needs; providing support and resources for staff; arranging staff training; liaising with outside agencies and monitoring and evaluation. RSE teaching is monitored through the schools' ongoing programme of classroom observation.

#### **13.1 Student Consultation**

As part of the development and review of this policy, at Senior School student representatives from each year group will be invited to a discussion on the policy and its content.

Between review periods, consultation with students takes place both formally and informally. Formally, students complete surveys after selected session, particularly if the material, topic or speaker is new and this scrutinised by the PSHEE Coordinator in discussion with the Deputy Head Pastoral.

Informally there is an open dialogue between staff and students during and between lessons, as well as the use of plenary activities to evaluate lessons.

#### **13.2 Parent and carers' involvement**

We are committed to working with parents and carers to ensure the best educational experience for their daughters. During the development and review of this policy, parents and carers will be consulted, through the mechanism of sending a draft version to all parents for their comments and questions.

Beyond these consultation periods, parents and carers we communicate with regularly regarding PSHE content. In both Prep and Senior School, we write to parents via letter or Head of Year emails detailing the topics covered and sharing a resourced where relevant that help parents to facilitate a conversation with their child. Parents are also always warmly invited to contact the school directly with any queries or concerns.