

This school policy will be made available to parents on the Stowe School website and the Parent Portal. Hard copies will be available from the Head's office on request. Parents are advised annually of the availability of the policy.

The School fully accepts its obligations to teach effective RSE with regard to The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, where Relationship Education and Sex Education was made compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education from September 2020. It recognizes both the rights of parents/carers to withdraw pupils from sex education (but not relationships or health education) and the process that the Head should follow in considering a request from a parent.

**In March 2023 the former government announced a review of the RSE curriculum and in the early summer of 2024 released a public consultation regarding the review that concluded a few weeks before the general election. With the change of government over 100 National Organisations called for a review of the review. As such, all educational establishments are now waiting for a statement from the new government on any future changes to the government's RSE education policy. This policy will remain as is, until a statement and/or further guidance is released when it will be fully updated to reflect any changes.**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Stowe School policies:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Child on Child Abuse policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Pupil Behaviour Policy
- Sexual Violence & Sexual Harassment Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Pupil Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy
- Digital-Safety Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

## 1. Context

All schools must have an up-to-date RSE policy that is made available for inspection and to parents. The policy must:

- Define Relationship & Sex Education
- Describe how Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) is provided and who is responsible for providing it
- Include information about parents' right to withdrawal; and
- Be reviewed regularly

### **1.1 Definition**

RSE is: 'Life-long learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.' (Relationship & Sex Education Guidance; DfE 0116/2000)

### **1.2 Legal obligations**

All schools in England and Wales have a legal responsibility to provide a 'relationships and sex education' curriculum. They also have a responsibility to keep an up to date written statement of the policy they choose to adopt and this must be available to parents.

### **1.3 Parental concerns and withdrawal of students**

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE, up to and until three terms before the age of 16. They do not have a right to withdraw their children from those aspects of RSE that are taught in National Curriculum Science or where RSE issues arise incidentally in other subject areas, nor do they have the right to withdraw pupils from the relationships education or health education elements of the curriculum. If a parent/guardian has concerns about the RSE provision, we will address their concerns. If any parents/guardians decide to withdraw their child, we shall work with them and their child to explore possible alternative provision. In line with the Government's guidance, before granting any request to withdraw, it will be considered good practice for the Head, Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of PSHE to discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the pupils to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. This process should be documented and accurate records kept.

Any parent wishing to withdraw their child is encouraged to make an appointment with the Head of PSHE to discuss the matter in the first instance. Any complaints about the content or delivery of RSE should be addressed to the Head.

Once discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the pupil, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point if the pupil wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the pupil with sex education during one of those terms.<sup>i</sup>

## **2. The Core elements of RSE**

### ***Knowledge and understanding***

- Learning how to develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships.
- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- Understanding human sexuality, sexual health, emotions, and relationships
- Learning about contraception and a range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity

- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy
- Learning about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within relationships, the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing and the key indicators to identify when a relationship is not right and how such a situation can be managed.

#### ***Attitudes and values***

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations
- Learning the value of family life, long-term partnerships, marriage and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children
- Learning the value of respect, love and care
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision making

#### ***Personal and social skills***

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- Managing conflict
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse

### **3. Aims of RSE curriculum**

The overall aims of the School's RSE curriculum are:

- To provide accurate information about, and understanding of, RSE issues
- To create a positive atmosphere where questions and discussion on RSE matters take place without embarrassment
- To develop respect for each other as individuals, and to encourage all genders to understand one another
- Pupils develop the confidence to communicate and reflect on their feelings about RSE
- Understand the importance of respect, trust, love and intimacy in relationships
- To appreciate the value of family life, long term relationships, marriage and the implications of parenthood
- Understand about different types of families
- Develop positive attitudes, values, integrity, self-respect and self-esteem
- Explore other people's attitudes and values
- Challenge and reduce discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender
- Address sexist, sexual, homophobic and transphobic bullying
- Gain knowledge and understanding about puberty and the changes that will take place
- Gain knowledge and understanding about reproduction and sexuality
- To counteract myths: correct misunderstanding they may have gained from the media and peers

- To be aware of the law on sexual behaviour, consent and abuse
- Seek information and advice when they need help

#### 4. RSE Delivery and the Morals and Values Framework

The RSE curriculum is delivered through a weekly PSHE lesson for the Lower School (Years 9-11) and through a lecture programme complimented by small group discussions for the 6<sup>th</sup> Form. In addition, there are school wide initiatives and cross overs within the curriculum. Some elements are delivered through the iGCSE Science curriculum, other aspects of RSE arise in Philosophy and Religious Studies (PRS) lessons (and Sports Science lessons for the Health Education elements). Pupils also receive additional input through initiatives led by the Medical Centres such as the TLC programme and Heart Start.

Materials are created by the Head of PSHE and distributed to the PSHE teaching team. Teachers are encouraged to use additional materials that are relevant to the topic but should share these materials with the Head of PSHE so that they can ensure they are age and topic appropriate as well as being aware of materials used should any parents/carers raise concerns.

Pupils are taught about the physical, emotional, and social changes at puberty, which include personal hygiene. They continue to develop an understanding of relationships within a family and society and will hone skills needed to form relationships, whilst respecting other people's emotions and feelings. They will consider how to make intelligent choices and learn techniques for resisting pressures. The School believes relationships and sex education should focus on the development of skills and attitudes not just the acquisition of knowledge.

By the end of Fifth form pupils will have had opportunities to gain knowledge and skills necessary to build and maintain healthy relationships including sexual relationships with a strong emphasis on respect and self-esteem. It should be stressed that RSE education will not encourage early sexual experimentation but rather an understanding of human sexuality and the ability to respect themselves and others. They will also have considered their own and others' attitudes towards relationships and sex which will guide them in making emotionally healthy choices in their future relationships.

Our approach to RSE will be conducted within a clear morals and values framework based on the following principles:

- The value of stable, communicative and loving relationships
- Respect, understanding and empathy towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, sexuality, feelings and views
- The development of relationships, including sexual relationships, based on mutual consent and respect
- The right not to be abused by other people or be taken advantage of
- The right of people to follow their own sexuality and identity
- Age and circumstance appropriate RSE
- Access to help from trusted adults and medical/counselling services

#### 4.1 Pupil Relationships

It is not the School's intention to put the emphasis on the disciplinary aspect of this part of school life. It is our intention to encourage pupils to form positive friendships, which are relaxed, natural and mutually respectful. However, it is important that pupils understand that the School has a responsibility to parents and to safeguard the pupils themselves.

If two pupils have a romantic relationship, they should be aware that:

- 1 Displays of intimacy in public are unacceptable, as these are unhelpful to the working atmosphere and community life of a school.
- 2 A relationship between two pupils who are more than one Form year apart may put the younger pupil under pressure and is therefore not considered appropriate.
- 3 Sexual intimacy and activity must be regarded by the School as a serious breach of discipline, and could in certain cases, lead to expulsion.

The above also applies if a pupil has a relationship with someone who is not a member of the School community. A sexual relationship between a teacher and any pupil at the school is a breach of that trust. Such behaviour constitutes serious misconduct on the part of the teacher and will invariably result in disciplinary action, often dismissal. It may also lead to a teacher being barred from further employment in the education service by the Secretary of State.

It is not the School's wish to emphasise disciplinary consequences, however as a co-educational establishment, we must safeguard all pupils in our care. The School wishes to be supportive in guiding pupils in this matter. Pupils who seek advice may contact the School Doctors and Nurses, DSL, Chaplain, House Staff or indeed any member of the teaching staff.

#### 5. Provision

**Sexuality:** Some of our pupils will define themselves as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual. Pupils may also have gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents/guardians, brothers or sisters, other family members and/or friends. Our approach to RSE will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality.

**Gender:** Some pupils may consider themselves as non-binary or transgender. Pupils may also have non-binary or transgender parents/guardians, brothers or sisters, other family members and/or friends. Our approach to RSE will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of gender.

Our pastoral, medical and counselling support will take account of the needs of LGBTQ+ students. We shall also actively tackle homophobic bullying.

**Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND):** We shall take account of the fact that some students may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities that result in particular RSE needs. Teaching and resources will be differentiated as appropriate to address the needs of these children in order for them to have full access and inclusivity in the content of sex and relationship education.

**Contraceptive advice to Lower School pupils:** Pupils will be taught, in the context of sexual intimacy and safer sex, that intercourse should always involve using a condom. Questions about forms of contraception will be answered accurately and honestly. Lessons will be taught in conjunction with TLC sessions provided by the Medical Centre. If pupils need further personal advice about contraceptive use, counselling and medical support will be sought from appropriate agencies and personnel.

**The School Medical Centre** plays a key role in RSE both in terms of advice, provision of pastoral support for students, resources through the Teaching Life Choices programme and drop-in sessions.

**External speakers** may be involved in inputting to RSE lessons. The School will only invite agencies and speakers who are appropriate to pupil needs. The PSHE department will also promote relevant helping agencies that pupils can access through StoweNet.

## 6. RSE Curriculum content

The RSE curriculum is delivered in a developmental manner so that issues are explored in greater depth as pupils mature. The following areas of content are addressed-scheduling may vary:

**Content may be adapted as the School responds to emergent issues.**

### THIRD Form Content

Emotional Intelligence & Empathy

Social Intelligence & Respecting Difference

Body Language & interpreting/responding to others

Age of Consent: The Law & views on sexual intimacy

Puberty: Psychological and Physiological changes

Reproduction: Conception, assisted conception and other options (adoption)

Female Genital Mutilation: The Law

Genital Health, breast & testicular cancer, STIs

Contraception introduction (in conjunction with the medical centre)

Social Media, Sexting & E-safety: reputations & acceptable behaviour

Body Image: what's real & self esteem

Relationships: Positive & Healthy Relationships

Personal Health

Harassment – what constitutes sexual harassment

Diversity

Indoctrination and radicalisation

Staying Safe

Mental Health

Family relationships

#### **FOURTH Form Content**

Contraception review

Sex & Consequences: the law, consent, teen pregnancy

Choices: Abortion & Adoption

Sex & Relationships – the influence of social media

Crime and Punishment (will include common teenage offences)

Review - Health Checks (Breasts and Testicular )and STIs

Drugs/Alcohol/ binge drinking & associated risks of early sexual experiences

Relationships: Intimacy, love, respect & trust

Relationships: Fidelity & Respect

Sexuality: Family & Marriage diversity

Sexuality: challenging stereotypes, masculinities & homophobia

Diversity – tolerance and understanding with particular regard to sexual diversity, sexism and homophobia.

Responsibilities within a relationship

Sex Trafficking/Criminal Exploitation

#### **FIFTH Form Content**

Pregnancy & Birth - detailed

Abortion, Infertility, Adoption and Fostering

Relationships: Stages of a relationship including waiting for sex, commitment, and marriage

Relationships: Integrity & Sexual Ethics

Relationships: Respect and privacy

Relationships: Communication and the end of a relationship

Relationships: Marriage & Divorce

Recognising Positive & Abusive Relationships including domestic violence (physical and emotional)

Sexual Abuse

Exploring Consent: Rape, Sexual Assault & The Law

Pornography: self-esteem, respect and effects

Sexual health review: safe sex & consequences

Being a parent

Sex in the Media – the influence of social media

### **Sixth Form Programme**

The Sixth Form will consist of a series of external speakers as well as forums with staff.

External speakers topics will focus predominantly on life either at University and/or in the world of employment and will include topics such as:

- Giving back – community projects
- Resilience
- Ethics within the workplace.
- Drug Awareness
- Mental Health
- Life Consequences
  - Addiction
  - Gambling
  - Drink Driving
  - Prison
  - Addiction
  - On-adult materials – effects on relationships
- Diversity
- Consent & Sexual Harassment

### **6. 1 The Science Curriculum**

The following topic areas are covered in the Science curriculum, specifically within lower school Biology.

- Sexual reproduction
- Sexually transmitted diseases: HIV/AIDS and Gonorrhoea
- Contraception methods (hormonal & non-hormonal)
- IVF and hormonal control of the Menstrual cycle

### **7. Methodology and Resources**

A wide range of teaching methods are utilized enabling pupils to actively participate in their own



learning and personal development. This includes use of academic research, quizzes, case studies, role-play, film and documentaries, small group discussion and use of appropriate guest speakers.

### **7.1 Responding to Pupil Questions**

The School believes that pupils should have opportunities to have their genuine questions and curiosity answered in an approachable and matter-of-fact manner. However, occasionally a pupil may ask a particularly explicit or embarrassing question in class. If a question is too explicit or inappropriate to answer in class at that moment, it will be acknowledged and responded to later with the pupil who asked it. Teachers are encouraged to establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in class by discussing ground rules with pupils and by taking an approach that ensures pupils are mature and sensible.

## **8. Medical Provision**

### **Under 16s' entitlement to confidential health advice and treatment**

The Medical Centre and School Medical Officer (GP) follow guidelines which allow them to give advice and treatment to young people under 16 years old without the knowledge or consent of the parents/guardians if that is in the young person's best interests. They will, however, encourage the young person to talk to their parents/guardians. Only in cases where there is a safeguarding risk in the boarding environment or suspected abuse and serious risk of harm would the health professional follow the School's and Buckinghamshire County Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and breach the young person's confidentiality. The young person would be kept fully informed at all stages of the procedure.

When the Medical Centre sees pupils on a one-to-one basis they will follow these professional guidelines. In Teaching Life Choices group lessons, however, the nurses must follow the same guidelines as teachers.

RSE lessons will inform pupils of their entitlement to seek confidential help, including contraceptive and sexual health advice and treatment, and they will be taught about how they can access local services for this both inside and outside school.

## **9. Safeguarding & Child Protection**

If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of abuse they must follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures. Pupils are made aware of the disciplinary consequences of engaging in sexual activity whilst at school.

**However, there may be occasions when a teacher learns that a pupil under 16 is having or contemplating having sexual intercourse whilst not at school. In this case the teacher should:**

- Make sure the pupil is aware of the need to seek contraceptive and sexual health advice and knows how to get this.
- Encourage the pupil to talk to a parent/guardian.
- Decide whether there are child protection issues: underage sex or a suspected pregnancy are not, in themselves, child protection issues unless the pupil is under thirteen years of age, and there is suspected coercion or abuse.

**9.1 Teenage Relationship Abuse**

In March 2013, the definition of domestic violence was revised to include young people between 16 and 18

*Risk Factors for young people:*

- have experienced domestic violence
- have experienced physical or sexual abuse
- are within gangs or violent peer groups
- have an older partner
- have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- in a same-sex relationship

**Warning Signs of Relationship Abuse might include:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical signs of injury / illness</li> <li>• failing grades</li> <li>• Withdrawal, passivity, being compliant</li> <li>• Changes in mood and personality</li> <li>• Isolation from family and friends</li> <li>• Frequent texts and calls from boyfriend / girlfriend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate sexual behaviour / language / attitudes</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Pregnancy</li> <li>• Use of drugs / alcohol (where there was no prior use)</li> <li>• Self-harm</li> <li>• Eating disorders or problems sleeping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symptoms of post- traumatic stress</li> <li>• Bullying / being bullied</li> <li>• Angry/ irritable</li> <li>• Changing appearance</li> <li>• Making excuses for their partner</li> <li>• Isolation</li> </ul>
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**A teacher who is concerned that there may be coercion or abuse should discuss the case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The pupil will be kept fully informed at all stages.**

Stowe School policy is that relationships between pupils with a two-year age gap or more are discouraged and if staff are aware of such a relationship it should be reported to the DSL.

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<sup>i</sup> Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex EDUCATION (RSE) AND Health Education, Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leaderships teams, teachers. Published by the Department of Education 2019. Points 45-50 pgs 17-18