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Severn Vale School
An Academy

RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

Date of Policy	September 2026
Date of Next Review	September 2028
Staff Responsible	Assistant Headteacher (Line Manager)
Responsibility	Governors
Reference	Staff shared area/school policies

Rationale

This Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy has been written in accordance with guidance from the DfE. RSHE forms part of a wider programme of Health Education, which is taught within Futures lessons, Science lessons and within aspects of whole school work.

It is a statutory requirement that secondary schools are required to provide RSHE (including information about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases) to all students. Only the biological aspects of sex education are taught as part of Science. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from any teaching of RSHE with the exception of National Curriculum Science. We believe that RSHE is important for all students and we would expect parents to discuss any concerns with the school before seeking to exercise their right to withdraw a child. Teaching resources are available for parents to view on request.

Occasionally during a lesson which is not part of the Futures curriculum, issues relating to sexual conduct may arise from the subject matter being taught. Discussion arising on such an occasion will reflect the values endorsed in the school's policy statement but would not constitute 'Sex Education' as defined in law.

Aims and Objectives

RSHE is part of the process of lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care, whilst exploring what marriage is, the legal status it carriers and why it is an important relationship of choice for many couples. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching.

The long term aims and objectives of the RSHE Policy are to:

- promote physical and emotional wellbeing
- combat ignorance and to increase knowledge and understanding
- promote responsible behaviour and safe choices
- enable young people to identify and manage risk for themselves and others
- promote the ability to make informed decisions about personal values that inform choices
- facilitate communication on sexual matters
- develop educational skills for future parents and carers
- enable students to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing

Relationship with other policies

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

In teaching RSHE, 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 404 to 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (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

This policy also links with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Procedures

Content of the RSHE programme

RSHE will be taught as a part of the Futures programme in Years 7-9, in Year 10 and 11 Futures lessons as well as in Science.

To comply with government requirements, Sex Education in Science will be restricted to the biological aspects of sexual behaviour. In other subject areas, opportunities for considering broader emotional and ethical dimensions to sexual attitudes may well arise and be dealt with. This will include an evaluation of curriculum materials by the relevant Line Manager/DSL.

During specific RSHE lessons in Futures, teachers may endeavour to cover or include one or more of the following objectives:

- Learning about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood as well as sex
- Building self-esteem
- Teaching the taking on of responsibility and the consequences of one's actions in relation to sexual activity and parenthood with a focus on boys as much as girls
- Providing young people with information about different types of contraception, safe sex and how they can access local sources of further advice and treatment
- Giving young people a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure
- Linking sex and relationship education with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol
- Ensuring young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships

The RSHE curriculum in Futures is delivered as follows:

Year 7

- The biological differences between men and women
- Puberty (emotional and physical aspects of growing up)
- Managing peer relationships

Year 8

- Navigating friendships and relationships
- Managing the changing nature of relationships
- Respecting the sexual orientation of others
- Sex and the media

Year 9

- The characteristics of healthy relationships (namely the 4Cs of Caring, Compromising, Communication and Consent)
- The characteristics of unhealthy relationships (including types of abuse and coercive control)
- The emotional and physical consequences of sexual relationships
- Safe sex and contraception

Key Stage 4

- The balance of power in relationships
- Peer pressure and sex
- The pressures of parenthood
- How alcohol and drug use can affect sexual behaviour
- The risks of making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes

- Communication in relationships
- Sexual health (including self-examination and the impact of lifestyles on fertility)

Alongside this a robust programme of health education is carried out covering areas such as mental wellbeing, online wellbeing, physical health and fitness, healthy eating, drugs alcohol, tobacco and vaping, health protection and prevention, understanding of the healthcare system, personal safety, basic first aid and developing bodies.

The programme of RSHE will present factors in an objective and balanced manner, being deliberate in language used, so that students can:

- comprehend the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society
- understand legal rights and responsibilities and the benefits that the law can bring
- make informed, reasoned and responsible decisions about the personal values they will adopt both while they are at school and in adulthood
- emphasise the skills, attitudes and insights that young people need in order to form loving, respectful and caring relationships
- foster self-esteem, self- awareness and the skills of assertiveness that will enable them to resist and avoid unwelcome peer or social pressures, or engaging in harmful behaviour.

To support all students the following is in place:

- bespoke differentiated materials depending on the sets in which they are taught to allow all students, including those with SEND, to access appropriate materials.
- Bespoke sessions can be delivered by the Subject Leader for Futures to vulnerable students if identified through the school's pastoral systems.

Dealing with sensitive issues

RSHE will include questions of values and beliefs. It is therefore bound to be controversial. Young people will be presented with a balanced range of viewpoints on an issue so that they can assess the evidence and explore ideas without distortion.

Teaching about the physical aspects of sexual behaviour should be set within a clear moral framework in which students are encouraged to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity and respect for themselves and others, and helped to recognise the physical, emotional and moral risks of casual and promiscuous behaviour. Students should appreciate the benefits of a stable relationship and the responsibilities of parenthood.

Where a student asks potentially challenging questions advice will be sort from the Subject Leader. This may include asking a student to speak to their parents or a trusted adult or signposting to support services where needed.

Who will teach RSHE**?**

The Futures programme of RSHE will normally be delivered by permanent members of the teaching staff. Students are taught in tutor groups initially then in sets at Key Stage Three and in A and B band groups at Key Stage 4. Student teachers and supply staff will not be involved in delivering the RSHE programme unless accompanied by a permanent member of staff. Where outside speakers are used, they will normally be accompanied by the teacher(s) with whose classes they are going to work. Outside speakers may be Health Professionals or representatives of the Family Planning Association. Occasionally, interactive theatre groups may be used. The decision to use such agencies or groups will consider students' age and levels of maturity. Copies of the RSHE Policy should be made available whenever outside agencies are used. There should be a clear understanding between the school and the agency, about the content to be covered.

Advice and confidentiality

Staff teaching the RSHE programme may not offer students one-to-one advice on contraception or sexual behaviour. Neither may staff promise confidentiality to students since there are some issues e.g., child protection or unplanned pregnancy, which may have to be referred to other people. Any safeguarding issues arising from the teaching of RSHE should be passed directly onto the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

There may be occasions when students may require alternative and more appropriate provision. We proactively liaise with pastoral and safeguarding teams to identify such individuals. In these circumstances help from outside agencies may be sought but always in consultation with parents and the students.

Parental rights

Parents may withdraw their child from any or all parts of the RSHE programme other than those parts which form part of the Science Curriculum. Parents who wish to exercise this right should contact the Headteacher. Students who are withdrawn from the RSHE programme shall be provided with alternative work by their Futures teachers: such work will be relevant to the programme's overall aims. Although it should be noted, as per DfE guidance, that 3 terms before a student turns 16, a student can choose to opt back into sex education even if the parent has requested withdrawal

Teaching resources are available for parents to view on request. Information highlighting this right will be included in the Futures termly parental newsletter.

Staff training

We shall seek to provide training for those teachers who are involved in the RSHE programme in order to provide them with the requisite skills and knowledge. We shall also ensure that colleagues who are engaged in the programme are kept up-to-date with DfE and Gloucestershire County Council regulations and guidelines.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy

The Subject Leader for Futures will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the policy in relation to the preparation and delivery of sex education within the curriculum and for evaluating the impact on students.

The Assistant Headteacher is responsible for the line management of the Futures department and, thus, the RSHE Programme within it. The Assistant Headteacher will also monitor and update the policy as appropriate in liaison with the DSL.

This policy will be updated biennially and monitored by the Governors' Curriculum and Achievement Committee. This will include information on the number of parents who choose to withdraw their children from specific elements of the RSHE curriculum and those that request access to RSHE curriculum materials.