



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

1. How often do you teach Relationships and Sex Education?

We make sure we reinforce and repeat the important learning about relationships, managing feelings, self-confidence and awareness throughout the curriculum at every opportunity during the school day. We have one weekly PSHE session which is specifically for teaching Relationships and Sex Education. We have a whole school focus on Relationship Education throughout the Spring Term.

2. My child touches herself inappropriately, what should I be doing to keep her safe?

We teach students about 'public' and 'private' in relation to body parts. RSE teaches students that sexual behaviours are inappropriate in school. These behaviours may be healthy and safe in the appropriate context, e.g. masturbation in the learner's bedroom in private. For example, if a student starts to self-stimulate or masturbate in a public place such as in the classroom, they will be asked to stop and be distracted or re directed to an alternative appropriate activity. Genital play can become more than just a passing curiosity when it becomes frequent and intense and the young person becomes so preoccupied with self-pleasure that he or she withdraws from interacting with others. In these cases, the learning is personalised and strategies can be shared with home to support parents and carers to help them deal with the issues that present at home to ensure a consistent response. If a child has discovered pleasure in masturbation there is a strong focus on not 'shaming' the student and focussing on appropriate use of the behaviour.

Useful resources: Child Sexual Behaviour (cactn.org)

What Is Masturbation? (Boy Version): Social Story (able2learn.com)

When Can I Touch Myself (Girls Version) : Social Story (able2learn.com)

3. What will sex education look like for my child who has PMLD?

Students with PMLD are exposed to greater incidences of personal touch and although they may not comprehend the difference, it is our responsibility to ensure that we foster an environment of respect, safe routine and transparency when undertaking personal care routines – so that they can develop an understanding of appropriate practices. Relationships and sex education for your student will include reinforcing public/private boundaries and narrated personal care to expose students to accurate names for body parts. Consent may be experienced by a pupil with PMLD when a teacher leaves time following a request, for example saying and demonstrating 'I would like to move you in your wheelchair to your desk' and then waiting a moment when a pupil may indicate readiness before the teacher completes the action - this highlights our respect for the student's dignity. There is always advocacy for the student, who is at the heart of the learning, but parents are consulted to see if they are happy for male/ female adults to be involved in personal care. There is a disproportionate representation of female staff in school and this can impact on our ability to offer choice.

4. How will you teach LGBT awareness/acceptance?

Acceptance of LGBT+ relationships is part of the Equality Act (2010) and is an intrinsic part of our culture. We teach about loving and respectful relationships in a variety of contexts, and the difference between friendships and intimate relationships. For example, we would use the phrase 'most girls / boys' rather than 'all' when describing puberty and body changes, to support LGBT+ inclusivity. We have also introduced a Topic dedicated to Diversity at the request of students.



5. How will you support students who have been exposed to negative relationships in the past (e.g. domestic or sexual abuse)?

We will support all students in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy. We teach about loving and respectful relationships in a variety of contexts, and the difference between friendships and intimate relationships. We also teach students about consent and the law, including sexual assault. All content will be discussed according to 'ground rules' set during the first session, which will centre around respect and a right to privacy. If this may be difficult or challenging for your young person we would encourage you to discuss it with the class teacher. We also seek parental consent before discussing forms of abuse with students, this is monitored by a multi-level support framework.

6. How does RSE education at the school fit with religion?

We teach RSE in accordance with the law with a respect for diversity and tolerance for difference beliefs. This extends to all aspects of the Equality Act 2010, including gender and sexuality. If you have any concerns about this we would encourage you to discuss it with the class teacher or the PSHE lead. There is a right to withdraw until the 3rd term before a 16th birthday. Our curriculum is designed to promote a multi-faith tolerance as part of our British Values and we do not seek to convert or influence religious choices.

7. Have we got a right to remove our children from these lessons?

Relationships education and health education are mandatory parts of the curriculum and you do not have a right to remove your child from these lessons. Reproduction is part of the Science curriculum and you do not have the right to withdraw your child from these lessons. Government RSE guidance highlights that 'some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND', and that 'Relationships Education and RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some pupils; for example, those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities'. We hope that you carefully consider your decision before withdrawing your child from Relationships and Sex Education lessons. We acknowledge that the final decision on the issue is for the parent or carer until your child is 3 terms before their 16th birthday or older and has the mental capacity to make the decision for themselves. You can withdraw your child from these lessons by contacting your Head of School or College.

8. How do we monitor PSHE?

The following are used to monitor PSHE at our school:

- Safeguarding software
- Home School Agreement Targets
- Termly coverage surveys with teachers
- Learning Walks throughout the school
- Evidence for Learning monitoring software
- Discrete discussions with teachers and support staff
- Observations



9. What can parents do at home to support PSHE?

PSHE is taught through a child centred approach and Home School Agreement targets are agreed with parents to target skills that will be useful in multiple settings. There are multiple opportunities for parents to discuss supporting students with PSHE targets throughout the year via parents' evenings. Additionally, teachers can be contacted via email or Home:School Diaries. If there is a specific behaviour or challenge that parents are concerned about, the first point of contact will be the classroom teacher, who can seek further support if the query is beyond their experience.

Sources:

RSE for disabled pupils and pupils with SEN - SEF.pdf (sexeducationforum.org.uk)

Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)