



1707

WARMINSTER SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Date of Latest Review: 1 September 2023

Responsible Person(s): Head of PSHE, Deputy Head and DSL

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Warminster School is an independent fully co-educational boarding school for pupils aged 2 - 18. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures. A proportion of the pupils are foreign nationals.

Introductory statement

This policy covers Warminster School's whole school approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). We believe that RSE is vital for the personal, social and emotional development of our pupils. It equips children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, respectful and enjoyable relationships and empowers them to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

Warminster School believes that all children and young people have a right to holistic, inclusive and needs-led RSE. We believe that through providing high quality RSE, we are upholding the ethos and values of our school and its commitment to equality and celebration of difference. This policy was produced in consultation

with our staff, board of governors and parents. We will ensure the policy is effectively communicated to staff and parents, including through publishing the policy on our school website.

The information below complies with our statutory obligations to deliver RSE under sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It will have due regard for the DfE's statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance and other relevant guidance. We will review the policy on a regular basis to ensure that it is in line with current Government guidance and legislation and to ensure that our RSE programme continues to meet the needs of our pupils. The policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

PSHE Policy

Child on Child Abuse Policy

Sexual Violence and Harassment Policy

Whistleblowing policy

Anti-bullying policy

E-Safety Policy

Confidentiality policy

Equality, inclusion and social justice

We believe that RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. Our RSE is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes and sexism and sexual harassment in schools. We take these issues seriously and ensure that we embed content on gender equality throughout the curriculum.

We are also committed to an RSE programme that makes every pupil feel valued and included and is relevant to them. This means we are committed to an LGBT+ inclusive and SEND inclusive curriculum and are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice 2014 when planning for this subject. We will also ensure that we take into account the religious and cultural background of all pupils when teaching RSE.

An inclusive RSE programme at Warminster School will seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

Definition of relationships and sex education

We define relationships education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human relationships including friendships, intimate, sexual and committed relationships and family life. We define sex education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections and sexual health.

We take the approach that Relationships and Sex Education are best approached in an integrated way and using a gender equity and human rights framework.

We will take care to highlight lessons/sessions that contain what we define as sex education so that we can respect the wishes of parents who have withdrawn their children from this content. Simultaneously, we will seek to nurture children's curiosity about the world around them, supporting their development and their respect for themselves and each other.

To cover the curriculum content outlined in the RSHE Guidance, we will equip our pupils to build positive and respectful relationships online and offline. We seek to ensure that it gives pupils the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help them to:

- realise their health (including sexual health), wellbeing and dignity,
- build self-esteem and self-worth,
- explore and value their personal and sexual identity and the personal/sexual identities of others ,
- understand family structures, committed relationships and the legal status of different types of long-term relationships,
- understand and make sense of the real-life issues they are experiencing in the world around them - manage and explore difficult feelings and emotions,
- consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others,
- develop as informed and responsible citizens,
- understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

We believe that high quality, comprehensive RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation but in fact builds young people's confidence and self-esteem and helps them understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Evidence shows that effective RSE plays a role in behaviour change, including reducing unprotected or unwanted sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

AIMS OF RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION

Warminster School believes that sex and relationship education is an educational entitlement of all pupils, and an integral part of each pupil's emergence into adulthood. We aim:

- to encourage personal self-responsibility in all forms of behaviour,
- to encourage self-respect,
- to encourage respect and consideration for others,
- to provide support and information for young people.

The aim of this policy is to communicate clearly to staff, visitors and pupils the manner in which sex education will be delivered in this school.

CONTENT

Relationships and sex education provides knowledge, and encourages the acquisition of skills and attitudes which will allow pupils to manage their lives in a responsible and healthy way.

I. Knowledge and Information.

Y5/Y6 – The issues covered include growth, changes at puberty, care and preparation for a new baby in the family. Reproduction - introducing intercourse, development of the foetus, birth, and contraception. The girls and boys have separate sessions with staff to discuss individual worries and concerns.

Y7 – Review of puberty, emotional and physical changes, positive friendships. The girls and boys have separate sessions with staff to discuss individual worries and concerns, particularly regarding some of the biological changes that will occur.

Y8 – Friendships, Respect for others, Prejudice, Cyber-Relationships, Rights, Values and Communication in Relationships.

Y9 – Emotional Awareness, Respect and Love, Personal Space and Boundaries, Communication in Relationships, Sexting, Sexual Exploitation, Safer Sex and Contraception, Sexually Transmitted Infections, where to seek help, LGBTQ Inclusivity.

Y10 – Emotional Awareness, Female and Male specific health conditions, Conception Facts and Myths, Sexual Consent, where to seek help.

Y11 – Personal Responsibilities, Informed Choices and Abortion, Healthy Relationships including Domestic Violence, The Reality of Relationships: Pornography.

Y12/Y13 – Sexual Consent, Respect for others including Sexuality, University Safety including Sexual Safety.

Sex Education also features in the **Science Department** curriculum. A brief outline is as follows:

Y6 – Living and Growing - How life begins, the human reproductive system, pregnancy, birth, growing up - adolescence and puberty.

Y10 – The human reproductive system, including the menstrual cycle and fertilisation. How the foetus develops in the uterus, including the role of the placenta. The emotional and physical changes that take place during adolescence. Contraception. In vitro fertilisation.

2. Values and Beliefs

As well as knowledge and information pupils will be encouraged to consider the importance of the following values, which are derived from the school's value system:

- respect and valuing of themselves and others,
- understanding and sensitivity towards the needs and views of others,
- responsibility for their own actions,
- responsibility to the school, their family and the wider community.

3. Skills and Abilities

Pupils will be helped to develop the following skills:

- communication including the making and keeping of relationships,
- assertiveness,
- decision making,
- recognising and using opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle.

ORGANISATION

RSE is co-ordinated by the Head of PSHE, Deputy Head and DSL, who are responsible for the overall planning, implementation and review of the programme. It is recognised that the Science Department, the School Nurse and Heads of House and Tutors have key roles, and there must be close consultation with all.

Delivery is through the PSHE programme. The PSHE programme is co-ordinated by the Head of PSHE and delivered as a series of whole school events and biweekly sessions by Tutors and others members of School Staff, and a variety of external speakers. There are six PSHE Days in each year, on average one per half term, and all pupils and staff are off timetable for the day and engaged in PSHE focused activities.

Teaching Approaches

Varying approaches are used to give pupils relevant information; to enable moral issues to be explored through discussion; and to acquire appropriate skills.

Pupil Groupings

Pupils are taught in mixed ability and gender groups. When there is a specific need, such as discussing the specific characteristics of puberty, arrangements will be made to teach pupils in appropriate groupings.

Resources

- Materials - wide ranging teaching resources are available to teachers.

- Staff - with regard to RSE, it is important that staff feel comfortable with the subject matter. Teachers of PSHE may decline to teach elements of RSE to their teaching group, in which case alternative arrangements will be made. Appropriate training will be offered to staff. All staff are asked to teach within the School's values framework.
- Time available - RSE forms part of the curriculum in every year group.

Evaluation

Evaluation of our programme is crucial to ensure that we can continue to improve on provision and teaching effectiveness. The evaluation process involves structured and informal pupil and staff feedback including:

- Teacher and parent evaluation of sessions and the overall RSE programme
- Evidence from lesson observations
- Pupil and parent Feedback questionnaires and evaluation by pupils
- Scrutiny of pupil knowledge checks

Pupil Assessment

Warminster School uses a range of assessment methods to get regular feedback on pupil progress in RSE. We also use pupil assessment to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention.

Lessons are planned to ensure that pupils of differing abilities, including the most able, are suitably challenged. Assessment methods used include:

- Knowledge Check Assessment and Quizzes
- Pupil Feedback and Self-Reflection Forms
- Project Work

Pupil Voice

Pupil voice is central to the culture and ethos of Warminster School. We use pupil voice to evaluate how relevant and engaging RSE is to children's lives.

Throughout our RSE scheme of work we embed pupil voice practices to enable students to express their views on the range of topics and issues that RSE covers and to ensure that they listen to other opinions and evidence, reflect on their own perspectives and take a broader view.

We want to ensure that all pupil voices are heard but that those views that are hurtful, offensive or exclusionary do not dominate and are addressed. We want to ensure a culture where human rights, social justice, inclusion and diversity are promoted.

Answering pupil questions

RSE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from pupils. We view questions as a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others.

As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group. There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class. Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way and

take into account whether a parent/carer has requested their child to be removed from sex education lessons.

School Staff will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their students that could make either party vulnerable. We believe that an open approach to answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and older students.

We believe exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSE. Importantly, we believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they are able to discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

Specific Issues

The following issues may occur as part of education. Staff and pupils need to understand the School's procedures.

- Confidentiality and Advice – Pupils will be aware that some information cannot be held confidential, and made to understand that, if certain disclosures are made, certain actions will ensue. At the same time pupils will be offered sensitive and appropriate support. The following procedure will be adhered to by all adults:
 - Disclosure or suspicion of abuse - the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be invoked.
 - Disclosure of pregnancy or advice on contraception - it is hoped that the following procedure will ensure that pupils who are in difficulty know that they can talk to a member of staff in the School and that they will be supported. Professional information and guidance will always be sought from a health professional. The School will always encourage pupils to talk with their parents first. Pupils should be asked whether they can tell their parents and whether they want help in so doing. If this takes place, subsequent responsibility then lies with the parents. It will then need to be checked. If pupils refuse to tell their parents, the member of staff should refer them to a health professional. If there is a disclosure of pregnancy to a member of staff, the Deputy Head should be informed. It is his responsibility to inform the Head.
- Family Life – The value of family life is an important aspect, which will be approached largely through a consideration of the qualities and relationships between the group of people, with an emphasis on stability, respect, caring and support.
- As part of the RSE programme issues of contraception, HIV, AIDS, sexuality and abortion are addressed. Facts are presented in an objective and balanced way, with pupils being encouraged to consider their attitudes and values within the framework set out above. They will be made aware of the difference between fact, opinion and religious belief.

Working with parents/carers and parental right to request their child be excused from sex education

We believe that the successful teaching of RSE involves parents/carers and School working together. We also believe that parents/carers can play an important role in the RSE of their children through exploring discussions at home that have taken place in School.

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Our RSE policy has been developed through consulting parents and carers.

At Warminster School, we will notify parents/carers each September when the policy has been reviewed, updated and uploaded to the school website and we will provide a window of opportunity for all parents and carers to respond with their views. The final version of the policy will then be available on the school website from October onwards for reference. We will provide additional opportunities for parents/carers to be informed and ask questions about the delivery and content of the RSE curriculum by providing:

- Notification of when RSE topics are to be taught and a summary of the content to be covered
- Opportunities to view and discuss examples of RSE teaching and learning resources
- Information about parents' right to withdraw their child from non-statutory elements of RSE

Parents/carers of new pupils will be provided with all of the above information at the point of admission, regardless of the time of year they join the school.

We work with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of what we teach through the following methods:

- Giving full details of the topics covered and resources used in the RSE component of our PSHE programme
- Offering parent workshops
- Inductions to the School
- Sharing copies of the policy in face-to-face meetings and/ or through emails

If parents/carers have any concerns or special circumstances the school should be aware of, or would like any further information about the curriculum, we will have a designated time for them to come into the school. We regularly share examples of the key resources we use with parents/carers to reassure them of the content and to enable them to continue the conversations started in class at home.

We understand that parents and carers may have concerns about some aspects of RSE and all views will be listened to and carefully considered. However, the school will ultimately make the final decision about what is to be taught and when, and this will be informed by our statutory obligations as well as the needs of our pupils.

As outlined within the Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSE. Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education. Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education. All children will have the right to opt into sex education three terms before they turn 16 and the school will make arrangements for this to happen. In practice, this means that when a child turns 15 they have the right to be taught sex education if they want to.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of Relationships Education, it is our aim to encourage parents to see the value of RSE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice.

Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we ask that they first speak to the Head to discuss their concerns. The Head will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum.

If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the Head in writing and the School will keep a record of this.

Except in exceptional circumstances, we will respect the parents' request to withdraw their child 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.

We will remind parents annually that the request to withdraw is still in place and invite them to confirm whether they still want it.

Working with visitors and external agencies

We may invite external experts and visitors to deliver parts of our RSE scheme of work. External visitors will be selected in order to enrich and supplement our RSE by bringing particular skills, methods and expertise to the classroom and the whole School. A teacher will always be present throughout these lessons so as to build on the pupil's learning after the session/s as well as answer any questions the pupils may subsequently have. Any external visitor will be expected to comply with this policy and other related policies, including the School's confidentiality and child protection policy. We will also ensure that:

- There is appropriate planning, preparatory and follow up work for the session.
- The visitor understands the cohort of children involved, including the different ability levels and diversities in identities across protected characteristics. They will also be made aware of any specific issues relating to child protection.

Safeguarding and child protection

Warminster School acknowledges that RSE is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the School and for meeting our statutory obligations as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education. RSE helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing abuse, or have experienced, abuse.

We recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSE covers, some pupils could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory training around child protection and will follow the School's safeguarding policy and procedures.

We also recognise that some children may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes to their personal life. For those children, additional support will be given to prevent them being affected by the scenarios or topics in their planned lessons.