

# Hartismere School



## Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy

### Policy No.3

**1. Introduction:** Hartismere High School aims to provide the learning experiences appropriate to ensuring that students are healthy, safe and enjoy a sense of well-being. It acknowledges that education on matters affecting sexual and relationship issues is part of achieving this aim. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education are taught as part of the School's RSE/HE programme. Copies of this policy have been made available to all concerned parties including the LA, teachers and parents.

1.1. In all areas of human experience a good base of knowledge and understanding is deemed necessary for informed opinions and decisions to be made - human sexuality is no exception. It is vital that pupils receive effective sex education before they become sexually active or put themselves at risk in other ways. It is also vital to correct prejudice and misinformation which may affect relationships with others both now and in the future.

1.2. The importance of sexual relationships in all our lives is such that RSE has a role to play in preparing children for their lives now and in the future as adults and parents. In sex education, learning information about the physical aspects of sex, must be complemented by learning about family life and the exercise of personal responsibility towards other individuals and the broader community. Effective RSE does not encourage sexual experimentation.

1.3. In drawing up the School's policy due regard has been given to:

- consultation with parents, governors, teachers, the National Advisor in Personal Social and Health Education, the school nurse and others in the local community;
- the issues of content, organisation, methodology, resources, outside speakers, the explicitness and presentation of their material (including the presence or intervention of teachers as appropriate);
- encouraging pupils to have regard to moral considerations and to appreciate the value of a stable family life, self-restraint, dignity, respect and to behave responsibly in sexual matters.

**2. Specific Aims:** The following aims reflect those of the School and the general aims of the Cross-Curricular Themes, and show how RSE/HE is delivered within the context of a moral framework. The full programme of study is available to view on the school website. We will provide a broad and balanced programme of RSE/HE which:

- 2.1. offers full entitlement and access for all including pupils with Special Needs;
- 2.2. operates in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect so as to encourage pupils to put forward and explore their ideas;
- 2.3. explores moral and sexual issues and values to endow the pupils with positive proactive attitudes, patterns of behaviour, lifestyles, values, communication and decision making skills with respect to sexuality and personal relationships.  
For example:

- those appropriate to informed decision-making and evaluation of the socio-economic/cultural influences on sexual behaviour;
    - non-exploitation, commitment and trust in sexual relationships;
    - an understanding that both sexes have responsibilities in sexual matters;
    - the skills to identify, avoid, resist and report unwanted sexual experience.
  - 2.4. fosters self-esteem, self-awareness and a sense of moral responsibility;
  - 2.5. gives pupils knowledge and understanding of the following in order for them to make informed choices about:
    - the physical, emotional and social aspects of an individual's development as a male or female, personal relationships; responsible attitudes and appropriate behaviour;
    - family life - the value and importance of the family as a social institution; its contribution to the development of attachment, love and concern in caring for others.
  - 2.6. shows that World Health has a global dimension and helps pupils to understand the responsibility of groups, organisations and society for the health of the individual and the community;
  - 2.7. approaches RSE/HE using an active and creative process of enquiry and investigation through projects, discussions, role-play, case studies. Observation and analysis are central to this process;
  - 2.8. clarifies the link between sexual practices and the transmission of STIs and STDs.
- 3. Offering Advice:** The Governors and staff believe that the School's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception - however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. If the offering of outside expert advice is not taken up, then a teacher may only give such advice after receiving written permission from the Headteachers and the parents/guardians - clearly this would not be done if the pupil did not wish it. Advice does not legally require consent but the following procedure protects the teacher and the pupil, and acknowledges that teachers may not be qualified to give the required advice.
- 3.1. **Staff cannot:**
    - give personal advice or counselling on sexual matters (including contraception) to a pupil (either individually or within a group).
  - 3.2. **Staff can:**
    - provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. school nurse, their GP or Brook Advisory Centre. This is not the provision of sex education, but merely the imparting of factual

information as to where advice, counselling (and treatment) can lawfully be obtained. Appointments to see the nurse can be arranged by the pupil through the form tutor or Head of Year.

**4. Explicit Questions:** We will provide learning experiences appropriate to ensuring that students are healthy, safe and enjoy a sense of well-being. We will ensure that discussions take place in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect so as to encourage pupils to put forward and explore their ideas. In doing so it is likely that pupils may need to ask explicit questions. However with our duty of care under Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) in mind any element of the RSE/HE programme that is likely to lead to pupils asking explicit questions relating to sexual behaviour must be preceded by the teacher explaining the protocols surrounding:

4.1. Confidentiality (see Para 5)

4.2. The need to frame questions in ways that are not personal, do not in their nature identify individuals and which deal with matters of fact

4.3. The need to frame questions in ways that are sensitive and respectful

It is not appropriate to deal with a pupil's explicit questions e.g. questions on oral and anal sex in front of the whole class when it is clearly about the pupil who is asking it rather than a more general question. In practice this means that teachers have to say 'I'm sorry but the School Policy and legislation does not allow me to answer that question'. The teacher may deem it appropriate to discuss the child's question with their parents, the Headteachers, DSL and/or the Wellbeing Team - a decision may then be taken on how best to deal with it (See section 5). Answers to the 'questions in a box' approach must only be given after very careful screening of the questions.

**5. Confidentiality:** Having considered all available advice and guidance, the Governors and Headteachers state that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at any sort of risk or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the DSL via the schools' usual procedure (MyConcern).

**6. The division between biological and non biological aspects of sex education.**

6.1. The division between biological and non biological aspects of sexual behaviour has been decided upon, and is indicated by the contribution to the Sex Education Programme made by the Science Department. The themes of parenting, relationships and the ethical and moral considerations of sex education are covered mostly within the timetabled RSE/HE lessons.

6.2. The Science Department deals only with the biological aspects of human sexual behaviour in its timetabled lessons. The separate but strategically coordinated RSE/HE course deals with:

- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV);
- any other sexually transmitted infections and diseases (STIs & STDs);
- aspects of human sexual behaviour, other than biological aspects.

N.B. It is the work covered in timetabled RSHE lessons and non science lessons upon which parents can exercise their right to withdraw their child - see below.

## **7. Withdrawing pupils from the Sex Education Programme**

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. Parents do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so - sometimes we can then resolve misunderstandings. Parents are reminded about the benefits of receiving this important education, as well as any detrimental effects of being excluded. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.
- 7.3. A full audit of RSE/HE programme has shown that issues such as over population, birth control and other sexual matters are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography and RE. However, as any discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it does not constitute part of the Sex Education Programme.

## **8. Using Visiting Speakers and others:**

- 8.1. We believe that most of the RSE/HE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However visitors such as nurses, family planning or sexual health workers, can greatly enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of sex education. N.B. health professionals are able to offer young people confidentiality and can provide a link between the School and support services.
- 8.2. After gaining approval from the Headteachers for the visit the organiser will make the visitor aware of the ethos of the School and the manner of delivery of the RSE/HE programme.
- 8.3. Care will be taken to provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of the Sex Education Policy.
- 8.4. Visitors will be given advance notice of the composition of the audience/target group and an idea of how their contribution fits into the scheme of work.
- 8.5. In order to inform the visitor of the precise requirements of a group it is advisable for the group to draw up questions in advance and these should be forwarded to the visitor. This will involve the pupils in the visit and will make the experience more relevant for them - it also facilitates planning.
- 8.6. As part of joint planning between the visitor and the visit organiser the following issues must be considered:
  - the degree of explicitness of the content and presentation;
  - the teaching and/or support staff who will accompany the visitor
  - the extent of participation of staff in the visitors activities
  - how will the visitor be prepared for the visit
  - how will the visit be built upon and followed up
- 8.7. Reception will be informed of the date and name of the visitor.
- 8.8. Where applicable, refreshments should be arranged with the catering staff.
- 8.9. The visitor should be welcomed at the main door (usually by a pupil from the form on duty) and escorted to the office.

- 8.10. At the reception the visitor will 'sign in', wear a visitor's lanyard and be escorted to the appropriate venue.
- 8.11. At the end of the session a vote of thanks should be given by a pupil and the visitor escorted to reception before the pupils are dismissed.
- 8.12. After the visit the visitor will sign out, return the visitor's lanyard and exit.
- 8.13. A written acknowledgement of their contribution should be sent to the visitor.

## **9. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT +) inclusion**

- 9.1. Topics relating to the LGBT+ community are a part of our programme of RSE/HE. We will ensure that teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. We will comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.
- 9.2. Any form of bullying is not tolerated and instances of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying will be dealt with as a Prejudice Related Incident.

## **10. Equal Opportunities Issues and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

- 10.1. The nature of work undertaken must be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. As pupils mature and develop at different rates, the RSE/HE is a 'spiral system' in as much as key concepts are revisited several times throughout the programme. This allows for reinforcement as well as the differentiated stages of pupil maturity.
- 10.2. Children with SEND may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others. Some parents find it difficult to come to terms with the idea that their child is likely to eventually become sexually active.

## **11. INSET**

- 11.1. All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly/honestly and a preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary.
- 11.2. Inset on the content of the RSE/HE programme will routinely be provided prior to delivery.

## **12. Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing RSE/HE**

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. Specifically important to the RSE/HE programme are:

- pupil feedback;
- staff review and feedback, particularly at pastoral meetings;
- regular liaison with the safeguarding team;
- parental feedback.