



ST JAMES
Senior Girls' School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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1. Introduction and guiding principles

This policy has been written by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in consultation with the Headmistress, Head of PSHEE and School Nurse. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss this policy at parental seminars, and staff are invited to discuss it during training sessions. The policy is reviewed and approved by the governing body annually.

The St James Schools' RSE curriculum is based upon the following principles:

1. Creation is an expression of unity; Unity manifests itself as diversity.
2. All human beings are of the same essence; and their similarities and diversities are to be respected and valued.
3. Love is intrinsic to our human nature, and is the basis of all positive relationships.
4. Self-awareness, self-worth and self-respect are fundamental to good relationships.
5. Relationships flourish when there is mutual trust, honesty, respect, true communication and commitment.
6. Committed relationships, including marriage and civil partnerships, are essential to the wellbeing of families and society as a whole.

2. Policy aims

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) comprises a vital and important part of our pupils' ongoing physical, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching what it is to be in a caring, stable and mutually supportive relationship with another person, and how to control and understand feelings that come with being in a relationship. It is also about teaching sex, sexuality and sexual health, fostering the values of love, honesty, openness and equality, in a way that is fully understood and effectively retained by pupils in our care. Our RSE will outline the importance of positive and healthy relationships for family life and the raising of children, as well as highlighting the role of marriage and other stable relationships as building blocks for community and society.

St James is not a denominational school but provides spiritual enrichment by drawing on the wisdom from our world traditions. The approach is therefore philosophical and we begin from the premise that every human being has, at its very essence, the same divine principle. Our teachers give their time generously to support the well-being and development of their pupils. Relationships throughout the school are extremely positive and are characterised by a spirit of love, trust and mutual respect.

Some aspects of RSE are included in our philosophy course which aims to teach our pupils to learn how to live in harmony with others, to grow in their ability and capacity to serve society at large and to strengthen their ability to make wise choices in order to live well and be happy. Our pupils are encouraged to enquire into the great questions of human existence and apply their intelligence to the deeper meanings of the teachings of some of our wisdom traditions in the light of their own experience. Emphasis is placed on applying this wisdom to the challenges of daily life and pupils are encouraged to share their findings with one another.

We are a 'Girls on Board' School: this approach aims to help our pupils, their parents and their teachers to understand the complexities and dynamics of girl friendships, to develop our pupils' empathy and to empower them to resolve their own friendship problems without always resorting to adult intervention.

We would like to emphasise that by providing comprehensive RSE we are not encouraging pupils to become sexually active at a young age. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the right provision is in place so that pupils may have all the background knowledge to keep themselves safe and to make informed decisions and responsible choices as they grow up.

Through the provision outlined in this policy we also aim to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, trying to develop communication and assertiveness skills that can help them stay true to their values if challenged by others, their peers or what they see in the media. We hope to teach pupils to be accepting of the different beliefs, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities, backgrounds and values of those around them. We want our pupils to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle, teach them to care for and respect their bodies and others' and provide them with all the right tools that will enable them to seek information or support, should they need it, both during their school years and after.

We take our responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible RSE to all our pupils as part of the school's personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) curriculum very seriously. We want parents and pupils to feel assured that sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both the age and development of pupils, and safe to voice opinions and concerns relating to the sex education provision.

3. Roles and responsibilities

School staff

The school provides regular professional development training to those who deliver sex education; this includes sessions on confidentiality, setting ground rules, handling controversial issues, responding to awkward questions and an introduction to the rationale of why teaching RSE is so important. There are certain members of the school leadership team, who will hold more responsibility for ensuring that the school's sex education provision is relevant to our pupils and effective, but this is a shared responsibility and the school expects the other members of staff involved to voice opinions and share their expertise in this area.

Governors and senior leaders will:

- Develop this school policy and review it on a yearly basis. This policy is developed in consultation with school parents, pupils and staff to ensure that it meets the needs of the whole school community.
- Ensure that staff are given regular and ongoing training on issues relating to RSE and how to deliver lessons on such issues.
- Ensure that staff are up to date with policy changes, and familiar with school policy and guidance relating to sex education. The current guidance can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf
- Ensure that sex education is age-relevant and appropriate across all year groups; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as our pupils do and meets their needs.
- Ensure that the knowledge and information regarding RSE to which all pupils are entitled is provided in a comprehensive way.
- Support parental involvement in the development of the RSE curriculum.

- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing a balanced RSE in school.
- Communicate freely with staff, parents and the governing body to ensure that everyone is in understanding of the school policy and curriculum for sex education, and that any concerns or opinions regarding the provision at the school are listened to, taken into account and acted on as appropriate. We want the provision of sex education at home to be complementary to the provision the school provides, and this should be clearly communicated to parents and additional support given where necessary or requested.

Staff who are delivering RSE education will:

- Ensure that they are up to date with school policy and curriculum requirements regarding sex education. Any areas that they feel are not covered or inadequately provided for should be reported back to the Deputy Head (Pastoral).
- Attend and engage in professional development training around sex education provision.
- Encourage pupils to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal and emotional development in confidence, listen to their needs and support them seriously. If a pupil comes to a member of staff with an issue that that member of staff feels they are not able to deal with alone, they should take this concern to the Deputy Head (Pastoral).
- Provide regular feedback to their managers on their experience of teaching RSE and pupil response.
- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSE in school.
- Tailor their lessons to suit all pupils in their class, across the whole range of abilities, including those pupils with special educational needs. If teachers need support in this area they should speak to the SENDCo or their manager.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend the sex education classes that are in their school timetable and take them seriously. Although they are not assessed through examination, these classes are still a very important part of the curriculum and a tool to aid personal development and the school expects pupils to recognise this.

Pupils should support one another with issues that arise through RSE. Listening in class, being considerate of other people's feelings and beliefs, and complying with confidentiality rules that are set in class are key to effective provision. Pupils who regularly fail to follow these standards of behaviour will be dealt with under the Behaviour, Rewards and School Discipline Policy.

We also hope that pupils will feel comfortable to talk to a member of staff, in confidence, regarding any concerns they have in school related to sex education or otherwise. Conversations of this nature between staff and pupils will be held in confidence; however, staff may take concerns to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) if there is a child protection concern or they feel ill-equipped to deal with the issue at hand.

We ask pupils for feedback on the school's sex education provision yearly and expect them to take this responsibility seriously. Opinions on provision and comments will be reviewed by

senior managers and taken into consideration when the curriculum is prepared for the following year's pupils. In this way, the school hopes to provide pupils with the education they need on topics they want to learn about.

Parents

The school aims to work with parents to share the responsibility of sex education and support their children's personal, social and emotional development. We encourage parents to create an open home environment where pupils can engage, discuss and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through school PSHEE. Parents are also encouraged to seek additional support in this from the school where they feel it is needed. For information on accessing school support, see section 6.

4. Implementation and curriculum

It is important that we implement our RSE policy consistently throughout the school and provide effective provision throughout classrooms. We encourage teachers to provide classes that are specific to the needs of the pupils in that class, and responsive to their behaviour and development.

Through this aspect of our curriculum we aim to explore different attitudes, values and social labels, and develop skills that will enable our pupils to make informed decisions regarding sex and relationships. It is important that pupils know the difference between fact, opinion and belief.

See Appendix A for a summary of the topics taught to each year group.

Guest speakers

We may invite guest speakers into school to talk on issues related to sex and relationships. It may be the case that the subject under discussion is better coming from an expert or experienced health professional who can challenge pupil's perceptions. A teacher will be present throughout these lessons. Visitors will be given a copy of this policy and expected to comply with the guidelines outlined within it and in our Visiting Speakers Policy.

Terminology

Pupils will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang or everyday terms used in certain social circles will be discussed; this will surround discussion about what is and isn't acceptable language to use.

Dealing with difficult questions

Staff training will include sessions on how to deal with difficult questions. There may still be times when staff are faced with a difficult question in class that they feel uncomfortable or ill equipped to answer. In this case, they may wish to put the question to one side and seek advice from the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Ground rules in class are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter. Some strategies staff may use to support this might be:

- an anonymous question box; this will enable pupils to feel more comfortable to ask questions without being identified
- making the classroom a 'safe space'; this means that whatever is discussed in the classroom stays in the classroom and should not be brought up at any other time. We hope this will give pupils the sense that they are able to speak freely about sex and relationships.

Pupils with special educational needs

The school works hard to ensure that all aspects of the school curriculum are inclusive and support the needs of pupils of all ranges of abilities. Staff should differentiate lessons to ensure that all members of the class can access the information fully, and this is no different when it comes to RSE.

The school will use a variety of different strategies to ensure that all pupils have access to the same information. Some of these include:

- interactive teaching methods
- use of expert guest speakers
- practical activities
- using DVDs or video
- group and paired activities.

Withdrawal from RSE

The school aims to keep parents informed about all aspects of the RSE curriculum and urges parents to read this policy. Parents can request access to resources and information being used in class, and the school will do everything it can to ensure that parents are comfortable with the education provided to their children in school. It is, however, a statutory right of parents or carers to withdraw the children in their care from the sex education aspect of RSE up to and until three terms before they turn 16. This excludes withdrawal from the elements on human growth and reproduction which fall under the science curriculum.

Any parent wishing to withdraw their child should contact the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will arrange a meeting with the Headmistress to discuss their concerns. Sex education is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports child development and we strongly urge parents to carefully consider their decision before withdrawing their child from this aspect of school life. However, it is acknowledged that the final decision on the issue is for the parent to take.

Complaints

Parents or carers who have complaints or concerns regarding the RSE curriculum should contact the school and follow the school's complaints policy.

Equal opportunities

RSE lessons provide a good background for talking openly and freely about the diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences. Prejudiced views will be challenged, and equality promoted, in line with the Equality Act (2010). Any bullying that relates to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be dealt with swiftly and seriously. This is the case for

bullying of any kind and the procedures regarding this are outlined in the Behaviour, Rewards and School Discipline and Anti-bullying Policies.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

We hope to provide a safe and supportive school community where pupils feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at school or at home. Training around confidentiality will be provided to all teachers.

It may be the case that discussion around what is acceptable and not acceptable in relationships may lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. If this is the case, the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should be followed (available on the website).

Personal information about pupils who have approached a teacher for discussion should not be shared with any other person. If there is a child protection concern, the information must only be shared with the DSL unless an emergency referral to Children's Services is needed.

If a staff member is approached by a pupil under 16 who is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, the teacher should:

- Decide whether there is a child protection issue. This may be the case if the teacher is concerned that there is coercion or abuse involved. If a member of staff is informed that a pupil under 13 is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, this will be dealt with under child protection procedures.
- Remind them that the legal age of consent is 16.
- Encourage the pupil to talk to their parent or carer. Pupils may feel that they are more comfortable bringing these issues to a teacher they trust, but it is important that children and their parents have open and trusting relationships when it comes to sexual health and the school will encourage this as much as possible.
- Ensure that the pupil is accessing all the contraceptive and sexual health advice available and understands the risks of being sexually active.

Pupils with special educational needs may be more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to protect themselves from harmful influences. If staff are concerned that this is the case, they should seek support from the DSL to decide what is in the best interest of the child.

Advice and treatment

Staff who are approached by pupils with a concern about having contracted or possibly contracted a sexually transmitted disease should refer them immediately to the DSL/School Nurse. Providing advice on contraception and practising safe sex is a key part of the school's RSE provision. We also encourage parents to engage their child in open discussion about practising safe sex.

There is no reason for staff to expect to be made aware of a pupil or colleague's HIV or hepatitis status, and no person will be discriminated against because of this if there is a disclosure of this type of information.

The school's First Aid Policy (available on the school website) covers protection for all school members against infection from blood-borne viruses.

5. Monitoring, review and evaluation

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and economic change. Our aim is to provide RSE that is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our pupils, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason, we review the RSE curriculum annually, and will inform parents of any revisions to the school policy or sex education curriculum.

We aim to monitor the effectiveness of our sex education provision through:

- regular feedback from pupils
- yearly feedback from parents
- feedback from staff
- classroom observations.

The school will review this policy annually, evaluating its effectiveness by taking into account feedback from pupils, staff and parents, as well as what has come to light through classroom observations and information we receive from national reports and curriculum reviews.

6. Support

We hope that pupils will feel safe in the school environment to talk to any member of staff in confidence about any areas of concern regarding their personal, social and emotional development, including matters raised by or relating to sex education. We promote the school ethos as one of inclusion and acceptance throughout all areas of school activity and hope that pupils respond to this by feeling comfortable to ask questions and continue their learning both in and outside of the classroom.

Signed by:	Hugh Venables Chair of Governors
Date of adoption of this policy	Spring 2021
Date of last review of this policy	Spring 2021
Date for next review of this policy	Autumn Term 2021
Policy owner (SMT)/other	Deputy Head (Pastoral)/Head of PSHEE

Appendix A: Summary of topics taught to each year group.

Year 7:

Philosophy curriculum (taught by Headmistress)

Unity: Seeing the whole world as one's family:

- Stepping over ideas of division (including religion or belief, race, disability)
- Being a friend to all

Relationships:

- Daughter to parents: respect; gratitude; obedience; trust; honesty
- Pupil to teacher: (as above)
- Sister to brother/sister: support; loyalty; tolerance; friendship; protection; honesty; trust
- Friend: (as above)

Good Conduct:

- Rules of conduct based on consideration for the needs of others

Good Speech:

- How our speech affects others; avoiding doing harm through speech

Avoiding doing Harm to ourselves or others

Forgiveness and Compassion

Absence of Hatred:

- What are the effects of hatred – on oneself and on others?
- The nature and effect of prejudice (including age, disability, religion or belief, race, sex, sexual orientation)
- Looking again; respect and tolerance

School Nurse/Head of PHSEE:

- Physical changes that take place at puberty in the female body
- Mental and emotional changes at the onset of puberty
- The menstrual cycle and its management

Year 8:

Philosophy curriculum (taught by Deputy Head Pastoral)

Relationships:

- What is a true friend?
- How to make and keep friends
- Being a friend to all
- Embracing diversity (including age, disability, religion or belief, race, sex, sexual orientation)

Family:

- Nurturing relationships with parents: the importance of loyalty, trust, tolerance & respect
- Commitment, loyalty, trust and sacrifice help to hold the family unit together

The gift of life and responsibility of parenthood

The female body image, a journey through history to the modern day:

- The power of image
- Self-image and self-esteem
- Sexualisation and the portrayal of men and women in the media; how to protect your dignity and reputation (the dangers of 'sexting')

Biology:

Conception, pregnancy and birth: these topics are taught in the 'Reproduction' section of the Biology syllabus.

PSHEE lessons:

Girls on Board and an introduction to gender, sexuality and LGBTQ+.

Year 9 (in PSHEE lessons or in presentations from external speakers):

- Contraception in more detail with relevant health implications
- STIs
- Making good decisions: full responsibilities of a male and female
- Responsibility and the law: consent

Year 10:

Philosophy curriculum (taught by Deputy Head Pastoral)

The wider perspective:

- Understanding what is meant by responsibility
- Making good choices: the importance of stillness and access to wisdom
- Our responsibility towards others
- Playing one's part properly

Relationships:

- Marriage and civil partnerships
- What is meant by commitment in relationships and why is it important?
- The marriage service in different cultures and religions
- Marriage/cohabitation and the law
- Project on 'my family'
- Sexual conduct and the law

PSHEE lessons or in presentations from external speakers:

- STIs and sexual health; health care and hygiene; cervical screening; oral sex
- Contraception: revision of previous topics (contraceptives and demonstrations kits are provided as a means for education and information in this lesson)

- On-line safety sexting
- Sexual conduct and the law, including sexting and pornography
- Diversity, including LGBTQ+

Year 11 (in PSHEE lessons or in presentations from external speakers):

- Cervical screening and advice
- Contraception advice, including choices and risks
- Breast examination
- Abortion – including the morning after pill and the IUD
- Consent, respect and power-dynamics (including coercive control) in relationships

Years 12 & 13 (in PSHEE lessons or in presentations from external speakers):

Going to University:

Personal health, including cervical screening and breast examination. Nutrition, the importance of good sleep. Smoking and alcohol. 'Date rape' and the importance of vigilance and self-defence. Relationships: power, consent and decision making.

Coping with University:

Coping with 'peer pressure'. Services for young people: health, pregnancy and abortion eg NHS Direct, Brook, GUM Clinics.

Where RSE topics are covered in PSHEE lessons, they will usually be taught by the Head of PSHEE.