

D.5 Relationships and Sex Education Policy (RSE)

The College intends that all students experience a programme of RSE at a level which is appropriate for their age, ability and development to ensure all have equal access to the Curriculum. Primary students study Relationships Education and secondary students, those attending the Middle College Programme, Pre-IGCSE and IGCSE programmes, study Relationship and Sex Education (RSE).

What is Relationships Education?

Primary students are taught the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships (with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults), both in the real world and online. Primary students understand the importance of self-respect and self-worth and develop personal attributes including honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice.

What is Relationships and Sex Education?

The term Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is used to stress that our approach goes beyond provision of biological information to focus also on attitudes and values, developing self-esteem and the skills to manage relationships in line with the Bishopstrow College Five Virtues. We want our RSE policy to encourage students at both primary and secondary level to be:

- considerate of others,
- capable of recognising situations, and
- confident to respond in an appropriate manner.

According to DfE guidance, RSE is “lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health”.

Students will also be educated in the complex issues of relationships and peer pressure online, along with how to use technology safely, responsibly and respectfully. Students will be encouraged to interact positively and to understand their legal responsibilities when using social media and online technology, including how to keep personal information private, challenge harmful content and balance online and offline worlds.

Subject Content

Guidance suggests that RSE should have three main elements, explained below. Within each element, the content will be covered at an appropriate time and stage in students’ development. This is true for all areas of PSHE education, and our scheme of work enables a differentiated and flexible approach to allow teachers to respond to the rapidly-changing cohorts of students at Bishopstrow College. From term to term the cohort may differ considerably in age, English level and nature, and the scheme of work needs to allow teachers to adjust content and delivery to suit the students at the College each term.

Some areas of content below relate only to sex education and these are areas from which some students might be withdrawn by parents.

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1. Knowledge and understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human sexuality, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay.
- Learning about contraception and sexual health advice, contraception and support services.
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

2. Attitudes and values

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.
- Learning the value of family life, marriage and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.

3. Personal and social skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Managing conflict
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

How is it taught and monitored?

Bishopstrow College’s approach to RSE is as follows:

1. RSE modules within each Key Stage are delivered within a planned PSHE Education programme.
2. PSHE knowledge and understanding is taught through one tutorial lesson each week, as well as in subjects like science.
3. Attitudes and values are taught across the College as part of The Five Virtues, as are personal and social skills. The PSHEE curriculum is designed so that students who might be at the College for as little as one term still experience a broad range of PSHEE topics, including RSE. All students attend the daily College assemblies, most of which focus on PSHEE/RSE.
4. Teaching by English and subject staff, and in its wider context by all staff across the College.
5. Provision of appropriate information is through leaflets, books, posters, use of appropriate websites as highlighted in the RSE Scheme of Work and external agencies/ speakers.

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6. Content is presented in an age-appropriate way, recognising the needs of second-language learners and accommodating SEND requirements as known. The College recognises the increased vulnerability of SEND students and responds accordingly.
7. Values are explored that support positive relationships and students’ developing emotional awareness and management.
8. Teaching is conducted in a safe learning environment through ground rules and distancing techniques so that students are not put on the spot or expected to discuss their own personal issues in class.
9. Teaching resources are selected for their appropriateness to students’ abilities and needs.
10. The Learning Coordinator is responsible for planning, monitoring and evaluating PSHEE/RSE with those who deliver it formally in classrooms, through the discussion of diary topics and through student responses to assemblies.

Parental rights of withdrawal

The law states there is no parental right to withdraw from relationships education at either primary or secondary level. Parents have the right to excuse their child from sex education at both primary and secondary level, but students have the right to opt in themselves from the age of 15 years. Staff are open to discuss any concerns parents and carers may have in relation to RSE and the needs of their child. Bishopstrow College aims to work in partnership with parents and carers, informing them about what their children will be learning and about how they can contribute at home.

Any request by a parent to withdraw their child from sex education should be made in writing to the Principal.

Equality

At Bishopstrow College, RSE is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination and is mindful of individuals’ religious, spiritual and moral beliefs. The College has a duty under the Equality Act, (2010) to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). RSE will foster good relations between students, tackle all types of prejudice, including homophobia, and promote understanding, respect and diversity. Staff will support students in developing qualities and skills such as resilience, confidence, self-respect and self-control.

Parental Consultation

The initial policy was drafted by senior staff at Bishopstrow College, following consultation and training, and circulated to parents for comment during Term 3 of 2021. It will be reviewed every other year and parents will be invited to comment.

Although consultation feedback will be considered, parents do not have the right to define the College curriculum, nor influence that which is required under Education law.

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