



RELATIONSHIPS And SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

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Reviewer(s)	Assistant Principal Pastoral
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Roles & Responsibilities:

Principal	Dr Ian Gross
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Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mr Martyn Rogers
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Aim

The RSE policy aims to detail how the school meets its legislative and regulatory responsibilities regarding RSE by stating how it is delivered, tailored to the school's specific context.

The policy aims to:

- ensure that students understand positive relationships and how to recognise where these exist, as well as relationships where this is not the case
- to cover the topics in a way that allows students opportunity to discuss areas of navigating the social world in a safe context with moral boundaries
- to ensure that students are aware of the nature of consent in relationships and feel empowered to act in ways that they recognise as exploitative
- To ensure that students are aware of PREVENT measures and the dangers of face-to-face and online coercion

Context

The school rarely operates with fewer than 50 different nationalities within our student community. This situation involves a significant variation in cultural and faith systems. Fundamentally these aspects affect expectations, values and choices. The UK government recommends nearly 100 learning opportunities for a robust and comprehensive personal development curriculum; RSE alone accounts for approximately one third of these. After consultation with the PSHE Association, these learning opportunities have been considerably woven into 2-year schemes of work for both junior and senior cohorts.

With an increasingly complex world in which UK safeguarding is considered one of the safest and most stringent, the RSE curriculum provides a safe place to explore a wide variety of mature concepts, vetted as relevant and appropriate for discussion. Laws regarding aspects of relationship and sexuality are also varied between nationalities. This adds a layer of complexity to the teaching of RSE. It is important at the outset to clarify contextualised UK law as a base from which to work. It is of significance that in many instances, discussion regarding sexuality and identity will be of a nature that many of our students have not encountered before.

The delivery of the RSE content carefully considers the cultural backgrounds and different belief systems of the student body. Through open dialogue the school attempts to build an atmosphere of inclusive discussion and tolerance. Students are encouraged to recognise that it is not necessary to always share beliefs but is necessary to show respect to others and their beliefs [where they are not hurting anybody], as well as to abide by law. From student induction the student body is encouraged to recognise that the school offers a clear support system for any concerns that students may have.

Experience tells us that students go through different phases during the school year. A themed calendar, aligned to our Worthgate Characteristics, supports students through those challenges in a proactive and sympathetic manner.

The curriculum includes introducing students to a range of aspects of healthy relationships, within the UK law framework, and the links this has to wellbeing and self-esteem. The delivery also aims to ensure that a culture of discussion, as well as allowing issues to be raised anonymously, exists. The school aims to cultivate an atmosphere where students develop good decision-making skills, resilience and confidence through understanding and questioning.

Parental Consent

At the outset of the academic year, all parents are sent a letter outlining the RSE scheme of work and giving opportunity for them to opt out of specific RSE lessons, should they wish (see Appendix A). Parents are provided with information about the school's intentions, curriculum and resources, which they are encouraged to review. The school will engage positively with parents who wish to opt out for their child, as well as parents with questions or concerns, to help reassure them and explain the benefits. In line with the law, the school will respect parental wishes and balance these with the wishes of the child [age impacted].

Teaching Methods

The expectation is that all teaching staff will be involved in the delivery of RSE. Training and guidance are provided by the Pastoral and Welfare Teams, comprising Personal Tutors, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs, the Medical Team, House Pastoral Directors, Assistant Principal Pastoral and Mental Health Lead. It may be necessary as part of life skills, delivered by the Boarding team, that RSE topics are covered. At times the program delivery involves the use of guest speakers as well as relevant departmental teachers and staff. The Personal Tutors (all subject teachers and tutors) deliver the scheme. Personal Tutors are asked to undertake formative and summative work with their groups. Should they have specific knowledge, a Personal Tutor / subject teacher may deliver an assembly on a topic area for example, International Women's Day, Diwali, Eid and other celebrations.

The curriculum is divided into Junior and Senior cohorts (see Appendix 2). Some topic delivery may be taught specific to gender in each of the key stages.

The House Pastoral Directors (HPDs) are actively engaged in professional development around the personal development areas to enhance their delivery of the topics as well as to enhance their skill and subject knowledge. From their own training and experience, HPDs deliver support to their teams.

In Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) it is possible students might ask 'difficult questions', which might upset staff and other students and potentially disrupt the lesson. Staff have been attended a CPD session exploring this and have been made aware specifically of the following guidance: A 'difficult question' refers to a question that is sensitive, potentially challenging to answer in a classroom setting, or goes beyond the planned curriculum. These questions often involve personal experiences, potentially risky behaviours, or topics that may be considered

controversial or age-inappropriate. Where this occurs and the member of staff does not feel comfortable and/or equipped to confidently answer, the member of staff should acknowledge the question and inform the student that we will have to 'park' this potentially sensitive / off topic / legally tricky question, so that you can research it and give an up to date answer. Staff can go back to the child or group when convenient, if they feel comfortable to do so.

If not: staff should make a decision about the nature of the question. Is it one that it will benefit the group to better understand or does the question potentially expose some vulnerability/concern within the student?

- Benefit the group - ask the student to remain with you at the end of the lesson, to dictate the question again. Enter their words (with your clarification if required) into an email to your HPD, and copy the APP in. The HPD will make a decision about next steps, which include: the HPD meeting with the student, the HPD working with the PT to update the group and/or the HPD may choose to consult the APP.

- Vulnerable student- email the student's question to your HPD. This may have been dictated to you by the student, or if they refuse to, you should record the question as you remember it. The HPD will make a decision about next steps, which include: the HPD meeting with the student, the HPD working with the PT to inform the group and/or the HPD may choose to consult the APP.

It must be noted that where any safeguarding concerns are felt, they must be raised quickly and according to the school's Safeguarding Policy.

For shy students or those for whom EAL is a significant barrier, operate an anonymous questions box into which students can submit their written questions. They may choose to include their name but don't have to.

Remember to treat every question seriously, even if it appears comedic. There's no such thing as a silly question - there will be a reason behind a student's question, which we may or may never fully understand.

Where students ask a personal question about your private life, firmly and pleasantly refer them back to your ground rules; that personal lives are not disclosed.

If a student appears to ask questions deliberately to try to embarrass you, you should be able to tell from the question, so ensure your ground rules [listed at the beginning of each Life Lesson presentation] protect you from this. You could say to students: "please do not ask questions with the aim of embarrassing me, yourself or other members of the class, I can tell when you are doing this and you run the risk of none of your questions being taken seriously in the future, even if they are genuine ones." This usually stops questions that are not genuine.

Always answer questions appropriately to the level you are teaching. Don't be tempted to answer a question above the learning level agreed within the scheme of work for your class.

Induction

During induction students are introduced to the PSHE & RSE curriculum (Appendix 2). This takes place during weekly PSHE sessions, with opportunities for further exploration and contextualisation, delivered in other curriculum areas. The material used is placed onto the House channels pages and includes opportunities for students to check their understanding and reflect on the meaning of the areas discussed.

External speakers are commissioned where beneficial to provide education and inspiration in trickier topics. Experts are well placed to answer sensitive questions and address misconceptions / misinformation.

Assemblies

Themed assemblies are used to introduce key messages and address current affairs where appropriate, for example, topical online safety, anti-bullying and mental health issues. On occasion these assemblies are used as the medium through which we respond to incidents as part of the wider set of mitigating measures identified through post incident risk assessment. Assemblies are run by a variety of staff members which may include the Principal, SLT, HPDs, classroom teachers or House Leadership teams. Students may also run assemblies to showcase their work, celebrate achievement or raise awareness about issues affecting the community.

Progress

In our unique context, measuring progress can be challenging. Students of different ages (13y/o - 22y/o) arrive with vastly differing levels of knowledge. Additionally, the 2-year schemes of work over which the PSHE and RSE curriculums are delivered, are often too long for individual students who may leave after 1 year, or indeed one term. Students may also join halfway through the year. After consultation with The PSHE Association in 2022, we have implemented a system which challenges students to show what they know at the start of sessions, then develop their learning and address misconceptions as lessons progress. PSHE & RSE are timetabled weekly, providing the opportunity to discuss, learn about and debate personal development topics, as well as how to report concerns effectively.

Assessment

The assessment of RSE aims to show engagement and understanding from all the students. Each topic involves assessment. Ongoing formative assessment is used to monitor engagement and understanding. To formally assess learning over time, students are summatively assessed on that term's topics during the penultimate week of term. They identify subject knowledge weaknesses and complete tasks to address these.

Student Council

The Student Council comprises House Captains [or Vice House Captains in their absence], representatives from House Activity Leads, Mental Health Ambassadors, as well as reps from the Diversity Committee and other key groups, who work together on behalf of the students, displaying mutual respect, transparency and advocacy. The school encourages students to form committees. Each committee has a connected adult, but emphasis is placed on the students developing their own ideas. The Student Council also has a key role in providing all students with a voice. Each House has a leadership group, who among other responsibilities, gather student voice from House Reps to represent their views, sharing them with the Student Council. These are then fed back to the respective House Pastoral Directors and SLT and shared with the student body via House Matters (a half termly House gathering), online and through bulletins.

Outcomes

Through the delivery of the RSE scheme of work, it is the aim of the School to promote physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing in students, including the creation and maintenance of healthy relationships. The scheme is designed to be delivered over two years to ensure that the coverage reaches most of the student population during their period of study. The school aims to encourage and facilitate integrity, kindness and resilience, and reinforces our Worthgate Characteristics. Students will be given the opportunity to have their best work showcased, for others to appreciate and to role model celebrating effort and achievement.

RELATED POLICIES

Personal Development Policy

Curriculum Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

Appendix A – RSE Letter to Parents

Dear Parents and Carers,

As a part of your child's education at The Worthgate School, we promote personal development and wellbeing through comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE), and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programmes. PSHE (including RSE) is the curriculum subject that gives young people the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live safe, healthy, productive lives and meet their full potential.

I am writing to let you know that starting from October 2024, your child's class will be taking part in lessons which will include topics from the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) aspect of the program. Under UK law, it is mandatory that broad and robust PSHE and RSE curriculums are offered, age appropriately, to students so that they can make informed choices and explore life lessons within a safe environment.

All PSHE and RSE content will be delivered highlighting British Values and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural aspects. Students will have opportunities to explore and help prepare them for healthier relationships of all kinds in the modern world. This year we are collaborating with Life Lessons - Discussion-Led Personal Development for Education who have a comprehensive range of engaging resources that help students improve their subject knowledge, skills and confidence in dealing appropriately with life events outside of the classroom.

PSHE and RSE are taught throughout the school in every year group and are monitored and reviewed regularly by the staff and Governing Body. Please contact us for more detail about our Personal Development curriculum. All PSHE and RSE teaching will take place in a safe learning environment and is underpinned by our school ethos and values with particular attention given to cultural perspectives. As a school community, we are committed to working in partnership with parents. If you would like to find out more, discuss any concerns or opt your child out, we invite you to contact studentcommunications@worthgateschool.com to arrange a discussion with one of our Pastoral Leads.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Mike Bell
Assistant Principal Pastoral & SENCo

Appendix B - PSHE & RSE 2 Years Course Overviews – Year 1 of 2

KS4 (Year 1) Junior PSHE Outline 2024-25

	Autumn Term 1	Autumn Term 2	Spring Term 1	Spring Term 2	Summer Term 1
Theme	Inclusion & Diversity	Kindness to others	Kindness to self	Being me	My future
Worthgate Characteristic	Open-mindedness	Communication	Caring	Critical thinking	Resilience
Week 1		Unhealthy Relationships, Boundaries and Consent	Family relationships and value conflicts	Gender and Trans Identity	Time management
Week 2		Digital Sexual Exploitation	Physical and mental wellbeing	Same sex relationships (LGBT+)	First Aid, CPR
Week 3	Healthy Friendships	Hate Crime - the UK riots	Conversations about mental health	International Women's Day	Forced and Arranged Marriages
Week 4	What is Community?	Anti Social Behaviour	Media influence on body image	Right to Choose	Parenting Styles and Types
Week 5	Forms of Discrimination and Allyship	Staying safe on public transport - gangs crime county lines	Managing peer pressure	Internet Safety (Online safety)	Relationships with Role Models
Week 6	Anti-Racism	British values – Criminal Justice System	Grief	Progress review and assessment	Binge Drinking
Week 7		Progress review and assessment			Living Sustainably
Week 8					Choosing a Career
Week 9					Progress review and assessment

Total = 33 weeks including induction week.

KS5 (Year 1) Senior PSHE Outline 2024-25

	Autumn Term 1	Autumn Term 2	Spring Term 1	Spring Term 2	Summer Term 1
Theme	Inclusion & Diversity	Kindness to others	Kindness to self	Being me	My future
Worthgate Characteristic	Open-mindedness	Communication	Caring	Critical thinking	Resilience
Week 1		Exploring Privilege	Using social media responsibly	Sex, Gender and Identity	First Aid, CPR
Week 2		Date Rape and Sexual Assault	Connecting mindfully	Feminism and Gender-based Attitudes	Miscarriage, Unplanned Pregnancy and Adoption
Week 3	What kind of person do I want to be for others?	Exploring discrimination and inclusion	Alcohol and drug misuse	Types of Masculinity and femininity	What next? Thinking about the future and leaving home (see LL topic)
Week 4	Norms, values and behaviour	Female Genital Mutilation	Conversations about mental health	Progression peer mentoring	Digital Footprint <i>Online safety</i>
Week 5	Appreciating diversity 1	Bias and Extremism	Looking after your body	Cosmetic, Plastic Surgery and Aesthetic Procedures / Tattoos and Piercings	Personal Presentation and Interview Skills
Week 6	Appreciating diversity 2	Media influence on identity and friendships (see Life Lessons topic)	Connecting with body and emotions	Progress review and assessment	Computer Literacy and Employment
Week 7	Progress review and assessment	Progress review and assessment			Employment Options and Careers
Week 8					Careers in the Core and STEM Subjects
Week 9					Progress review and assessment