

Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Policy statement:

Relationships and sex education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being. (Sex Education Forum)

Newcastle High School for Girls (NHSG) takes its responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) to all its pupils as part of the school's Personal, Social, Health and Economic education curriculum (PSHE) very seriously. NHSG want parents and pupils to feel assured that sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both the age and development of those being taught.

This teaching is not intended to replace advice or guidance which is received at home, but to supplement and broaden knowledge and understanding.

This policy is drafted by the School Nurse, in consultation with the Deputy Head Pastoral and Junior Assistant Head Pastoral. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss this policy content should they wish to.

Aims of policy:

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching sex, sexuality and sexual health in a way that is fully understood and effectively retained by girls in our care. This includes a focus on good health, the value of self-esteem in making choices and judgements, the nature of healthy and consensual relationships, and knowledge about how the body works, all within a context of moral issues and values.

The purpose of RSE is to give the pupils the information to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle and to care and respect their bodies. We provide them with the right tools to enable them to seek information or support should they need to, both during their school years and beyond.

Provision:

NHSG follows the Department of Education guidance that has been mandatory in England since September 2020: *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance*. Taught PSHE has also been part of the Independent Schools Standards since 2014.

The NHSG PSHE curriculum is spiral, so that topics can be explored in more depth each year, building on prior knowledge. Although the topics below are listed specifically, we also treat Relationships and Sex Education as part of the wider PSHE curriculum. NHSG supports equal opportunities in education, seeing it as enabling and encouraging all our pupils to build self-esteem through discussion and activities in a

safe environment. We aim to equip pupils with decision-making skills irrespective of gender roles and stereotyping.

The main topics covered in RSE are:

- Families, including different types of committed stable relationships
- Establishing healthy relationships, including friendships
- Online safety including cyber-bullying
- Sexuality and Gender identity
- Consent and how to communicate this to others
- Unhealthy relationships
- Domestic abuse
- Contraception and Safer Sex
- Understanding our bodies
- Sexting
- Personal choices
- The Law in relation to marriage; consent; violence against women and girls; online behaviours; female genital mutilation.

Topics are delivered at an age-appropriate level.

As part of the PSHE programme, Relationships and Sex Education is taught by the form teachers and school nurse mainly in form classes, using a range of activities with materials and support provided by other professionals as appropriate.

The programme is developed and reviewed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents to ensure that it meets the needs of the whole school community and meets Government guidance.

We ensure that RSE is age appropriate across all year groups; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as our pupils do and meets their needs.

Staff are given ongoing training on issues related to RSE including confidentiality, setting ground rules and establishing positive behaviour, handling controversial issues, and responding to questions. We also ensure that all staff are up to date with policy changes and are familiar with the school policy and guidance relating to relationships and sex education.

Terminology:

Girls will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, as well as slang and everyday terms used in social situations. This will be part of the discussion about what is and what is not acceptable language to be used.

Ground rules are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter and staff will use strategies to enable pupils to feel comfortable to ask questions. If controversial questions are asked, the teacher will use their professional judgement about how to answer them and girls will be allowed to raise anonymous questions if preferred.

We recognise that because of the nature of the subject, sensitive and controversial issues are likely to arise. These may include, for example, abortion, emerging gender identity, sexuality and sexual abuse. These are dealt with within the framework of the aims of the school and of the Relationships and Sex Education policy as a whole. Any cause for concern will be dealt with in accordance with our pastoral and safeguarding systems.

Guest speakers:

Outside speakers are sometimes used to complement our teaching of this content, who are asked to work within the framework of the school's Relationship and Sex Education policy and adhere to the policy for Visiting Speakers. A member of NHSG staff will be present throughout these lessons.

Withdrawal from RSE:

NHSG aims to keep parents informed about all aspects of the RSE curriculum and urges parents to review this policy. RSE is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports the whole development of the child.

We work hard to ensure that our RSE programme is culturally sensitive and appropriate. Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, parents have the right to withdraw their child from the formal Sex Education programme, but they are not allowed to withdraw their child from Relationship Education or Health Education (including puberty and menstruation).

Any parents expressing concerns will be invited into school for discussions with the Assistant Head Pastoral and teacher responsible for delivering the programme, and to view materials and resources.

If a parent wishes their child to be withdrawn from sex education lessons, they should write a letter to the Junior School Head, formally requesting permission for this to happen. The Head will likely discuss the concerns of the parent before granting the withdrawal. If the parent still wishes to have their child withdrawn from Sex Education, the School will comply with the wishes of parents up to and until three terms before the child's 16th birthday (which is generally during Year 11). After that time, the pupil's wishes will determine whether or not they attend RSE lessons.

Review and evaluation:

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and other changes. For this reason, we regularly review our RSE curriculum. This policy and accompanying schemes of work will be reviewed annually.

Other related policies:

The following whole-school policies support RSE:

- Safeguarding
- Equal Opportunities
- Discipline and Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety
- Anti-Bullying
- Online Safety
- SMSC
- PSHE Policy
- Visiting speaker policy