Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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Approved by	Sam Cartland, Vice Principal Culture, Behaviour and Inclusion
Owner	Mrs L Bennett, PSHE & Wellbeing Coordinator
Review date	September 2025

This policy has been extended, and the review will now take place in July 2026. This is due to further guidance around the RSE curriculum being released by the Government and curriculum review taking place.

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1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our Academy are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- As a part of a child's educational experience at St. John's Academy, we aim to promote personal wellbeing and development through a comprehensive taught programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education that gives children and young people the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live healthy, safe, productive and fulfilled lives, both now and in the future.

1. Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy school we must provide RSE to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

At St John's we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

2. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to contribute through a questionnaire to the shaping of the policy
4. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want and need from their RSE
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

2. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

3. Curriculum

Our curriculum ensures that every student is guaranteed a PSHE education that covers mental health and wellbeing; physical health (including healthy lifestyles and first aid); learning about safe, healthy relationships and sex (including understanding consent, negotiating life online, intimate relationships).

Our wider Personal Development curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1. The section in red focus on Relationships and demonstrate where the RSE elements will be taught. We may need to adapt it as and when necessary, but all Year Groups will have one term each focused on the delivery of the RSE elements of the curriculum. This curriculum indicates the topics covered by each Year Group across the five years of their education with us at St John's Academy.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, pupils and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner, so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

For more information about our curriculum, see our curriculum map in Appendix 1.

4. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. This is delivered by specialist teachers once a fortnight for 60 minutes (KS4) and once a week for KS3. The department consists of: Lucy Bennett (Head of Wellbeing/PSHE) Debbie Peskett (Head of Faculty) Debbie Benson (Wellbeing and Philosophy and Ethics Teacher) Hallam Goad (Philosophy and Ethics Teacher). Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (Philosophy and Ethics) at Key Stage 3 and 4. Further time to explore and develop thinking about these ideas is a key features of the RSE curriculum.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

For more information about our RSE curriculum and specifically, the statutory requirements set out by the DfE, see Appendix 2. The St. John's curriculum has been developed with these at the forefront to ensure all aspects are covered in sufficient detail across the five years of education that students are with us.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQI+ parents/carers, families headed by grandparents/carers, adoptive parents/carers, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

National Curriculum Subjects and Wider Whole School Approach

St.John's acknowledges that high quality, evidence based and age appropriate teaching can help students prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life as well as promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of students both at school and socially.

RSE will be set in the context of a wider whole-school approach to supporting students to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school, sitting within the delivery of our school values. The curriculum on relationships and sex will complement and be supported by, wider policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, anti bullying and safeguarding.

RSHE will sit within the context of St. John's broader ethos and approach to developing students socially, morally, spiritually and culturally, and its pastoral care system. RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. At St John's this is known as the Wellbeing curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in philosophy and ethics education. The curriculum on health education will similarly complement and be supported by the school's education on healthy life's through physical education, science, food technology, extra curricular activity, sport and school food. The Head of Wellbeing will work collaboratively with other Heads of Faculty to draw links between the subjects so they complement each other and do not duplicate, content covered in the national curriculum subjects such as citizenship, science, computing and PE.

Curriculum Links

- PE – students can develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activity, are physically active for a sustained period of time, engage in competitive sport and lead health, active lives.
- Food – an understand of a healthy and balanced diet, food groups and nutrition.
- ICT and Computing – students are taught about how they can keep themselves safe online and the different risks that they may face online as they get older.
- Science – students are taught about the main external parts of the body and changes to the human body as it grows, including puberty.

There continues to be no right to withdrawal from any part of the national curriculum.

The curriculum develops important attributes in students, such as honesty, kindness, tolerance, courtesy, resilience and self efficacy. These attributes are also developed via tutorial sessions, the assembly programme, 5 fundamentals and St.John's Way. The curriculum proactively addresses students' physical, emotional and sexual development. This is developed in line with student need, informed by student voice and participation in curriculum development and in response to issues as they arise in the school and wider community.

Use of Material and Resources

We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support students in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, give the aged, development stage and background of our students
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are complaint with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to students' experiences and won't provoke distress.

Resources are stored with the school's SharePoint area for staff to review before teaching and are regularly discussed/reviewed and evaluated within Faculty Meetings.

Where the curriculum has been planned to use external organisations for guest speaker sessions or their materials in lessons, we will make sure that agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality. The school remains responsible for what is said to students. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools or resources used don't undermine the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We will continue to adopt the same considerations listed above. In addition we will:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use are: age appropriate, are in line with students' development stage, comply with The Teaching Standards, The Equality Act 2010, The Human Rights Act 1998 and The Education Act 1996.
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses.
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcomes of the relevant part of the curriculum.
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with.

- Be clear on what they're going to say and their position on the issues being discussed.
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use.
- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for those people.
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that maybe of concern to us, or to parents and carers.
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures and using any personal data they might get from the session.
- Remind teachers that they can say 'no' or, in extreme cases, stop a session.
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with an external speaker.
- Share all external materials with parents and carers.

We won't under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions.
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme.

Inclusivity

At St.John's we will teach RSHE in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of students will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all students' experiences
- During lessons, make students feel safe and supported, able to engage with the key message.

We will also:

- Make sure that students learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in: a whole class setting, small or target group settings, 1 to 1 discussion, digital formats.
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed.

Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

RSHE will be accessible for all students. The Head of PSHE/Wellbeing will work collaboratively with the Assistant Vice Principal/SENCo to ensure that the RSHE curriculum is accessible for all students. Teachers will be aware of the SEND students within their classes, to be able to differentiate and personalise learning for theses students. Where needed TA's will support learning within the classroom to ensure these students access the full curriculum. The Department are also mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes, as set out in the SEND code of practice, when preparing the curriculum and lesson resources for students with SEND.

St.John's is aware that some students are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education can also be a priority for some students, for example Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs or learning disabilities.

For some students there maybe a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of the student at the different development stages.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LBGT)

St.John's will ensure that all needs of all students are appropriately met, and that all students understand the importance of equality and respect. St.John's will ensure that the curriculum, planning and delivery complies with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment

are amongst the protected characteristics.

St. John's will ensure that all of their teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. From Year 7 students will be taught about LGBT, this content is fully integrated into programmes of study rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson.

Menstruation

The onset of menstruation can be confusing or even alarming for girls if they are not prepared. Students are taught key facts about the menstrual cycle through the RSHE and Science curriculum including what is an average period, range of menstrual products and implications for emotional and physical health. In addition to the curriculum content adequate and sensitive arrangements are made for girls to prepare for and manage menstruation including:

- Access to a range of menstrual products from the medical room and key workers.
- Issuing toilet passes for those students who may need to access the toilets more frequently for a period of time.
- Intervention and additional support via counsellors, ESLA, medical trained staff and key workers.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board

The Governing Board will approve the RSE policy and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE (see section 8).

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Principal. RSE is delivered by specialist teachers at St John's. The department consists of:

- Debbie Peskett (Head of Department)
- Debbie Benson (Wellbeing Coordinator)
- Hallam Goad (Philosophy and Ethics Teacher)
- Kate Gray (Teacher of Wellbeing)
- Lucy Bennett (Wellbeing Coordinator)

Safeguarding, Reports of Abuse and Confidentiality

At the heart of these subjects there is a focus on keeping children safe, and this is a key, important part of preventative education. The curriculum works alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and the curriculum is planned to ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

Teachers are aware that effective relationships and sex education brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable, this may lead to disclosures of a safeguarding nature. Under common law, young people are entitled to the same duty of confidentiality as adults. Personal information about them should not be shared without their permission except for purposes of child protection as detailed in the Safeguarding Policy. All staff are aware of the reporting systems via CPOMs and concerns will be addressed and acted upon by the Safeguarding Team.

Any RSHE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons, ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When pupils ask questions, teachers will aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the lesson.

There is no expectation that any teacher delivering RSHE will automatically answer student questions, as this may infringe personal boundaries. Any situation which indicates knowledge about sex or sexual activity which is inappropriate for the students; age should be addressed and concerns emerging from conversations should be shared via CPOMs or with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

Feedback from local primary schools, and generally regarding primary curriculum delivery of RSE, informs us that the delivery of the RSE curriculum will be mixed for Year 6 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, this has been considered as part of the curriculum planning to ensure students who will be joining our Year 7 cohort in September 2020 are not disadvantaged and will receive a full education regarding RSE through our broad and balanced wider curriculum.

6. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the Principal.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The Principal will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. This may involve alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

7. Training

Most of the staff delivering the RSE curriculum are specialists. If any other staff deliver RSE they will be trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) calendar. Regular opportunities to refresh their knowledge will also be provided. Staff should speak to the Head of Department about any training needs they have regarding the teaching of RSE. Visitors from outside the school will also be invited, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE

8. Monitoring arrangements and Accountability

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Debbie Peskett through regular liaison with the Vice Principal.This is achieved through a combination of:

- CPD and faculty meetings

- Learning walks and general visits/observations
- Vetting of any visitors to the school, ensuring their messages are consistent with this policy and related policies
- Regular discussions at staff and governors' meetings
- Yearly audit of policy and units of work, including extra curricular provision and assemblies
- Student surveys
- Surveys and feedback from external providers.

Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by Sam Cartland, Vice Principal annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

Key aspects of Relationship Education, RSHE and Health Education are in scope for OFSTED inspection, for example through inspectors' consideration of students' personal development, behaviour and welfare, and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Appendix 1: Curriculum map

Relationships and sex education curriculum map

SECONDARY PSHE EDUCATION: LONG-TERM OVERVIEW – THEMATIC MODEL

	Autumn 1 Health & wellbeing	Autumn 2 Living in the wider world	Spring 1 Relationships	Spring 2 Health & wellbeing	Summer 1 Relationships	Summer 2 Living in the wider world
Year 7	**Transition and safety** Transition to secondary school and personal safety in and outside school, including first aid	**Developing skills and aspirations** Careers, teamwork and enterprise skills, and raising aspirations	**Diversity** Diversity, prejudice, and bullying	**Health and puberty** Healthy routines, influences on health, puberty, unwanted contact, and FGM	**Building relationships** Self-worth, romance and friendships (including online) and relationship boundaries	**Financial decision making** Saving, borrowing, budgeting and making financial choices
Year 8	**Drugs and alcohol** Alcohol and drug misuse and pressures relating to drug use	**Community and careers** Equality of opportunity in careers and life choices, and different types and patterns of work	**Discrimination** Discrimination in all its forms, including: racism, religious discrimination, disability, discrimination, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia	**Emotional wellbeing** Mental health and emotional wellbeing, including body image and coping strategies	**Identity and relationships** Gender identity, sexual orientation, consent, 'sexting', and an introduction to contraception	**Digital literacy** Online safety, digital literacy, media reliability, and gambling hooks
Year 9	**Peer influence, substance use and gangs** Healthy and unhealthy friendships, assertiveness, substance misuse, and gang exploitation	**Setting goals** Learning strengths, career options and goal setting as part of the GCSE options process	**Respectful relationships** Families and parenting, healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and relationship changes	**Healthy lifestyle** Diet, exercise, lifestyle balance and healthy choices, and first aid	**Intimate relationships** Relationships and sex education including consent, contraception, the risks of STIs, and attitudes to pornography	**Employability skills** Employability and online presence
Year 10	**Mental health** Mental health and ill health, stigma, safeguarding health, including during periods of transition or change	**Financial decision making** The impact of financial decisions, debt, gambling and the impact of advertising on financial choices	**Healthy relationships** Relationships and sex expectations, myths, pleasure and challenges, including the impact of the media and pornography	**Exploring influence** The influence and impact of drugs, gangs, role models and the media	**Addressing extremism and radicalisation** Communities, belonging and challenging extremism	**Work experience** Preparation for and evaluation of work experience and readiness for work
Year 11	**Building for the future** Self-efficacy, stress management, and future opportunities	**Next steps** Application processes, and skills for further education, employment and career progression	**Communication in relationships** Personal values, assertive communication (including in relation to contraception and sexual health), relationship challenges and abuse	**Independence** Responsible health choices, and safety in independent contexts	**Families** Different families and parental responsibilities, pregnancy, marriage and forced marriage and changing relationships	

Appendix 2: By the end of secondary school pupils should know

Topic	Pupils should know
Families	• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships • How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children • What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony • Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into • The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships • The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting • How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed
Respectful relationships, including friendships	• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help • That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control • What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable • The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

Topic	Pupils should know
Online and media	• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online • Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them • What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online • The impact of viewing harmful content • That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners • That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
Being safe	• The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships • How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)

Topic	Pupils should know
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	• How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which incelude mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship • That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing • The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women • That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressuring others • That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available • The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage • That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help) • How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing • About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment • How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour • How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

Appendix 3: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

To be completed by parents			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

To be completed by the school	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	