



# Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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Although The Studio School has always included elements of relationships and sex education (RSE) within the PSHE programme, the law now requires that all students in secondary education be taught RSE from September 2020. Recent statutory guidance sets out the required RSE content while giving schools the freedom to deliver that content within a broad and balanced curriculum.

This policy covers the School's approach to teaching RSE. It is informed by the statutory guidance referred to above and also by PSHE Association Guidance, specifically 'Writing Your School's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy' (2018). Further guidance was taken from external RSE specialist organisations such as the Brook, as well as the Sex Education Forum and the School also has regard to other relevant legislation and statutory guidance such as the Equality Act 2010 and Keeping Children Safe in Education (as amended from time to time).

We view the partnership of home and school as vital for providing the context for any RSE programme and this policy was developed in consultation with the school community. It should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

## **Rationale and Ethos**

At the Studio, we see RSE as just one part of a lifelong process of learning about relationships, emotions, sex, sexuality and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

Our overarching aim in RSE is to give students the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. Our teaching of RSE should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. We aim to teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships, to help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It aims to teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It should enable young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and support them to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time. We aim to impart knowledge about safer sex and sexual health to ensure that our students are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy

choices as they progress through adult life. This will be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for students to ask questions in a safe environment.

RSE at the Studio is underpinned by a wider, deliberate cultivation and practice of resilience and character in the individual. Through our PSHE programme and our pastoral care we aim to foster the personal, moral, spiritual, social and cultural development of our students, as well as helping to enhance their ability to cope with life and its demands. We aim to inspire and encourage our students to become kinder, more confident, more thoughtful and more responsible citizens in the communities in which they live and work.

## **Responsibilities**

Ultimate responsibility for the school's RSE policy lies with the School's governors, and this policy is subject to review and approval by the Governors' Education Committee. In School, the Senior Management is responsible for the implementation and review of the policy, supported by the Pastoral team.

RSE will be delivered primarily by form tutors and coaches with professional experience in delivering this content.

We recognise that parents and/or carers play a key role in teaching their children about relationships and sex. The school aims to work with partners and carers to support them in preparing their children for happy and fulfilled relationships in adult life

## **Curriculum design**

At the Studio, we have chosen to deliver RSE mainly as part of a timetabled PSHE Form programme. This with some elements covered by the science curriculum, and supplemented with various extra-curricular talks and activities

## **Equality**

Schools are required to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for the provision of RSE and other subjects.

We will consider whether it may be appropriate or necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with particular protected characteristics. We will also be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled.

### **Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND):**

RSE must be accessible for all students and high-quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility. The School will refer to the SEND code of practice, where appropriate, and will also be aware that some students are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. RSE can be particularly important for those with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities, and such factors will be taken into consideration when designing and teaching the RSE curriculum.

### **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT):**

In teaching RSE, we will ensure that the needs of all students are appropriately met and that all students understand the importance of equality and respect. All teaching will be sensitive and age appropriate, in both approach and content.

### **Safe and Effective Practice**

We will ensure a safe learning environment by requiring that certain 'ground rules' are established for each session and clearly understood by all those that take part. These may vary depending on the age of the students but are likely to include:

- Guidance on how potentially sensitive questions can be asked;
- A general expectation of privacy and the importance of being able to talk frankly in the session without fear of discussions being repeated outside the room without due cause;
- How staff will respond if anyone shares anything they consider to be concerning, particularly any issues of a safeguarding nature (they must not promise confidentiality);
- The promotion of 'distancing techniques' that encourage pupils not to personalize their questions or discussions.

Staff should bring any non-urgent issues for discussion to the Assistant Principal. Any urgent and/or safeguarding issues must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads in line with the school's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

### **Safeguarding**

Effective delivery of RSE necessarily allows students an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues, which may in turn lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. All Staff are trained in child protection and, if they receive a disclosure or have any concerns about a student in their class, should follow the School's normal safeguarding procedures as set out in the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

Where visiting speakers are invited to support delivery of certain aspects of the RSE curriculum (for example, Brook or So To Speak Projects), they will be subject to the School's usual procedures for

vetting visiting speakers. In addition, the member of staff responsible for the talk will brief them in advance regarding the School's safeguarding procedures and their RSE sessions will be attended by a member of school staff /SMT.

### **Monitoring, reporting and evaluation**

Staff are given an opportunity to reflect critically on delivery of the RSE curriculum through regular meetings with the Assistant Principal.

Students will have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lessons and the School Council. Student voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities.

The Senior Leadership Team reports on RSE provision to the Governors' Education Committee from time to time.

### **Parents and Carers -Right to Withdraw**

This policy and the curriculum plan are made available to parents on the school website and a paper copy is available on request. In addition, we will work closely with parents to ensure that they are fully aware of the aspects of RSE that are delivered by external specialists and organisations.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from **some** or all of the sex education delivered as part of the statutory RSE. Parents must state their request in writing to the Principal. Parents will then be invited into School to discuss the request to ensure that their wishes are fully understood. We will clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum alongside the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on their child, e.g. the emotional and social effects of being excluded.

However, three terms before the student turns 16 years old they are legally able to make their own decision as to whether they receive sex education. The School will provide the student with sex education during one of those terms and a parental request of withdrawal will not be granted.

When students are withdrawn from sex education, alternative arrangements will be made for these students, which will usually involve continuing the PSHE content with another form tutor. The right to withdraw from lessons relates only to sex education in RSE, and not to the teaching of the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction included within the School's science curriculum. If parents have any queries or wish to withdraw their child from the sex education element of RSE, they should contact the Head Teacher. There is **no right** to withdraw from the 'relationships' aspect of RSE.

### **Training**

The Assistant Principal is responsible for the organisation and delivery of staff training. This is delivered through staff inset, sharing of good practice and distribution of literature and resources. This is supported by the use of Brooks Online CPD for RSE.

### **RSE Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team annually to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of students, staff and parents, and that it is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance.

### **Guest Speakers**

We sometimes use outside speakers to complement our teaching of the RSE content. In this instance, speakers are asked to work within the framework of our RSE policy and adhere to the policy for visiting speakers. A teacher will be present throughout these lessons.

### **RSE Curriculum Overview**

The RSE curriculum is part of the whole school PSHE curriculum, which is planned and designed to be age appropriate, under the following themes:

- Relationships (families and friends)
- Health and Wellbeing
- Living in the Wider World

See PSHE Schemes of Work for more detail. The RSE topics fall under all of these themes and are taught within the PSHE curriculum, but also will be covered across the curriculum in subjects such as science.