

RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Description of Policy Formation and Consultation Process

The Downe House Relationship and Sex Education Policy has been drawn up by relevant members of staff, including the Head of Learning for Life (PSHE), the Nurse Manager of the Health Centre, the School Counsellors and the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES –

1. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) should give each pupil opportunities to learn about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, puberty, 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.
2. To ensure that all pupils receive a comprehensive, well-planned programme of relationship and sex education during their time at Downe House.
3. To complement and support the role of parents in the Relationship and Sex Education of their girls.
4. To provide girls with the skills and knowledge to encourage moral regard and consideration for the values of family life and to enable them to formulate their own values and attitudes.
5. To deliver relationship and sex education, which is in line with a 21st Century Education, in order to prepare the girls for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, by developing their self-esteem in the area of relationships in general, covering topics such as consent, digital misuse, pornography, LGBTQ+, so that they can make informed, responsible choices about their own sexual behaviour now and in the future. This will take into account individual differences and beliefs.
6. To deliver Relationship and Sex Education within the guidelines as set by the Department of Education 2019.
7. To deliver Relationship and Sex Education within the context of the school ethos, aims and objectives, and to encourage the spiritual, moral, social, intellectual, emotional and physical development of pupils within school and longer term within society as a whole.

CONTEXT – MORAL AND VALUES FRAMEWORK

At all times there are various key messages which will be reinforced.

1. It is illegal for anyone under the age of 16 to be involved in a sexual relationship.
2. It is quite normal not to be sexually active.
3. The Christian ideal is that a sexual relationship should be preserved for marriage.
4. A fulfilling sexual relationship is one that is enjoyed by two consenting adults in a loving, trusting and committed relationship.
5. Becoming involved in a sexual relationship is an important decision, which should not be taken lightly. It is important that girls should not be swayed by the media or by peer pressure and should be in a position to make as informed a decision as possible.
6. The only ‘failsafe’ method of contraception and avoidance of infections is abstinence.

Review Date: Aug 2022 – Deputy Head (Pastoral)

CONTEXT – TEACHING FRAMEWORK

Relationship and Sex Education will be taught within the PSHE programme. However, the topic is not dealt with in isolation, as much appears in other timetabled subjects, for example, Biology and Religious Studies.

Biology and Religious Studies deal with factual delivery and discussion. PSHE, in addition to providing factual information and a framework for girls to develop their own moral code (in the context of the school's ethos), provides the opportunity for pupil-led questioning and discussion of issues of interest and concern. The topic will be delivered sensitively, by staff who feel comfortable with the subject and within full discussion of the Laws in general and the Age of Consent in particular. The physical, moral, emotional and health implications of sexual behaviour are recognised. Fact and opinion are clearly differentiated.

The PSHE teaching of Relationship and Sex Education will be fully supported by the system of pastoral care in the Lower School, Upper School and Sixth Form Houses. The Health Centre Staff and the School Counsellors are involved in House visits to discuss sexual matters in a more informal setting on a regular basis.

UPPER FIFTH: **Sexual Health** (12 x 40 minute sessions)
Sexual health – consent
STI's - transfer game
Exploitation, Harassment and Abuse x 2
Attitudes and double standards
The virginity myth
Domestic abuse and forced marriage
Women's rights and feminism
How we respond to women in the media
Toxic masculinity and misogynistic behaviour
The sex trade
Medical Ethics

LOWER FIFTH: **Relationship and Sex Education** (10 x 40 minute sessions)
Relationships and Respect
LGBTQ+ and Diversity
First time sex pressures
Consent – Pleasure and communication
Sexting and personal safety
Pornography and its relationship to everyday life
Condoms and contraception
Teenage pregnancy and abortion
Abuse and where to get helped
Post box and The Law

UPPER FOURTH: **Relationship and Sex Education** (9 x 40 minute sessions)
Body Image – Self Esteem
Homophobia, transphobia and sexism
Healthy Relationships and Consent
Online safety – Sexting
Online safety – Pornography
Contraception and Condoms
STIs
Abuse
Post box and The Law

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LOWER FOURTH: **Relationship and Sex Education** (6 x 40 minute sessions)
Puberty and periods revisited
Period Poverty
Tackling discrimination and stereotypes - sexuality
Introduction to Sex Education
Contraception, pregnancy and STI's
LGBTQ+

REMOVE: **Relationship and Sex Education** (6 x 40 minute sessions)
Growing, Feelings, Emotions and Respect
Puberty: Body parts and Hormones
Puberty: Periods and personal hygiene
Boyfriends, girlfriends and LGBT
FGM and Unwanted contact
Online Relationships and Grooming

SIXTH FORM: There are no timetabled lessons on Relationship and Sex Education. However, as appropriate, external speakers are invited to speak on occasion on specific subjects. The Health Centre staff are involved in preparing UVI girls for leaving Downe House by running a series of informal information sessions in the Summer Term.
Regular speaker for L6 and L5 (annual)

ORGANISATION

The Head of LfL (PSHE) is responsible for planning the content of the PSHE Relationship and Sex Education course for the various years within the school and does so in consultation with the Health Centre. This links with the Sex Education covered in Biology and Religious Studies, which is the responsibility of those departments.

The girls will be taught in mixed academic ability, but same year-group, classes. Relationship and Sex Education will be taught by appropriate members of staff, working within the LfL (PSHE) team, who feel comfortable with the subject, including the Health Centre staff.

Training will be provided for relevant members of staff as necessary.

Relationship and Sex Education will be taught using a variety of teaching methods – formal and informal, discussion and questioning, practical work, whole class and small group work. Members of staff should not be drawn into discussion of their own personal experiences. Answers to questions should always be handled factually and in the third person, reinforcing the moral and values context outlined above, as appropriate.

Girls at all age levels will be asked to contribute to an 'evaluation' process at the end of each term to enable the effectiveness of the programme to be monitored – from both perspectives. Overall monitoring and collation of feedback is the responsibility of the Head of the LfL (PSHE). Staff meet together regularly to evaluate and update modules.

SENSITIVE ISSUES

Members of staff may not give specific advice – contraceptive or otherwise – to girls. Girls should always be referred to the appropriate medical professionals, including the Health Centre, the school or family doctor or a family planning clinic.

Relationships Education should promote equal, safe and enjoyable relationships and be taught in a way which fosters LGBTQ+ and gender equality, in line with the Equalities Act 2010. LGBTQ+ issues such as homosexual, bisexual and transgender issues are recognised and discussed objectively to dispel myths and promote better understanding in the community. The term 'partner' should always be used, where appropriate, rather than a gender or relationship specific term to avoid assumption and prevent possible discrimination.

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Pupils are made aware that most information will be treated as confidential. However, they should be made aware that if there is any questioning that gives members of staff cause for concern, particularly in a safeguarding context, in line with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, this will be explored with the girl directly and the concerns will be referred to the appropriate medical authority via the Headmistress, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, if deemed necessary. Such issues would include suspected under-age sex and suspected sexual abuse.

In accordance with guidelines produced by the Department of Education in 2019, parents will retain the right to withdraw their child from Sex Education (but not Relationships Education or Health Education). A pupil can opt back into sex education from 3 terms before her 16th birthday. A record will be kept of the process of dialogue with parents relating to requests to withdraw from Sex Education. Parents wishing to exercise this right should discuss the matter first with the Headmistress.

Parental complaints should be addressed, in writing, to the Headmistress.

Parents are kept updated about significant changes to the PSHE/RSE programme via letters sent out from either the Head of Department or updates from the Headmistress in her weekly letter. The opportunity for feedback is offered to all parents via these updates so a full consultation takes place.

DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY

This policy is readily available on SchoolBase for members of staff to read and refer to. Parents are made fully aware of the fact that Relationship and Sex Education is taught and they may receive a copy of the full policy on request.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE POLICY

The Head of LfL (PSHE) will initiate with the Director of Boarding (Compliance), a review and evaluation of the policy annually with appropriate staff as agreed with the Headmistress. Recommendations for amendment will be discussed by the Leadership Team Policy Group.

Revision History:

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Requested By
	August 2016		Genevieve Ford
	August 2017	Reviewed	Genevieve Ford
	August 2018	Reviewed	Genevieve Ford
	August 2019	<p>Reviewed and Updated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-naming of the Policy in line with Government policy. • Aims and Objectives: introduction of a new Point 1 and Point 4 updated. • Updated PSHE content. • Concerns raised in PSHE lessons, which might constitute safeguarding concerns, should be passed to the DSL. • Updates as required are included following the guidance produced by the Department of Education in 2019- the right to remove a child from Sex Education. 	Genevieve Ford
	August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSHE renamed Learning for Life (PSHE) • Updated Schemes of Work Topics included. • Palmer Medical Centre has been renamed the Health Centre. 	Genevieve Ford
	August 2021	Reviewed	Genevieve Ford

Review Leader: Deputy Head (Pastoral)
 Reviewed: August 2021
 Next Review: August 2022