



Maidstone Grammar School
for Girls

Non sibi sed omnibus

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

School Policy

2024 - 2026

History Log

Last Revised	Revised By	Ratified By Governors	Next Review Date	Time Scale
April 2024	Ben White	1st May 2024	April 2026	Biennially

Contact: Mr Ben White- Assistant Headteacher

A forward-thinking community with a tradition of excellence

This policy has been written using guidance and adheres to legislation from:

- Section 405 of the Education Act 1996
- Children's Act 2004
- www.thinkyouknow.co.uk
- Sex and Relationship Education Guidance DfE, 2000
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) DfE 2020
- Sexual violence and Sexual Relationships between students in school DfE 2021

This policy does not stand alone and is used alongside other school policies:

- MGS Child Protection policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- PSHE policy

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. "At secondary, teaching will build on the knowledge acquired at primary and develop further pupils' understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs and alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex." (Relationships and Sex Education and Education (RSE) DfE 2020)

The Relationships and Sex Education Policy has been developed in accordance with the current requirements of the law, taking into account the Children's Act 2004, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2020, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools. It sets out the legal powers and duties of school governors and staff with regard to the content and methodology of Sex & Relationship Education in schools. In 2020 the Department of Education Guidance has been updated to introduce the new subject of 'Relationships and Sex Education' and renaming the secondary school subject 'Relationships and Sex Education', to emphasise the central importance of healthy relationships.

Our RSE policy emphasises building a preventative culture through the curriculum regarding relationships and sex and to develop students' understanding of what makes relationships safe and healthy. "Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way." (Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSE) DfE 2020). The School works collaboratively with external organisations to challenge,

sanction and report behaviours that are exploitative and unsafe in line with the DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 guidelines. “Schools and colleges should be made aware of making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up This is why a whole school/college approach (especially preventative education) is important.” (Sexual Violence and Harassment in Schools and Colleges. DfE 2021).

Aims of Relationships and Sex Education at Maidstone Grammar School for Girls (MGGS)

To support the personal and social development of all students, ensuring that they have the ability to accept their own and others' sexuality, to express their sexuality in positive and appropriate ways, and to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect and responsibility.

- To provide information and opportunities for discussion in order to empower young people to be able to explore their own feelings and to make informed choices, encouraging them to make safe and healthy decisions.
- To help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development, helping young people to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.
- To emphasise the role and importance that healthy relationships play as part of a young person's sexuality and sexual relationships.
- To support young people to feel better prepared for the complex world in which they live including a deep understanding of the role that technology plays in contemporary relationships.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment and sexual violence can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the school, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language. This is why as part of our whole school Relationship and Sex Education policy, we emphasise building a preventative culture through the curriculum. It is important that students develop a good understanding of what makes relationships safe and healthy. “Given the increasing concerns around child sexual abuse and exploitation and the growing risks associated with growing up in a digital world, there is a particularly compelling case to act in relation to pupil safety.” (DfE Guidance, Relationship and Sex Education 2020). The MGGS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy contains further information on Sexual violence and Sexual Harassment.

Peer on Peer Abuse; Sexual Violence and Harassment

Peer on peer sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

We place emphasis on the importance of making all stakeholders aware that as a community we have the following expectations:

- **Sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up.**
- We do not tolerate or dismiss sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter.”
- We will challenge and report behaviour (potentially criminal in nature) that falls short of our school code of conduct.

The School works collaboratively with external organisations to challenge, sanction, record and report behaviours that are exploitative and unsafe in line with the DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education guidelines. “Schools and colleges should be made aware of making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated.” See the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further information on Sexual violence and Sexual Harassment.

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

- Staff consultation – staff were given the opportunity to share their views on RSE and PSHE and make recommendations.
- Parents/carers -were consulted and invited to share their views on RSE and PSHE.
- Student consultation – we investigate and review what students would like from their RSE.
- Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified.

Content

The most effective RSE programme is established through a whole school approach that prepares students for life in modern Britain. Our RSE policy incorporates our core school value of Non Sibi Sed Omnibus and is embedded via our code of conduct demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. This is underpinned by the school’s behaviour policy and our pastoral structure. We have a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the whole curriculum in line with D of E Guidance on Relationships and Sex Education. “Such a programme should be developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering SEND children and their cognitive understanding), and may tackle such issues as: healthy and respectful relationships; what respectful behaviour looks like.” (Sexual violence and Sexual Relationships between students in school DfE 2021).

Our Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) policy focuses on physical, moral and emotional development. It is a key element of SMSC (Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural development). It includes developing an understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, consent, love and care. It recognises the diversity of family forms in today's society. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is important that sexuality is integrated in the content of RSE to promote student understanding and awareness of LGBT+. “The Department recommends that it is integral throughout the programmes of study. As with all RSE teaching, schools should ensure that their teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate and delivered with reference to the law. (Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSE) DfE 2020).

This policy includes the National Curriculum and the need for guidance arising out of the new Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) framework.

It has four main elements that are underpinned by Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSE) DfE 2020.

Attitudes and Values

As well as knowledge and information students will be encouraged to consider the importance of the following:

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations
- Learning the value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children
- Learning the value of respect, love and care as essential aspects of healthy relationships
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- Taking responsibility for their actions
- Understanding and sensitivity towards the needs and views of others.

Personal and Social Skills

Students will be supported to develop the following skills:

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others
- Healthy communication and the role this plays in making and sustaining healthy, positive relationships
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- Managing conflict and developing assertiveness
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse
- Recognising and using opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle.

Knowledge and Understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- Understanding human sexuality (including LGBT+), reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS
- Links between RSE with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviours such as drugs, smoking and alcohol use and the risks of sexual exploitation
- Know how the law applies to sexual relationships and sexuality.

Physical and Mental Wellbeing

- Developing students' understanding of looking after their mental wellbeing as a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health. "There is a relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing and this can also influence their ability to learn." (Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) DfE 2020).
- To be able to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
- To critically assess when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health.
- To recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing issues (e.g. anxiety and depression).
- To develop an understanding between physical activity and promotion and its connection to mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress.

- To have an understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardiovascular ill-health.
- Facts about wider issues such as organ/blood donation.

Internet Safety

- To develop a healthy understanding of the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online through setting unrealistic expectations of body image.
- To use the internet appropriately so they do not develop an over-reliance on online relationships (including social media). “Schools should be aware that for many young people the distinction between the online world and other aspects of life is less marked than for some adults Schools should take this into account when planning how to support them in distinguishing between different types of online content and making well-founded decisions.” (Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) DfE 2020).
- To understand how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online.
- To identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or get support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.

Drugs and Alcohol Abuse

- To understand the facts about legal substances and illegal substances, including alcohol consumption, drug-taking, and the associated risks.
- The physical, psychological and often social consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency.
- The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
- The awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.

Delivery and Organisation

Relationships and Sex Education is jointly delivered and organised by Assistant Headteachers together with Heads of Study and Heads of Departments in a variety of ways through:

Curriculum subjects e.g. Physical Education, Science and Religious Studies delivered by subject teachers PSHE lessons delivered by Form Tutors, External facilitators including peer educators. The school works closely with appropriate and experienced external agencies.

Addressing moral and ethical issues which may arise from unrelated topics in the National Curriculum subjects. Within this category as long as any discussion takes place within the context of the subject it will not be deemed to be part of the sex education programme and therefore not subject to the parent right to withdrawal.

Teaching materials used are age-appropriate and developed and delivered with sensitivity and respect for cultural diversity and inclusion, including students with SEND and LGBT students (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender). At the end of Year 13 students should know and understand the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online). MGGS students will have a sound understanding of key aspects that are central to all human relationships. “Trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy,

consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.”
Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education DfE 2019)

Examples of Delivery

Year 7: As part of the Year 7 Science curriculum students are given factual information about human growth, puberty and menstruation, human reproduction systems, conception, development of the foetus, birth and parental care.

Year 8: Aspects of positive self-image, moral values, relationships and family life are covered in English, Humanities and the PSHE programme and reinforced in these subjects in all years.

Years 9, 10, 11:

- In Science, students study reproduction, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases.
- In Religious Studies,* the topic of Families and Households includes issues of adolescence and relationships within the family, gender roles, contraception and abortion and the moral issues involved.

Year 9 take part in an RSE Focus Day, including Health Advisors. Issues such as teenage pregnancy, contraception, keeping safe online, LGBTTT+ issues and consent are delivered in an engaging and informative way by external facilitators, including a peer trainer.

Year 12 & 13

A number of external facilitators including Kent nurses deliver a range of RSE lessons during PSHE, including contraception and positive relationships workshops. Students are taught a range of key issues affecting them such as staying safe online and revenge porn.

PSHE and RSE Curriculum

The PSHE programme teaches students to manage emotions, conflict and relationships confidently and sensitively. “Emphasis should continue to be given to steps pupils can take to protect and support their own health and wellbeing. They should know that there is a relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing. This can also influence their ability to learn.” (Relationships and Sex Education DfE 2020).

All year groups take part in the RSE and Wellbeing Schemes of Work (SoW) designed to enhance the innate resilience young people have. Through a series of interactive lessons students develop an understanding of the following:

- A deeper awareness of the different types of relationships that we have, particularly our relationship with ourselves.
- How all people develop psychologically which encourages them to have increased respect for others and tolerance of diversity as a greater capacity to reduce conflict and bullying
- Gain insight into the separate realities of each person which encourages young people to welcome and accept differences.
- To gain confidence to navigate daily challenges and trauma with greater ease and success.

Leadership assemblies, Year group assemblies and tutor time also forms part of our PSHE and RSE curriculum.

Whole School

We have student wellbeing weeks with a focus on developing positive mental health and resilience. Students are taught in their tutor time, PSHE and assemblies how to recognise signs of mental illness such as stress and anxiety. Students are also encouraged to develop personal strategies they can use to develop positive mental wellbeing such as meditation, breathing exercise or talking.

Sensitive Topics

There are a range of sensitive topics that may arise within Relationships and sex education such as abortion, STI's, HIV and Aids.

Abortion

Discussion around abortion will involve a range of religious faiths, as well as medical and ethical considerations. Religious convictions of students and their families will be respected. However, it is important that students gain knowledge of appropriate information (including abortion and the law) and information on contraception.

HIV/AIDS/STIs

Through discussion students will develop assertive skills for negotiating healthy, positive relationships, enabling them to make informed decisions that are right for them. Students will gain knowledge on services that help, prevent/treat STIs and HIV. Discussions covering the transmission of the HIV virus and other STI's will cover sexual acts and practices, helping students to clarify and develop their knowledge and understanding about HIV/AIDS and STI's.

Teachers and health professionals will deal sensitively and objectively with information of this kind to avoid bias and prejudice.

Review

The delivery of RSE is monitored by a member of the Leadership team through:

- The whole school teaching and learning monitoring arrangements, such as marking reviews, learning walks, departmental meetings.

Student Voice activities are used to evaluate provision, the Relationships and Sex policy is reviewed annually. The Headteacher, Governors and Deputy Headteacher monitor the frequency of concerns in the school e.g. Child Protection referrals and pregnancies. If they are frequent, this may be an indicator that there are deficiencies in young people's awareness of, or confidence in RSE. This will be addressed in the school's RSE programme.

Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. Specialised external agencies and guest speakers are invited to deliver professional development such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide specialist training to staff teaching RSE.

Confidentiality

As a general rule a young person's confidentiality is maintained by the teacher and or member of staff concerned (in line with the School's Safeguarding policy). If this person believes that a young person is at risk or in danger, she/he talks to the named Designated Safeguarding Lead

who may confer with the Headteacher before any decision is made. The young person concerned will be informed if the confidentiality is breached and the reason why and given support throughout the process.

Additional Sources of Support

- All year groups have access to the School Medical Needs Co-ordinator, appointments can be made in advance. The School Medical Needs Co-ordinator is promoted through assemblies and via student notice boards.
- Where needed, Student Reception provides emergency sanitary protection in a discrete and sensitive manner.
- Students receive information about staying safe on-line and know how to report their concerns, including to external agencies such as CEOPS (www.thinkyounow.co.uk).
- Students can request to see one of the School's Counsellors or can be signposted to specialist services by the Safeguarding Administration Manager or any member of the Pastoral Team. Links to specialist support services are also displayed in Student Support.
- Where concerns are raised about a young person's safety and there is an indication that they may be at risk, advice can be sought from any member of the School's Pastoral team and safeguarding concerns should always be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead*. Staff should never agree to keep information confidential and if confidentiality is to be broken, the young person should be made aware.

*For further information on all aspects of Safeguarding and Child Protection including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), see the MGS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Students Seeking Advice

Teachers may provide information about contraception but not personal advice to individual students less than 16 years, the legal age of consent. Teachers may, however, encourage individual students to seek professional health advice when appropriate. Effective RSE should enable and encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having sex or contemplating doing so. It is desirable, although not always possible, that that person should be their parent or carer. The law allows health professionals to see and, in some circumstances, to treat young people confidentially, and part of this process includes counselling and discussion about talking to parents.

There may be cases where a teacher learns from an under 16-year-old that they are having, or contemplating having, sexual intercourse. In these circumstances, the School will take steps to ensure that:

- Wherever possible, the young person is encouraged to talk to their parents or carer.
- Any child protection issues are addressed as a priority (see above).
- That the young person has been supported and informed about contraception, including information about where they can access contraception and advice services: ideally, this information would be delivered by the School Nurse or other appropriate medical professional.
- Students are aware of moral, physical and legal implications.

Parental Consultation

Parents and Carers have access to the RSE Policy via the School's website. Section 405 of the Education Act 1996 gives parents the right to withdraw their children from either part, or all, of the Relationships and Sex Education provided by the school. Parents/carers who wish to withdraw their children from all, or part, of the RSE Programme, should inform the Headteacher in writing. They are welcome to meet the appropriate member of the Pastoral Team to discuss their decision and to view materials about which they may be concerned. The aim of the meeting is to discuss the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the young person. This could include any social and emotional effects of not feeling included, as well as the possibility of the young person hearing their peers' version of what was discussed in class, rather than what was said by the teacher.

Once discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' right to withdraw their child, up to and until three terms before the young person is 16. After that point, if the young person wishes to receive sex education, the school should make arrangements to provide the young person with sex education during one of those terms.

Students who are withdrawn from Relationship and Sex Education lessons will be provided with alternative work. The situation will be handled sensitively.

This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, in exceptional circumstances the Headteacher may want to take the young person's SEND needs into account when making this decision.

The School works in partnership with parents so that RSE reflects their wishes and the culture of the community the School serves.

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