



THAMESVIEW SCHOOL

**Thong Lane, Gravesend,
Kent DA12 4LF**

**Relationships and Sex
Education Policy**

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RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Thamesview School believes that relationships and sex education make an essential contribution to every student's health, wellbeing and preparation for adult life in society. It is an integral part of our PSHE programme under the umbrella of the Healthy Schools Scheme.

The students in our school come from diverse backgrounds, expressing a spectrum of beliefs and values. Together with our governing body, we have consulted and developed a familiarity with the beliefs and attitudes which our range of families have about issues such as relationships and sex education, abortion, contraception, homosexuality and sex outside marriage.

The stage of development and the experiences of any group of young people of the same age will be diverse and varied. This fact has clear implications for curriculum content, teaching approaches, and the creation of an appropriate learning environment based on the need to develop in young people respect for each other's differences.

The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the general ethos of the school, will seek to persuade students in need of support to come forward

WHAT IS RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE)?

RSE is an educational entitlement for children and young people and must build upon the best evidence as to what works. It should support children and young people in managing puberty and adolescence and prepare them for adult life in which they can:

- Be aware of and enjoy their sexuality.
- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour.
- Have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others.
- Behave responsibly within sexual and personal relationships.
- Communicate effectively.
- Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and their partner from unintended/unwanted conceptions and STIs including HIV.
- Neither exploit others nor be exploited.
- Access confidential advice and support.

Sex Ed Forum 1999

Why Should RSE Be Taught?

Effective RSE can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by students if they are to establish and maintain healthy relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

1. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The law in relation to RSE makes reference to:

- Education Act 1996

- Sexual Exclusion Report on Teenage Pregnancy 2000
- National Healthy Schools Model Framework 2003
- Learning and Skills Act 2000
- Every Child Matters
- The governing bodies of schools are required to keep an up-to-date SRE policy that describes content and the organisation of SRE provided outside the national curriculum science order.
- Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their children from SRE lessons except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum.
- The SRE programme must include information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.
- The DfE Relationships and Sex Guidance (0116/2000) suggests that schools should set sex and relationships education within a broader base of self-esteem and responsibility for the consequences of one's actions.
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 are made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and provide that pupils receiving primary education must be taught Relationships Education, pupils receiving secondary education must be taught RSE and that all primary and secondary pupils must be taught Health Education.
- The new subjects of Relationships Education and RSE must be taught in all maintained schools, academies and independent schools.
- Equality Act 2010

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aims

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 ways and to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect and responsibility, free from any abuse. Relationships and sex education at Thamesview aims to provide students with clear, accurate and unambiguous information about human reproduction, sexuality and relationships within the responsibility and the value of family life (a fundamental social group in society typically consisting of one or two parents and their children). The aim of the curriculum is to enable students to take responsibility for their sexuality, to be aware of the needs of others and the implications and consequences of sexual behaviour. The programme at Thamesview emphasises the skills, attitudes and values that young people need in order to form loving and caring relationships.

Objectives

Thamesview School aims to provide young people with:

- Relationship skills that prepare them for the challenges of teenage years
- To teach human reproduction with clarity in Science throughout Years 7 to 11 (including an understanding of contraception and Sexually Transmitted Infections)
- To create a programme which caters for students' needs and is sensitive to individuals and groups
- To generate an atmosphere where questions can be asked and discussions on sexual matters can take place without embarrassment

- To discuss the physical and emotional changes which take place during adolescence and provide reassurance
- To understand the value of family life, the implications of parenthood and the needs of the very young
- To help children to affirm their rights, to be able to resist unwanted touches or advances and to communicate such matters
- To develop growing understanding of other risk-taking behaviour such as drugs, smoking and alcohol and the motivation and skills to keep themselves safe
- To be aware of sources of help and to acquire the skills and confidence to use them
- To encourage parents to be partners in this learning process by keeping them informed and reassuring them
- To develop students' practices and understanding of different kinds of contraception and safe sex and to know how to access further advice, guidance and support locally
- To ensure young people know how the law applies to sexual relationships
- Opportunities to explore their own values and develop their own moral framework
- Opportunities to understand and accept difference and diversity
- An understanding of their own bodies
- The ability to know where to seek help and advice
- High self-esteem, self awareness and emotional health
- An awareness of the right they have over their own body
- The skills to be assertive
- Good communication skills
- The skills to make positive informed choices that reduce risk to themselves
- The ability to respect the right of others to hold opinions that differ from their own as long as these views do not impact on the rights of others
- The ability to take responsibility for and accept the consequences of their own actions
- The knowledge to reduce the risks to their own and the health of others
- The ability to understand the risks to health and well being associated with teenage conception
- To understand sexual violence and sexual harassment between children

3. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

At Thamesview School we ensure Relationship Education, RSE and Health Education is accessible for all students. Teaching is differentiated and personalised to ensure accessibility and age appropriate.

4. LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT)

We will ensure the needs of all students are appropriately met and that students understand the importance of equality and respect. LGBT will be taught as an integrated part of the students RSE education

5. GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT

The governors at Thamesview recognise that the development of young people into mature and responsible adults is achieved through a variety of influences including background, upbringing, family life, beliefs, friends, the community and the partnership between school and parents.

Thamesview strives to create an ethos that gives high priority to moral considerations, places emphasis on responsibility and respect for others, implicitly and explicitly expressed through actions and reactions to situations and through individual and corporate decision-making. The implementation of this policy will further support and advance these aims and values.

6. WORKING WITH PARENTS

Parents are advised of the content and intention to deliver relationship and sex education as part of the PSHE programme through the website. Parents are welcome to review the resources and materials used in lessons. Parents are consulted for their views of the programme in individual meetings as the need or opportunity arises. This is often supported by the SNP.

7. TEACHING APPROACHES

The school recognises the need to begin with pupils' own experiences, beliefs and values and, therefore, places a high importance on creating a supportive and secure atmosphere where they can develop the confidence needed to talk, listen and think about sex and relationships. In order to do this, teachers:

- Establish ground rules with pupils
- Emphasise the importance of mutual respect
- Require no open personal disclosures in a class setting
- Use distancing techniques
- Provide for anonymity by using a question box (this also gives the teacher time to consult with colleagues on how to answer unexpected questions from pupils)
- Encourage reflection and the possibility of working with external agencies

The school also draws on a range of teaching methods in order to encourage exploration of attitudes, values and beliefs, using active learning methods which involve pupils and help them to personalise information. This also increases the likelihood of the learning being relevant and effective. The school includes activities where pupils can practise and develop confidence in using communication, negotiation and decision-making skills. Pupils are consulted about issues they wish to explore, how they wish to work together, how well lessons are going and what changes need to be made.

The school recognises that some aspects of RSE are a whole school concern and that some aspects can be covered by subject teachers across the curriculum. However, there are aspects which need to be taught separately in PSHE, including those specifically relating to sexual matters such as contraception and STIs. Not all teachers are best suited to teach some of these. Therefore, some RSE topics may be delivered by a panel of teachers who are particularly trained and confident in teaching this subject. In addition, the school draws on the expertise of the School Nurse, faith communities and a representative spectrum of national specialist agencies. Pupils are given a choice about their participation in learning activities related to sexual matters such as contraception and STIs. Resources are chosen from agencies which represent diverse beliefs, which are appropriate to pupils' age, maturity and religious and cultural background.

All teachers are given training on handling controversial topics and are made clear about confidentiality boundaries and know where/who to refer pupils for confidential advice and support.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Students and teachers will be made aware throughout the programme that some information cannot be held confidentially. This is explained to teachers at induction and links to the Confidentiality Policy. Students will be offered sensitive and caring support if disclosures are made.

- Disclosure or suspicion of possible abuse will invoke the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Students with Special Educational Needs may need additional help to develop skills to reduce risks and to learn appropriate behaviour. This may be through the SNP, key workers appointed to individual students or other specific health professionals

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

There is a commitment to monitor the effectiveness of the RSE programme at Thamesview by asking both teachers and students through questionnaires, discussion and team meetings. Parents will be consulted as appropriate. Evaluation will be against aims and objectives.

10. ORGANISATION

Delivered:

RSE is not an isolated subject: it permeates the whole school curriculum, the ethos of the school, the pastoral system and is informed by the role models given by teachers. Opportunities should be used as they occur for answering pupils' questions and exploring issues as they arise.

RSE is:

- Embedded in the PSHE and Science curriculums
- Enhanced in English and Drama

Who delivers RSE?

- Range of teaching and support staff
- External agencies used to enhance programmes
- The PSHE Co-ordinator is responsible for the overall planning, implementation and review of the programme.

11. RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

Relationships and sex education is part of all students' education and it is hoped that all will participate. However, the school acknowledges that, under the Education Act 1993, parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the relationships and sex education programme except for that part which occurs in the National Science Curriculum. Parents need to be aware, however, that relationships and sex education can occur at any time if it arises naturally from class discussion. They also need to consider whether they want their child withdrawn from all relationships and sex education or just that part which deals explicitly with sexual intercourse and related issues. Discussions on feelings, values and relationships may well not be of concern. Parents wishing to exercise that right are asked to make an appointment to meet the PSHE co-ordinator to discuss their concerns. The school recognises that they are under

no obligation to do so, however. The school will provide alternative arrangements. Students who are withdrawn are given the opportunity to talk to the pastoral support manager for that student.

12. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

We strive to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and that there is no discrimination or bullying on the grounds of gender, race, religion, colour, language, culture, social circumstances, appearance, sexuality, ability or disability.

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

This policy was agreed and adopted at a Governors' Meeting held on _____ (*date*)

Signed: _____ (Governor)

Signed: _____ (Headteacher)

The policy will be formally reviewed in _____ (*date*)

APPENDIX 1

In Key Stage 3 pupils learn how good relationships can promote mental well-being, how to manage their feelings positively and how to manage changing relationships. They learn the law relating to sexual behaviour, how to develop skills of assertiveness in order to resist peer pressure and stereotyping. Students will also learn how to access sources of advice and support and when and where to get help.

In Key Stage 4 and 5 pupils learn to recognise the influences and pressures around sexual behaviour and how to respond appropriately and confidently seeking professional health advice where necessary. They learn how HIV and other STIs affect the body, how different forms of contraception work, the risk of early sexual activity and the link with the use of alcohol. Discussions around moral issues such as abortion, contraception and the age of consent are all considered.

Further content that may be included any either Key Stage:

Accessing help and support

- Local and national
- Turning to trusted adults
- Unplanned pregnancy – pregnancy choices
- Emotional literacy
- Confidentiality – in school and in sexual health services

Minimising risk in sexual encounters

- Knowing about STIs
- Knowing that contraception exists and where to access sexual health services
- Condoms, condom demonstrations and safer sex
- Alcohol education
- Considering real life situations e.g. parties
- Peer pressure and influence
- Avoiding exploitation
- Challenging myths and misunderstandings

Delaying sexual activity

- Considering how you will know that you are really ready for sex
- Saying 'no' and being assertive
- Considering rights
- Raising self esteem
- Exploring friendships

Realising potential for positive sexual health

- What makes a "good" sexual relationship
- Maintaining sexual relationships
- Communication and negotiation in sexual relationships
- Gender issues

Challenging stereotyping and prejudice

- Challenging sexual stereotyping
- Teaching about sexuality
- Challenging homophobia
- Considering media messages

Improving relationships

- Valuing friendships
- Communication skills – conflict, negotiation, assertiveness, appreciation