

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

1. Context

This policy was developed in response to Sex & Relationship Education Guidance (DfES 2019), the National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, and National Healthy Schools Programme, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019. Documents that inform the RSE policy Education Act (1996), Learning and Skills Act (2000), Education and Inspections Act (2006), Equality Act (2010), Children and Social Work Act (2017), and Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023).

Department for Education guidance 'Teaching about relationships, sex and health (DfE September 2023) suggests that this policy should be read in conjunction with government publications: Respectful School Communities: self-review and signposting tool, SEND code of practice: 0-25 years, as well as the College policies relating to Supporting Pupils with Mental Health Problems at School, the Promoting Good Behaviour and Discipline Policy and the Promotion of Democratic (British) Values 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. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help and to know where to access support.

Relationship and Sex Education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Some aspects are taught in Science and others are taught as part of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE or Life Skills). Our pupils' views are actively sought (e.g. in Pupil Thrive meetings) to influence lesson planning and teaching.

The Malvern College curriculum includes RSE (Relationships and Sex Education)

2. Definition of Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development.

RSE gives young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It 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. RSE also covers contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It teaches what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior in relationships. This helps pupils to 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, both on and offline.

At Malvern, we believe that RSE should:

- Recognise that parents are the first people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up and that they have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships. We aim to work in partnership with parents and pupils. Parents will find an overview of the Life Skills curriculum on the parent hub on the College website.

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- Recognise that for many young people the distinction between the online world and other aspects of life is less marked than for some adults. Where topics and issues are likely to be encountered by pupils online we will support them in distinguishing between different types of online content and making well founded decisions.
- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process and not be taught in an isolated manner aside from other topics or issues.
- Be an entitlement for all young people with teaching that is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content.
- Support each individual as they grow and learn.
- Be set within the wider school context to support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept which includes a variety of types of structure, and acceptance of different approaches.
- Ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect.
- Encourage pupils and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation. The important values are love, respect and caring for each other.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma, embarrassment or bullying.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals and other support agencies.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – that would be inappropriate teaching.

3. The Main Elements of RSE

Education at Malvern

- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices.
- Learning the value of family life, committed stable relationships, and marriage.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision making.

Personal and Social Skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.

- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Managing conflict.

Knowledge and Understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- Learning about contraception and sexual health, including an awareness of the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services available.
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay.
- Learning about the laws relating to sex and relationships

4. Aims of Relationships and Sex Education

The primary aim of RSE at Malvern is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSE programme aims to prepare pupils for an adult life in which they can:

- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide decisions, judgements and behaviour.
- Understand the consequences of actions and behave responsibly within sexual relationships.
- Avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sexual activity.
- Communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.
- Develop an awareness of their sexuality and an understanding of human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity.
- Understand the arguments for delayed sexual activity.
- Understand the reasons for having protected sexual activity.
- Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves from unintended/unwanted conception and from sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
- Be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary.
- Know how the law applies to sexual relationships and be aware that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up.

5. Organisation and Content of RSE Education

The school delivers RSE through its Life Skills Programme, Religious Studies/Ethics and Science lessons at KS3 (FY), KS4 (Remove and Hundred) and KS5 (Sixth Form). RSE and Drug awareness training is supported by ITHappens Education.

The focus of the Life Skills curriculum is more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of reproduction are also included. Sessions may be supported by the Nurse Manager.

Relationship and Sex Education is supported by the College's wider curriculum for Life Skills. This enables pupils to receive their sex education in the wider context of relationships and helps prepare them for the opportunities, relationships and experiences of adult life.

The Science National Curriculum is more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten.

The RS curriculum focuses on moral and ethical considerations.

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some pupils will find sensitive. Teaching staff receive RSE training in order to support pupils appropriately. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lessons. When pupils ask questions we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the lesson. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the pupils, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

Assessment is carried out regularly. Reflection is crucial for learning as it encourages pupils to consolidate what they have learnt and to form new understanding, skills and attitudes.

6. Inclusion

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns. In the first instance these will be dealt with by the Head of Life Skills, Mrs. Andrews.

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that RSE is relevant to them.

7. The Right to Withdraw Pupils from Relationship and Sex Education. Some parents prefer to take responsibility for sex education. They have the right to withdraw their children from some or all of Sex Education programme up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point if the pupil wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, arrangements will be made for this to happen during one of those terms. Should a parent decide to exercise their right to withdraw their children from Sex Education, we encourage them to discuss their decision with the the Deputy Head:Pastoral at the earliest opportunity. Parents should communicate their decision to withdraw their children from the sex education element of Relationship and Sex Education lessons in writing to the Deputy Head:Pastoral.

8. Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues

Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the school will be expected to handle information without parental knowledge. Visiting speakers are aware that they should pass on any concerns raised by young people if they relate to safeguarding matters.

In the case where a teacher learns from an under 16-year-old that they are having or contemplating sexual intimacy.

· The young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to their parents and, if necessary, seek medical advice.

- Child protection issues will be considered, and if necessary referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The young person will be counselled by the Medical Centre about sexual health and emotional maturity, and given pertinent information as deemed necessary.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation of RSE Education

- It is the responsibility of the Head of Life Skills to monitor and evaluate RSE provision annually as part of the review of Life Skills.
- It is the responsibility of the Heads of Department for Religious Studies and Biology to monitor and evaluate RSE provision annually as part of the review of teaching and learning of this aspect of the curriculum.
- The Head of Life Skills and Heads of Department must inform the Deputy Head: Pastoral of any changes or issues which have arisen in relation to RSE education.
- It is the responsibility of the Senior Deputy Head to lead the review of RSE policy with governors via the Council.

10. Support – extensive support is available for pupils who wish to discuss LGBT/diversity issues from the Pastoral Team, House staff and the College Counsellors, as well as pupil support groups.

The College's Medical Officers, Housemasters and Housemistresses, as well as the Chaplain and Tutors, discuss pupils' questions about sex and contraception and give advice where appropriate. Sexual contact and sexual relationships are not allowed in College. Severe sanctions, including permanent exclusion, can result from failure to heed this rule. Pupils are made aware of the disciplinary consequences of sexual intimacy on the school site or on school visits. Pupils are also made aware of the fact that personal displays of affection are not appropriate during the school day. It is important that pupils avoid doing anything that will cause embarrassment to others, such as kissing in public. As in all aspects of life, pupils must be aware of, and respect, the feelings of others.

The friends that pupils make at Malvern will always be an important part of each individual's well-being and happiness and some friendships may develop into closer personal relationships. As sexual intimacy at this stage has the potential to lead to pressure or even exploitation of others, and because there are also potential legal implications resulting from sexual intimacy with/between persons under 18 years old, school is not a place for sexual intimacy, and pupils are made aware of this. Severe sanctions, including permanent exclusion, can result from failure to heed this rule.