



NORTHAMPTON  
HIGH SCHOOL

GDST  
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

## NORTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL

### RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

#### Policy statement

Definition of RSE – from *Sex Education Forum*

*Relationships and sex education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, 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.*

Northampton High School takes its responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible Relationships and Sex education (RSE) to all its pupils as part of the school's Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education curriculum (PSHE) very seriously. At our school we want parents and pupils to feel assured that sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both age and development of pupils.

This policy is drafted by the Head of PSHE in consultation with the Head, Head of Junior School, Deputy Head Pastoral, the school nurse and SEND coordinator. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss this policy content during parent forums and through invitations to discuss on a one-to-one basis. The policy is updated and reviewed annually to ensure it remains current and in line with government requirements.

This teaching is not intended to replace advice or guidance which is ideally received at home, but to supplement and broaden knowledge and understanding.

#### Aims of policy

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching matters around sex, sexuality and sexual health in a way that is fully understood and effectively retained by pupils in our care. This includes emphasis on good health, the value of self-esteem in making choices and judgements, the nature of healthy and consensual relationships, and knowledge about how the body works, all within a context of moral issues and values.

RSE will explore the concept of marriage and family life, and the raising of children, as well as highlighting the role of healthy and stable relationships as building blocks for community and society.

We want our pupils to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle and to care for and respect their bodies, and we provide them with the right tools that will enable them to seek information or support, should they need it, both during their school years and after.

### **Provision**

We follow the Department of Education guidance mandatory in England from September 2020: *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance*.

Taught PSHE has also been part of the Independent Schools Standards Regulations since 2014. We aim to provide a relevant, broad and balanced curriculum that not just fulfils, but exceeds externally set standards.

The Northampton High School curriculum is spiral, so that topics can be revisited in later years. Although the topics below are listed specifically, we treat Relationships and Sex Education as part of the wider PSHE curriculum. We support equal opportunities in education, seeing it as enabling and encouraging all our students to build self-esteem through discussion and activities in a safe environment. We are equipping them with decision-making skills irrespective of gender roles and stereotyping.

### **The main topics covered in RSE are:**

- Establishing healthy relationships
- Puberty, menstruation and change
- Consent and how to communicate this to others
- Contraception
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Understanding our bodies
- Sexting
- Safer sex
- Sexual exploitation
- Sex and pornography
- Personal choices

Under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, Northampton High School will not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation and the delivery of RSE will reflect this.

At Northampton High School, our SEND Policy sets out how we make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and when planning and delivering the RSE curriculum, we take account of the SEND Code of Practice.

As part of the PSHE programme, Relationships and Sex Education is taught by a range of staff within the Pastoral Team, mainly in small groups, using a range of activities with materials and support provided by health professionals. External professional speakers are also regular contributors to the wider programme of study and offer expert and individual information and advice.

The programme is developed and reviewed in consultation to ensure that it meets the needs of the whole school community, including pupils with SEND.

We ensure that RSE is age relevant and appropriate across all year groups; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as our pupils do and meets their needs.

We ensure that staff are given regular and ongoing training on issues related to RSE including confidentiality, setting ground rules and establishing positive behaviour, handling controversial issues and responding to questions.

We ensure that all staff are up to date with policy changes, and familiar with the school policy and guidance relating to relationships and sex education.

We ensure their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RSE in school.

### **Terminology**

Pupils will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang and everyday terms used in social situations will be discussed; this will be part of the discussion about what is and what isn't acceptable language to be used.

Ground rules are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter and staff will use strategies to enable pupils to feel comfortable to ask questions. If controversial questions are asked, the teacher will use professional judgement about how to answer them and pupils will be allowed to raise anonymous questions if preferred.

We recognise that because of the nature of the subject, sensitive and controversial issues are likely to arise. These may include, for example, abortion, emerging gender identity, sexuality and sexual abuse. These are dealt with within the framework of the aims of the school and of the Relationships and Sex Education policy as a whole. Any cause for concern will be dealt with in accordance with our pastoral systems and safeguarding arrangements.

### **Guest speakers**

We sometimes use outside speakers to complement our teaching of this content, who are asked to work within the framework of the school's Relationship and Sex Education policy and adhere to the policy for visiting speakers. A teacher will be present throughout these lessons.

### **Withdrawal from RSE**

The school aims to keep parents informed about all aspects of the RSE curriculum and urges parents to review this policy. RSE is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports the whole development of the child. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education. Any parents considering withdrawing their child from RSE should contact the Head, or Deputy Head Pastoral, to discuss their concerns. Parents will then be invited into the school to discuss the request to ensure that their wishes are fully understood. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, Northampton High School will respect the parent's request to withdraw their daughter. Requests from parents must be made annually for consideration.

According to Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance paragraph 41-43 pupils can opt into sex education from three terms before their 16th birthday.

There is no right to withdraw from relationship education or health education.

**Monitoring, evaluation and review**

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and other changes. For this reason we monitor, evaluate and regularly review our RSE curriculum. This policy will be reviewed annually, with consultation from parents, where appropriate.

Policy Reviewed: September 2024

Policy Reviewed by: Rebecca Kneen, Deputy Head Pastoral and Senior Leadership Team

Next Review due: September 2025