



Portsmouth
High School

GDST
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Pre-School, Prep, Senior and Sixth Form

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Part of the Girls' Day School Trust family of schools

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) 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.

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

This policy is written by the Assistant Heads Pastoral in consultation with the Head, Deputy Head, Head of the Prep School, Welfare Officer and SEND coordinator. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss this policy content via the Parents' Forum.

Aims of policy:

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching 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 outline the importance of marriage and family life and the raising of children, as well as highlighting the role of marriage and other stable relationships as building blocks for community and society.

We want our pupils to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle and to care 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 subscribe to the mandatory Department of Education guidance: *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance*.

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

The Portsmouth High School curriculum is spiral, so that topics can be re-visited 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

As part of the PSHE programme, Relationships and Sex Education is taught in teaching groups, using a range of activities.

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

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 staff's 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 Deputy Head/ Head of the prep school to discuss their concerns. According to *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance* paragraph 16 to 23 - pupils can opt into sex education from three terms before their 16th birthday.

Review and evaluation:

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and other changes. For this reason we regularly review our RSE curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Delivery Mechanism

See PSHEE Policy for details.

Evaluation, Assessment and Reporting to Parents

See PSHEE Policy for details.

Provision of Advice to Pupils on Contraception, Sexual and Reproductive Health

All pupils should feel able to approach any member of staff on these matters to seek advice or a listening ear. In practice, this is most likely to be our Welfare Officer, Mrs Ayling, or a member of the pastoral team.

As always, if a pupil asks us for confidentiality, we must explain that we will keep a pupil's confidence unless we feel it is in the pupil's best interests to pass on information. All along, we advise the pupil to confide in her parents.

If a pupil asks for specific advice or information about contraception etc., we may direct her to where the information can be found or where she may go to consult others e.g. her own GP, St Mary's Community Health Campus (2nd Floor, Milton Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO3 6AD, Tel: 0300 300 2016) or a pharmacy. We must not express our own opinion or make any suggestions which imply our own view on these matters.

Should a pupil ask to leave the school premises during the school day in order to obtain advice on a contraception, sexual or reproductive health matter (e.g. the morning after pill), we may not give permission for the girl to leave school or accompany her if she is below the Sixth Form. A Year 11 pupil who is over 16 may go if a member of staff is willing to accompany her. If the pupil insists that she is going to leave anyway, we must explain that we are obliged to tell her parents. If she subsequently leaves the premises, then we should phone her parents to say that she has left school. We would not offer an explanation. A girl in the Sixth Form would, of course, be able to take herself off-site, but, should she approach a member of staff to accompany her, this is in order, at the discretion of the member of staff. Girls in the Sixth Form may, of course, leave the site if they have their parents' blanket permission.

Date: August 2025

Review Date: August 2026

Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior) and Assistant Head Pastoral (Prep)

Location:

Parents' handbook

Website