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Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy (RSHE)

Context

At The Gilbert School, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is an important strand of the Personal Development Curriculum, preparing young people to face life outside and beyond school; it is also an integral part of our delivery of safeguarding education to our students.

In planning and delivering this programme, the varying knowledge, experience and maturity of the students are taken into consideration. We also aim to educate students to filter the often-conflicting information about sex and sexual morals represented to them on social media and by some less responsible sections of the media.

While we acknowledge parents/carers have an important role in imparting the facts of life to their children as a natural part of family life and discussion, it is also a fact that there will be some young people who may not benefit from this experience.

Taking these points into consideration, the school aims to provide with sensitivity, a framework which will equip all students with a knowledge of the physical, emotional, social and moral aspects of their developing sexuality, and of their place in long term and stable relationships. Attention is given in particular, to developing students' assertiveness when they are faced with peer and media pressure.

Our RSHE policy is based on the current Department for Education (DfE) Relationships education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (published 2021), the Children's Act of 2004 (updated 2009 and referenced in The Children and Families Act 2014) and Healthy Schools Guidance and model policy. The Ofsted report "Not Yet Good Enough PSHE Education in Schools" (May 2013 ref 130065) and The PSHE Association's publication of Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) for the 21st century, published in 2019 (developed by the PSHE Association and partners Brook and the Sex Education Forum) have also been considered.

1. What is Relationships, Sex and Health Education?

Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) is lifelong learning for all young people in school, irrespective of their gender, sex, culture, ethnicity or ability. It is about physical, moral and emotional development, the understanding of the importance of family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity. RSHE should enable students to make informed and appropriate choices as they become young adults and to develop responsible attitudes to sexual activity and the development of their own stable, loving relationships.

2. Principles and values

At the Gilberd School, we believe that RSHE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, from early childhood through to adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people.
- Be inclusive, ensuring that students of all genders, cultures, ethnicities, and abilities feel respected and supported.
- Support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.
- Encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure. The important values are love, respect and care for each other.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer in the delivery of Relationships, Sex and Health Education. We aim to work in partnership with health professionals and other advisers.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education in this school has three main elements:

- To develop and understand the importance of attitudes and values and how these are formed.
- To develop students' personal and social skills so that they are equipped to make healthy, safe and respectful decisions.
- To develop students' knowledge and understanding of relationships, sex and health so that they are equipped to be able to cope with growing up, physically and emotionally.

3. Aims

RSHE equips students with knowledge, understanding and confidence to form healthy relationships. Additionally, it will provide age-appropriate factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health and appropriate and safe relationships.

4. Organisation and content of Relationships, Sex and Health Education

The Gilberd School incorporates Relationships, Sex and Health Education as part of the PSHE programme within our Personal Development Curriculum, through RE and Science lessons at KS3 and KS4, and via 'drop-down' days. Science lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction though the importance of relationships is not forgotten. Students are also taught how to keep themselves safe online both in Computer Science lessons and in the tutorial programme.

Some RSHE lessons may cover topics or raise questions that some students may find sensitive. Where appropriate, external professionals, such as the school nurse or other providers, may be invited to assist in delivering parts of the RSHE programme. All RSHE teaching is expected to align with the values and principles outlined in this policy, and those involved in delivering RSHE must follow the full programme of study, irrespective of personal opinions or beliefs.

Delivery of RSHE is usually within mixed gender groups.

Core curriculum themes that run throughout the RSHE programme include:

- Building healthy relationships, including friendships and family life.
- Understanding consent, peer pressure and personal boundaries.
- Education about contraception, sexual health and reproduction.
- Safety online, including impact of social media and pornography on relationships.
- Developing emotional resilience and the ability to manage complex feelings.

5. Inclusion

The Gilberd School is committed to the provision of RSHE to all of its students and aims to recognise the diversity of students' faiths and family backgrounds. The content of lessons taught reflect the different views of these faiths and backgrounds.

Students with Special Needs

We ensure that all young people receive Relationships, Sex and Health Education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students. There may be occasions when additional support for students with special educational needs is given either in a one to one, or small group setting. This will be organised after liaison with parents/carers.

Sexual identity and sexual orientation

The Gilberd School provides a sensitive, respectful approach to discussions about sexual orientation and gender identity, where students can develop their knowledge without bias or discrimination.

6. Right to withdraw students from Relationships, Sex and Health Education

Some parents/carers prefer to take the responsibility for aspects of this element of education. Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Relationships, Sex and Health Education except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (i.e. in Science lessons). Parents/carers can do this up until 3 terms before their child turns 16. After that, it is the child's decision.

Any parent/carer wishing to exercise this right is asked to contact the Headteacher in writing at the earliest opportunity. A copy of the withdrawal request will be placed in the student's file, and usually a meeting is arranged to discuss any concerns a parent/carer may have, as well as the impact withdrawal from RSHE lessons might have. Once a child has been withdrawn from RSHE lessons, they cannot take part in further RSHE lessons until the request for withdrawal has been removed. The school can arrange for parents to review any RSHE resources planned for use and meet with relevant staff to discuss RSHE lessons.

If a student is withdrawn from RSHE education, they will receive supervision to complete independent study.

7. Confidentiality, controversial and sensitive issues

This RSHE complies with the Alpha Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.

Effective RSHE may bring about disclosures of a safeguarding nature. If a teacher is concerned that a student is at risk of sexual abuse, they must follow the school's safeguarding procedures, referring the matter as a cause for concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a member of staff learns from an under 16-year-old that they are sexually active or contemplating sexual activity, the school will ensure that:

- The young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to a parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice.
- Child Protection issues will be considered, and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead following the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The young person will be advised about contraception, including information about where young people can access contraception and advice services provided by the NHS.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation of Relationships Sex and Health Education

The RSHE provision will be monitored by the Subject Lead for Personal Development and appropriate senior staff. The Local Governing Body will ensure that the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy complies with national requirements and recommendations.

The content of both the Personal Development lessons and drop-down days are evaluated and adapted each time they are taught. Staff receive training to ensure lessons are delivered in an age-appropriate manner and recognise the needs of the students.

Related policies:

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Equality Statement
- E-Safety policy