

Policy

Relationships and Sex Education

Approved by:	CEO
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This policy applies to:	 DURHAM SIXTH FORM CENTRE

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Links with other policies:

This Policy is linked to:

- Climate for Learning and Attendance Policy
- Equality Information Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

1. Policy Introduction and Purpose Statement

Relationships and Sex Education Policy (RSE)

- 1.1. This Policy was developed in response to and in conjunction with the following policies and guidance:
 - [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers](#)
 - [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
 - [The Equality Act 2010](#)
 - [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
 - [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years \(statutory guidance\)](#)
- 1.2. The consultation process regarding the delivery of the Relationships and Sex Education Policy has involved:
 - Qualitative and quantitative student voice exercises.
 - Consultation with the Student Executive group.
 - Work with specific gender groups linked to relevant topics such as Harmful Sexual Behaviour and consent.
 - Review of RSE curriculum content with the Pastoral and Safeguarding team.
 - Consultation with the wider school community e.g. Health and Wellbeing Officer, NHS Sexual Health Team, Youth Work Organisations, School Counsellor, Progress Tutors, Pastoral Support Managers and the Safeguarding team.
 - Consultation with named school Governor with responsibility and awareness of safeguarding and the CORE programme.

What is Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)?

- 1.3. Effective Relationships and Sex Education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. Although the RSE statutory requirements do not apply to sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies or Further Education (FE) colleges, Durham Sixth Form Centre draws upon the statutory expectations placed upon education providers as a means of good practice and educational integrity.
- 1.4. We believe that RSE is lifelong learning around physical, sexual, moral, emotional, social and cultural development. It is about developing an understanding of relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity, including the importance of stable and loving relationships and having respect, love and care, for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills, exploring issues and values and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes. It allows students to make considered decisions and to weigh up different options, including when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. RSE can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help and to know where to access support.
- 1.5. During 16-19 education young people are at the legal age of consent and we ensure that our RSE support is age-appropriate. We aim to help students fully understand what healthy, happy and responsible relationships look like by providing a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place by creating a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships. It aims to promote respect for others and for those of a different sexual orientation. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.
- 1.6. Our programme recognises that young people may be interested to know more about being gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender. We recognise that students will need more information on sexual risk, pregnancy, sexual health, fertility and infertility. Our curriculum will address violence, exploitation, the law and discrimination and look at relationships between self esteem and body image and how to challenge negative messages from peers, the media and society.

1.7. Our knowledge-based RSE curriculum aims to help support students to:

- Have strong relationship skills, including knowing how to express their feelings.
- Have a good knowledge of their own bodies.
- Develop self-worth, confidence and self-efficacy.
- Know the qualities and behaviours relating to different types of positive relationships.
- Recognise unhealthy relationships and make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships.
- Have knowledge of prejudice and its negative effects.
- Recognise and challenge media stereotypes.
- Understand how the law applies to sexual relationships including having knowledge about consent and how to seek and assertively communicate consent.
- Be aware of Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB) and know how to access support and help.
- Be aware what female genital mutilation (FGM) is and the laws and guidance linked to the crime.
- Develop positive values and a moral framework and conscience that will guide decisions, judgements and behaviour, including the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and personal relationships.
- Avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
- Communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.
- Develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality, challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity.
- Know about different types of contraception and understand the reasons for having protected sex and the dangers of having unprotected sex.
- Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from unwanted/uninvited conception and sexually transmitted infections.
- Be aware of sources of help and treatment and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary.
- Understand how relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health.
- Be aware of the risks of online relationships as well as contact from strangers online.
- Make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts regarding sex and relationships.
- Be aware of responsibility and the consequences of one's actions in relation to sexual activity.
- Link RSE with issues of peer pressure and other risk taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol.

2. Principles Underpinning RSE at DSFC

Principles and Values

2.1. Durham Sixth Form Centre believes that RSE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all students.
- Be delivered in a variety of ways and not just in the classroom e.g. wellbeing stalls, Google Sites, via one-to-one discussions and Student Briefings.
- Encourage students to share and respect each other's views, through delivery of the CORE programme.
- Be sensitive to all students' experiences.
- Be aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure. We take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of young people based on their home circumstances.
- Generate an atmosphere where students feel comfortable in open discussions and where questions and discussion on sexual and sensitive matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.

- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals.
- Evolve and adapt in line with technological and society changes e.g. social media, mobile phones.

Attitudes and Values

2.2. We support students in regards to:

- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and of moral considerations.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision making.
- Challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions.

Personal and Social Skills

2.3. We support students in regards to:

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding and respect of difference.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Managing conflict.
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and Understanding

2.4. We support students in regards to:

- Understanding human sexuality, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services.
- Avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

2.5. Students at Durham Sixth Form Centre will address the themes below via the delivery methods identified in **Section 3**.

Healthy Relationships and the Law

2.6. Students will be taught:

- That there are different types of committed and stable relationships.
- How to determine whether other students, adults or sources of information are trustworthy.
- The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships.
- How stereotypes, particularly in this context stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage.
- That in school and wider society they can and should expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others.
- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.
- That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence, including child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence, and why these are always unacceptable.
- The explicit links between everyday sexism, misogynistic attitudes (including the influence of toxic online cultures) and the escalation into violence against women and girls. Students will be challenged to identify harmful myths and cultivate a zero-tolerance culture toward misogyny. They will also be taught how to identify and learn from positive male role models.
- About ethical behaviour in relationships, beyond respecting boundaries and consent.
- The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality.

Online and Media

2.7. Students will be taught:

- Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
- About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.
- About technological threats and digital abuse such as AI-generated abuse and deepfakes.
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including prison.

Being Safe

2.8. Students will be taught:

- The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
- How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).

Intimate and Sexual Relationships, including Sexual Health

2.9. Students will be taught:

- That all aspects of health can be affected by the choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
- That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressuring others.
- The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices.
- That there are choices in relation to pregnancy.
- How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
- How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Safer Sex

2.10. Students will be taught:

- Information that will help them develop their knowledge about safer sex. Sexual health remains important to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This will be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment. Progress Tutors will use strategies such as setting ground rules with the class to help manage sensitive discussion.

Contraception

2.11. Students will be taught:

- About the different types of contraception and where to access it; this is equally relevant to boys and girls.

Sexually transmitted infections and sexual health

2.12. Students will be taught:

- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, remain one of the strongest causes of illness due to infectious disease among young people. STIs can cause long-term fertility problems, long-term illness or even death. The age group most at risk of being diagnosed with an STI is

young people aged 16-24. Students need to be aware of the risks of contracting an STI and how to prevent it.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

2.13. Students will be taught:

- The facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age appropriate and inclusive way. When teaching about these topics, our Progress Tutors recognise that young people may be discovering, questioning or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. Therefore, our curriculum uses equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same sex relationships.

Consent

2.14. Students will be taught:

- Key aspects of the law relating to sex including the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment and knowledge of the law surrounding consent.

Grooming, Child Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Abuse

2.15. Students will be taught:

- About grooming, sexual exploitation, child-on-child sexual violence, sexual harassment and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour. These topics will be addressed sensitively and clearly.
- The physical and emotional damage caused by FGM. Students will be taught where to find support and that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM.
- As well as addressing this in the context of the law, students will be taught to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk.

3. Organisation and Content of RSE

3.1. Durham Sixth Form Centre delivers RSE through:

- CORE curriculum
- Student Briefings
- Safeguarding Google Site
- Stalls in the Refectory
- Sexual Health Support Workers
- Community Sexual Health Workers
- Health and Wellbeing Lead
- NHS (Community Sexual Health)
- Drop-in-sessions
- Referrals: Talking Changes
- Referrals: Counsellor
- Safeguarding Team
- Being an accredited C-Card School
- Links with Durham University LGBTQ+ support group
- Pastoral Team, including Progress Tutors and Pastoral Support Managers

4. Inclusion

4.1. Durham Sixth Form Centre will teach about the above topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of students will relate to them.
- Is sensitive to all students' experience.
- During lessons, makes students feel:

- Safe and supported
- Able to engage with the key messages.

Ethnic and Cultural Groups

- 4.2. We intend our Policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups.
- 4.3. Durham Sixth Form Centre and its staff have a good understanding of student's faith backgrounds and local faith communities. This helps to create a constructive context for the teaching of these subjects. In all subjects, the religious and personal background of students is taken into account when planning and teaching, so that the topics that are included in the CORE content are appropriate.
- 4.4. Durham Sixth Form Centre ensures that it complies with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics.
- 4.5. Durham Sixth Form Centre teaches the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- 4.6. We will ensure that all students receive Relationships and Sex Education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary. High quality delivery that is differentiated and personalised ensures that information is accessible and fit for purpose. Durham Sixth Form Centre is aware that some students are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. These students are supported by the school's Director of Student Support and have the appropriate support documentation in place e.g. Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) or Student Support Plan (SSP).

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

- 4.7. We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Students, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that RSE is relevant to them.
- 4.8. In teaching RSE at Durham Sixth Form Centre we ensure that the needs of all students are appropriately met, and that all students understand the importance of equality and respect. As an establishment we comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010 which includes sexual orientation and gender reassignment amongst the protected characteristics.

Confidentiality and Sensitive Issues

- 4.9. Staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. In any case where child protection procedures need to be followed, the member of staff will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.
- 4.10. All information about individual students and staff is private and should only be shared with staff that need to know.
- 4.11. All social services, medical and personal information about students at Durham Sixth Form Centre is stored in a safe and secure location (such as SIMS and CPOMS), which cannot be accessed by individuals other than appropriate members of staff and which meets all GDPR requirements.
- 4.12. As per Keeping Children Safe in Education, student requests relating to names, gender-questioning requests, pronouns, or other aspects of social transition will not be agreed automatically. Rather, they will be discussed on an individual basis with a senior member of the Pastoral Team who will make a holistic assessment of what is in the best interests of the student and other students. Parents/carers should be

involved in the vast majority of cases, following an assessment of the potential impact on the students' wellbeing and psychological development.

5. Withdrawal from RSE

- 5.1. Students, and their parents/carers, have the right to request that they are withdrawn from some aspects of RSE. If students or parents/carers feel that they need further information to make an informed decision, they should contact the school and ask to speak to their child's Progress Tutor (PT) or Pastoral Support Manager (PSM).
- 5.2. Before granting any such request, a PSM or PT discusses the request with both students and parents/carers, where appropriate.
- 5.3. The PSM or PT discusses with the student and/or parents/carers the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the student.
- 5.4. This process is the same for students with SEND. However there may be exceptional circumstances where the PSM or Director of Student Support may want to take a student's specific needs into account when making this decision.
- 5.5. There is no right to withdraw from Health Education.

6. Protected Characteristics

- 6.1. The protected characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage or civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1. This Policy will be reviewed at least annually (or sooner if required). At every review, the Policy will be approved by the CEO and shared with the Local Governing Board.

APPROVED



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