

## Skipton Girls' High School Relationships and Sex Education Policy

### 1 Introduction

Skipton Girls' High School believes that effective relationship and sex education (RSE) is essential for young people to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. The aim of RSE is to support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. A successful programme will help young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

This policy is based on guidance from The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Our relationship and sex education programme is intended to complement and support the role of parents and carers in educating their children about sexuality and relationships.

### 2 What is relationships and sex education (RSE)?

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It covers five main areas:

1. **Families** and the importance of stable, loving relationships in raising children.
2. **Respectful relationships** including friendships, intimate relationships and issues of prejudice, discrimination and bullying.
3. **Online and Media** which includes online risks, how to stay safe and the influence of social media on behaviour and attitudes towards sex and relationships.
4. **Intimate sexual relationships** including sexual health.
5. **Being safe:** which includes issues of consent, abuse and exploitation. Although some of the themes covered may remain consistent throughout the age range, some topics, and the manner in which they are taught, will be age appropriate.

### 3 What is taught in RSE at Skipton Girls' High School?

The following outlines the content of RSE, the majority of which is delivered through the PHSE curriculum in fortnightly lessons.

#### 3.1 Families:

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- What marriage are, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

#### 3.2 Respectful relationships, including friendships

- The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.
- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can

cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice).

- That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs.
- 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 and why these are always unacceptable.
- The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

### **3.3 Online and Media**

- 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.
- 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.
- The impact of viewing harmful content.
- That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

### **3.4 Being Safe**

- 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).

### **3.5 Intimate sexual relationships, including sexual health**

- How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.
- That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
- The facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.
- That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
- That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
- The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.
- The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.
- That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).
- How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.
- About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about

treatment.

- 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.

#### **4 Organisation of Sex and Relationships education**

The delivery of RSE at SGHS is carried out within PHSE lessons in which every student in years 7-11 has one lesson a fortnight. Other curriculum areas making significant contributions to sex and relationships work include the physical aspects of sex education in Science; issues relating to population and reproduction in Humanities; and moral and ethical issues, such as marriage and abortion in RS.

The pastoral team (including student progress and the school counsellor) work with students who have a range of issues including relationships, self-esteem, gender and sexual identity and offer guidance through working with students as and when they require it.

The gatherings calendar which is reviewed on an annual basis can include themes that are relevant to RSE such as trafficking, International Day for the elimination of violence against women, bullying and LGBTQ+ school diversity week.

The Government advises that pupils should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage and civil partnerships for family life and bringing up children. However, the Government also recognises that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside of marriage. SGHS will take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances.

#### **5 Students with special educational needs**

The school will ensure that students with special educational needs are properly included in RSE. Some students will be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than their peers, and others may be confused as to what is acceptable public behaviour. We will help these students to develop skills to reduce the risks of being abused and exploited, and to learn what behaviours are, and are not, acceptable.

#### **6 LGBTQ+**

In teaching Relationships Education and RSE, we will ensure that the needs of all students are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. We will ensure that all provision complies with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, (please see The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Departmental advice), under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.

We will endeavour to ensure that all teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. We will also ensure that LGBT+ content is fully integrated into PHSE programmes of study rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson.

The school will not tolerate bullying in any form, including:

- Sexual - talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- Sexist - related to a person's gender or gender reassignment
- Related to a person's sexual orientation
  
- Related to a person's gender identity or gender reassignment

#### **7 Contraception**

Knowledge of and access to the different types of contraception is a major part of the Government's strategy to reduce teenage pregnancy. Effective RSE in secondary schools has an important role to play in achieving this.

PHSE staff and Student Progress are able to give students full information about the different types of contraception and their effectiveness. They can also give pupils, individually and as a class, additional information and guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling, and where necessary, treatment.

When a member of staff learns from an under-16 year old they are having, or contemplating having, sexual intercourse, the school will ensure that whenever possible, the student is persuaded to talk to their parent or carer, that any child protection issues are addressed, and that the student is adequately counselled and informed about contraception.

The school will enable and encourage students to talk to a trusted adult if they are having sex or contemplating doing so. It is desirable, although not always possible, that that person should be their parent or carer.

## **8 Abortion**

The school recognises that abortion is an emotive issue, and that any teaching must present a balanced view which respects a range of views and religious beliefs. Teachers will create a classroom environment where young people have an opportunity to explore dilemmas related to abortion, to understand abortion and the law, and to develop the communication skills to discuss it with parents and health professionals.

The school will teach about abortion and contraception in accordance with the purpose of sex and relationship education, which is preparing students for the responsibilities and challenges of adult life.

## **9 Safer Sex and HIV / AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**

We will teach the following key messages regarding safer sex, HIV / AIDS and STIs:

- Information and knowledge about HIV / AIDS is vital
- Young people need to understand what risks are attached to certain behaviours and what is safe and acceptable
- Sex and relationship education should inform young people about protective and safer sex in general
- Young people need skills to enable them to avoid being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex (this will link with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour such as using drugs and alcohol)
- Young people need factual information about safer sex and skills to enable them to negotiate safer sex.

## **10 Confidentiality**

Staff will follow the school's policy on confidentiality between themselves and students. Students should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained, but that staff cannot offer or promise absolute confidentiality. Staff will follow the school's Safeguarding policy if a child protection issue is raised.

We will encourage students to talk to their parents or carers and support them to do so. We will also inform students of sources of help, for example, the Student Progress team, school counsellor, GP or local young person's advice service.

## **11 Parents and carers' rights with regard to their children and sex and relationship education**

We believe that the role of parents/carers in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents/carers are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships. Should a parent/carer wish to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE, they can do this up to and until three terms before their child turns 16. We would request that in all instances parents and carers discuss this matter with the senior leadership team member responsible for PHSE and we will make alternative arrangements for students in such cases that are negotiated.

This policy will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis in line with government legislation.