



Policy No: 21.7

APPLEFORD SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

This policy which applies to the whole school including boarding is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.

Legal Status:

- Complies with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations currently in force.
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 (HM Government: 2003)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE: December 2017)

Monitoring and review: This policy is subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by Mrs Mikyla Francis (Head of PSHEE) and Mrs Fiona Filkins (Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Prevent Lead for the whole school. The Proprietor will undertake a full annual review of this policy and procedures, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. The Proprietor recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns.

Signed:

Date Reviewed: September 2020

Date of Next Review: September 2021

Dr Peter Gardner, Managing Director

Mr David King, Headmaster

This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Proprietor of the School in September 2020 and will next be reviewed no later than September 2021 or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require. **We are awaiting revised guidance from the Department of Education on Relationships and Sex Education, (which must be in place as of September 2020), we will then revise this policy.**

Rationale

It is recognised that RSE is a cross-curricular area, which impinges on all aspects of students' personal and social education and development. At Appleford School we have a responsibility to provide sex and relationships education (RSE), including education about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. This education is available to all registered students. A whole School approach to RSE is adopted. This incorporates aspects of the School ethos and organisation and enables effective pastoral support.

Appleford School is committed to the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education to provide an understanding and lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It ought to provide knowledge about the processes of reproduction and the nature of sexuality and relationships in a responsible and healthy manner. Due to the nature of the subject, this policy should be read and implemented in conjunction with other existing, related policies, including PSHEE & Citizenship, Teaching and Learning, Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding.

What Is Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)?

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes. Effective Relationship and Sex Education does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. It builds up knowledge and skills which are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on young people.

Principles and Values

Appleford School believes that RSE should be:

- an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- an entitlement for all young people
- encourage each student to contribute to our community and aim to support each other as they grow and learn
- set within the wider Appleford School context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness
- encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. 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 parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents and students, consulting them about the way these topics are delivered at Appleford School. We recognise that the wider community has much to offer and aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

Relationship and Sex Education at Appleford School has three main elements:

Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices
- learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships and marriage
- learning about the nurture of children
- 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 about normal behaviour

Personal and Social Skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- developing self-respect and empathy for others
- learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- managing conflict

Knowledge and Understanding

- learning and understanding, at appropriate stages, physical development
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay

Aims and Objectives

The aim of RSE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSE programme delivered in a number of ways, aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour;
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others
- have respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly regarding sexual and pastoral relationships
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected relationships
- 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
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity
- understand the reasons for having protected sex
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships

Content

Students learn at the appropriate level how good relationships can promote mental well-being, how to manage their feelings positively and how to manage changing relationships. Materials used reflect ongoing consultation with parents and professional advisers. Emotional readiness and cultural backgrounds of the students are always regarded in relation to the content and images used. The range of material used is available to parents and informative books are available to students.

Appleford is a specialist school and the safety and wellbeing of all pupils is at the centre of everything we do. Prior to sex education lessons commencing, the Head of PSHEE, the Heads of School and the Head of Pastoral identify the emotional readiness of students and group them accordingly. A letter is sent to parents informing them of the course content and asking for consent for their child to participate. Parents are invited to view resources which accompany various units of work if they so wish. Our programme for Relationship and Sex Education includes content such as:

- “sexting”, “banter”, sexual assault between young people and gender based issues
- healthy and respectful relationships;
- what respectful behaviour looks like;
- gender roles, stereotyping, equality;
- body confidence and self-esteem;
- prejudiced behaviour;
- different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships, dealing with strangers and, at secondary school, intimate relationships;
- how to recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, including self-respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent, and how to manage conflict, and also how to recognise unhealthy relationships;
- how relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health;
- healthy relationships and safety online;
- factual knowledge around sex, sexual health and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships and that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong; and addressing cultures of sexual harassment.

We ensure that our students are aware of the dangers of these safeguarding issues and promote positive relationships based on mutual respect.

Organisation

RSE is delivered by a number of teachers who have the experience and skills to deliver sensitive material to mixed ability, co-educational groups of students. Annually, appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside Appleford School may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE in Appleford School. The RSE programme, outside the Science Schemes of Work where certain topics are dealt with, is conducted using a variety of informal activities which have been built into the programme. A set of ground rules will help teachers create a safe environment, in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from students. All staff involved in the teaching of RSE will receive training on the importance of ground rules and how to set them. Appleford School believes in the importance of training for staff delivering RSE. Staff are encouraged to identify appropriate training and support to help them deliver effective RSE.

The following are protocols for discussion based lessons with students:

- Students must be made aware that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- No one (teacher or student) will have to answer a personal question;
- No one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
- Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way;
- When answering a specific question which involves information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.
- Where a member of staff is concerned that a child protection issue is arising, it is his/her responsibility to follow the school's Child Protection policy.

Procedures for Relationships and Sex Education

A coherent programme of RSE is provided. The Heads of School, Head of Pastoral and Head of PSHEE review the individual needs and emotional readiness of the pupils and make appropriate provision before the programme begins. The Head of PSHEE, in liaison with the DSL, organises the key elements in lessons, liaising with specialist agencies including health professionals where appropriate. Facts are presented, and issues considered within a clear moral framework, allowing students to recognise the importance of dignity and respect for themselves and others, the values of family life and acceptance of responsibility.

Within the context described above, sensitive issues such as contraception, abortion, homosexuality and HIV/AIDS are discussed as appropriate.

A range of methodologies and resources are used, regularly reviewed and updated to ensure accuracy of information and relevancy. They are presented in a broad and balanced way, free from sensationalism and personal bias and sensitively geared to the level of students, needs and experience.

The use of "ground rules" helps in the creation of a supportive climate for discussion. Within any particular group there is an emphasis on trust, respect for privacy, care and compassion and the necessity of listening to others opinions in a respectful, reflective manner. Sensitivity to religious beliefs is regarded as an important dimension. The School seeks to develop Appleford students' self-esteem and a sense of responsibility by counteracting prejudice and victimisation and promoting British values. Key elements of RSE, or those which are especially sensitive, are delivered by specialists.

However, Appleford School will ensure that:

- teachers are aware of their legal responsibilities;
- the concerns of teachers never trespass on parental rights;
- students are taught how to gain information on a wide range of health-related issues to include information on the provision of specific and individual advice;
- should a teacher believe that a student to be in danger or distressed or should questions from students cause such concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted so that the best course of action can be identified;
- teachers are guided by DfE circular 5/94 which states that “Particular care must be exercised in relation to contraceptive advice to students under 16, for whom intercourse is unlawful. The general rule must be that giving an individual advice on such matters would be an inappropriate exercise of a teacher’s responsibilities.”

Specific Issues within RSE

Child Protection

Appleford School has a separate Safeguarding Child Protection Policy. Effective Relationship and Sex Education may bring about disclosures of child protection issues and staff should be aware of the procedures for reporting their concerns by informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Disclosures

If a member of staff learns that an under 16-year-old is sexually active or contemplating sexual activity Appleford School will ensure that:

- The young person is persuaded to talk to their parent/carer
- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed;
- The young person receives adequate counselling and information

Controversial and Sensitive Issues

Members of staff are aware that views around RSE related issues are varied. However, whilst personal views are respected, all RSE issues are taught without bias. Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that students are able to form their own informed opinions but also respect others that may have a different opinion.

Dealing with Questions

Students’ questions are answered according to the age and maturity of the student concerned. Questions do not have to be answered directly and can be addressed individually later. Appleford School believes that individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in this area and refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if they are concerned.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

Appleford School believes that Relationship and Sex Education should meet the needs of all students regardless of their developing sexuality and be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Homophobic bullying is dealt with strongly yet sensitively.

Equal Opportunities and inclusion in Relationship and Sex Education

The Relationship and Sex Education curriculum has been developed to take into account the diversity of the collegiate population and to meet the needs of the students. The teaching materials we use are regularly reviewed to ensure their suitability. All Relationship and Sex Education will be inclusive and meet the needs of all young people, recognising that issues such as sexuality, disability, ethnicity and faith affect attitudes towards sex and relationships. We will address explicit and implicit homophobia in Appleford School, and issues of related bullying.

Visitors contributing to Relationship and Sex Education

The wider community has much to offer, and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals and other mentors or advisors. Appleford School also provide independent listeners. These services are advertised throughout Appleford School, and parents may also contact these services by making an appointment. From time to time, as part of a planned module of work, the nurse and/or local experts will be invited to speak on issues relating to Relationship and Sex Education. All school associate health and other professionals and visitors will be asked to conform to the following:

- visitors contributing to Relationship and Sex Education will do so at the invitation of Appleford School and will be qualified to make an appropriate contribution.
- visitors must agree with the aims of Appleford School in delivering its policy on Relationship and Sex Education;
- when in class, visitors will be supervised by a teacher, who will be present at all times;
- visitors will follow the Appleford School child protection procedures if a disclosure occurs within the classroom setting;
- visitors will know and understand where their contribution fits into Appleford School's programme of Relationship and Sex Education and Personal Development.

Parental Rights

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any 'Relationships and Sex Education' other than those elements which are required by the science curriculum. In this case, such parents should write to the Headmaster, stating their objections.

The School aims to teach in a way which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of the children (SMSC) at the School and prepares them for the changes of puberty and adult life. When teaching any aspect of Relationships and Sex Education, it is important that certain ground rules are formulated and discussed with the children first. These include:

- that the work will be done in a way which does not involve anyone, staff or children, having to answer personal questions or revealing private or family situations which could lead to embarrassment and subsequently be 'used' inappropriately;
- that any teasing on sexual matters will not be tolerated and will be treated as harassment or bullying. Children are being trusted to use the information gained in lessons in a responsible and mature way;
- that there should always be two members of staff present when this teaching takes place.

It is important that all staff and outside visitors taking part in this programme are aware of these ground rules and that a classroom is not the same as a counselling session or clinic. In any one class, there are children from different backgrounds, at varying levels of physical and emotional maturity. Teachers need to be sensitive to the needs of all their children and work in a way which protects their sensibilities.

Confidentiality: Teachers conduct Relationships and Sex Education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of safeguarding. Teachers will, in these circumstances, talk to the child as a matter of urgency and in accordance with safeguarding guidelines. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw their concerns to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. (See also Safeguarding Policy.)