



St Nicholas School

Relationships and Sex **Education Policy**

Date Approved: September 2025

Next Review Date: September 2026

Signature: _____
Chair of Governors

Introduction and Background

St Nicholas Secondary School is a special school for students with a “range of learning needs, to include cognition and learning difficulties, communication and interaction difficulties and autism”. It caters for pupils from 11-16 years of age. All students have Education Health Care Plans.

Every student matters regardless of their background, culture, faith, family background, SEND, EAL, difference and diversity, discrimination and bullying, gender, race, religion, sexuality, ability, disability and appearance.

The UK government has passed 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 which made Relationships Education compulsory for all students receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. These regulations also made Health Education compulsory in all schools except Independent Schools.

The Department for Education (DfE) also published guidance as to the content of the Relationships Education, RSE Education and Health Education as detailed in Section 6 and 7.

The effect of this legislation is that from September 2020 all state funded Secondary schools will have to deliver 2 new subjects “Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. These subjects should sit within the wider framework of PSHE, which has been described by the Chief Medical Officer as a bridge between health and education.

High quality, evidence based and age appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. They can also enable schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and in society.

Aims of the policy.

Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) aims to help students to develop knowledge, skills and understanding about the value of loving, diverse and stable relationships along with developing an understanding of their own sexuality and sexual health. The aim is to help young people lead confident healthy lives to enable them to be active citizens with due regard to the values of family life in all its forms.

- Sex and relationships education guidance to schools state that schools should prepare students to progress from adolescence to adulthood with an awareness of

- the rights of others and develop the capacity to make choices in a caring and sensitive manner.
- Enable students to conduct personal relationships with the full understanding of the meaning of responsibility.
 - Enable students to conduct their lives with confidence knowing their own legal rights.

Statutory Requirements

RSE is compulsory in Secondary schools from September 2020 and must be implemented into the curriculum by Summer 2021, so all students must take part in these lessons.

Health Education is also statutory and focuses on learning about the characteristics of good physical health and mental well-being and the relationship between the two.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from lessons on sexual intimacy, sexualised behaviour and sexual health, as detailed in section titled Parent's right to withdraw their children from lessons.

Objectives

RSE seeks to:

- Provide knowledge about loving relationships including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) relationships, the nature of sexuality and the processes of human reproduction.
- Lead to acquisition of understanding and attitudes in order to enable students to view their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.
- Provide a programme which is tailored not only to the age but also the understanding of students.
- Present information in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner which has an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour.
- Encourage the development of social skills and strategies, which will reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse both on and off line.
- Allow students to examine the physical and emotional implications of sexual behaviour and to appreciate the need for all genders to behave responsibly in sexual matters.
- Develop awareness of their gender and sexual identity and to challenge sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and prejudice in society.
- Ensure that students have a clear understanding of sexual and reproductive biology, including knowledge of STI's.

- Make students aware of the unrealistic nature of pornography both physically and emotionally.

Responsibilities for Relationships and Sex Education

St. Nicholas Secondary School recognises its duty of care and statutory responsibilities for Relationships & Sex Education.

The Governing Body will ensure that the School has policies in place which are robust and fit for purpose.

The Head teacher will ensure that the policy is, and any associated procedures are, implemented and that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support.

The Deputy Head is directly responsible to the Head teacher and is responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are being implemented correctly on a day to day basis. Other staff and any volunteers are directly responsible to them.

The School Council are able to raise any concerns relating to Relationships and Sex Education at their regular meetings with the Head teacher and any issues arising will be investigated appropriately.

Parent's right to withdraw their children from lessons

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the sex education components of RSE. That means the lessons cover physical aspects of sexual development and intimate relationships and sexual health. The process for requesting withdrawal is as follows:

1. Requests for withdrawal by parents should be put in writing and addressed to the head teacher.
2. Once the head teacher has received the request, the head teacher will contact the parents to discuss the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that the withdrawal might have on the student. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the student hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although the detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents propose to deliver the sex education to their child at home instead)

3. Once these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to refuse the withdrawal.
4. A copy of the withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's file.
5. Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the student wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the student with sex education during one of those terms.

There is no right to withdraw from other parts of Relationships and Sex Education or Health Education.

Parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. Many parents find it difficult to talk to the children about these matters. The school is committed to supporting parents in this area. The school believes that the RSE programme is of the utmost importance to all students.

Parents or Carers are very welcome to discuss any concerns they may have with staff and to view the teaching materials.

The detailed content of the RSE programme will be made available to parents on request.

Sensitive or Controversial topics

During RSE lessons (and at other times) controversial topics may arise. Class teachers will decide whether the subjects are suitable for class discussion. Teachers will try to answer pupil's questions honestly, sensitively and in such a way that takes the context into account. In all circumstances the professional judgement of the teacher must come into play.

Teachers should establish a set of ground rules so that young people are aware of boundaries.

Any concerns about sexual abuse must be followed up under child protection procedures. (See safeguarding section)

Confidentiality/ Safeguarding

1. Effective RSE should enable and encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are in a sexual relationship or contemplating being so. It is desirable but not always possible that that person should be their parent or carer. The law allows health professionals to see and in some circumstances to treat young people confidentially and part of this process includes counselling and discussion about talking to parents. In order to be able to take responsibility for their actions young people need to be more generally aware of the law in relation to sexual activity and local confidential services
2. There may be cases where an adult in the school learns from an under 16 year old that they are having or contemplating having sexual intercourse. In these circumstances the school will take steps to ensure that :
 - Wherever possible the young person is persuaded to talk to their parent or carer.
 - Any child protection issues are addressed.
 - That the child has been adequately counselled and informed about contraception including information about where they can access contraception and advice.
3. If the teacher receiving the information believes that there is a child protection issue they should refer the case to the designated Child Protection Officer as the schools safeguarding procedure states.

Training

Each class teacher is responsible for continuing their professional development.

Regular INSET training will be provided taking into account any relevant current issues at the time of training.

During staff meetings any immediate information regarding pupils is disseminated.

Organisation and Delivery of RSE

Relationships and sex education will be inclusive for all pupils, sensitive to all family and faith backgrounds and students own identities. It will be respectful of all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Across all Key Stages, students will be supported to develop the following skills appropriate to their age and understanding:

- Communication Skills
- Forming positive relationships including self-respect as well as respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and addressing potential risks
- Assertiveness and managing conflict and difficult emotions

These skills are taught within the context of family life and friendships in an age appropriate way. The school environment will reflect, value and celebrate the diversity of friendships and relationships. Lessons will be delivered by school staff including Class Teachers and support staff.

We will answer any questions in a way that is sensitive to student's family and faith backgrounds, appropriate to their age and understanding, and consistent with the relationships education policy and scheme of work.

Use of other professionals and services

If other professionals are used from outside school they will be briefed about student's levels, age and will be aware of the schools RSE curriculum relevant school policies and their work will be planned and agreed.

Links to other policies

- Equal Opportunities
- RE
- Science
- PSHEC
- Safeguarding

Breach of the Policy

Any breaches of school policies by staff or pupils will be investigated and dealt with as part of the normal grievance or disciplinary procedures in the School, as appropriate.

Assessing

Students will be assessed by class teachers, and subsequent planning will take into account student's needs and age appropriate content.

Assessments will be used to inform future planning and inform teachers what stage students are working at to ensure continuity across the key stages

Monitoring and Review

This policy and related procedures will be monitored on an ongoing basis, in consultation with the Governing Body and records kept as appropriate, in line with the Quality Improvement Cycle. It will be reviewed as necessary, either when the relevant legislation or guidelines are amended or at least annually.

The delivery of Relationships & Sex Education will be monitored with the use of baseline assessments.

Teachers will provide opportunities for self-assessment as well as peer assessment.

There will also be opportunity for cross-moderation amongst staff and special schools with similar student needs.

This policy will be reviewed annually and consideration will be given to student changes, changes in the law and government guidance