



WESTMINSTER  
SCHOOL

# RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

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## WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

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### INTRODUCTION

Westminster places at the heart of its endeavour the wellbeing of each pupil. We see high quality Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) as an entitlement which helps our boys and girls to understand and to value themselves and others, as they emerge into young adulthood and prepare for an independent life beyond school.

Honest sensitive discussion with experienced teachers who know pupils and care about them provides a perspective which is often missing from conversations amongst peer groups, whether in real life or online. Many of the aims of RSE build on skills which are developed throughout school life – listening skills, conflict resolution, help seeking, decision making, reflection, assertiveness, and effective communication. Ethical and moral issues abound within the everyday life of the School, either presented to pupils for consideration or arising by virtue of everyday human interaction.

In short, RSE enriches and is enriched by the holistic experience of the pupil.

### AIMS

One definition of RSE is “learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality, and sexual health”<sup>1</sup>.

Statutory guidance reminds us that “young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way”<sup>2</sup>. RSE allows pupils to build up confidence both in real life and the virtual world, to make healthy relationships of all kinds whilst understanding the pressures and risks associated which can accompany intense feelings.

Our aim is to help our pupils to:

- Respect differences of attitudes and opinions
- Challenge discrimination and stereotypes
- Build the capacity to forge positive relationships in their lives
- Understand intimacy, including romantic and sexual intimacy
- Know how to access support and advice around all aspects of health (sexual, mental or physical)
- Have a basic understanding of the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as relates to relationships, consent and sexual activity

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<sup>1</sup> Sex Education Forum

<sup>2</sup> *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Draft statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers* (Feb 2019)

- Understand the reasons for delaying sexual experience and for any sexual activity to be protected
- Have an understanding of STIs
- Have knowledge of contraception
- Avoid being pressured into unwanted sexual activity
- Use social media appropriately, lawfully and positively
- Manage strong feelings (including those of sexual attraction)
- Develop a support network of reliable friends and adults.

## **PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES**

Pedagogical approaches include the following:

- Establishing ground rules so as to promote a positive and safe climate for discussion.
- Distancing techniques – fictional characters and scenarios are used – often arrived at with pupil input.
- Role-play (this might involve rehearsing refusal skills or responding to a pressurising peer or scenario).
- Reviewing values (clarifying one's own values and discovering how these relate to those of others).
- An approach which is inclusive and respectful: the Equality Act 2010 is taught explicitly but is also modelled throughout by teachers. We recognise that our pupils will come from a variety of religious and cultural traditions. The School is committed to allowing a variety of perspectives to be expressed, within the law and within the broader ethos of the School. Pupils are affirmed in their equality and uniqueness, whilst recognising that everyone with their differences can be right.
- Differentiating in response to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND): all teaching staff are aware of SEND profiles for pupils in every subject and learning situation. RSE is no exception to this and teachers will adapt approaches so that each pupil has full access to the content of the programme.

## **ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY**

The day-to-day responsibility of Westminster's RSE programme falls to the Head of Wellbeing. Delivery is through lessons taught by trained Wellbeing teachers who are also experienced teachers of other subjects at Westminster. The modest group sizes (10 to 12) allow for discussion whilst avoiding groups which are intensely small or unwieldy. These groups refer to the entry points to the School – (i.e.: Fifth Form and Sixth Form). As ever, teachers have the best interests of the pupils at heart.

### **Fifth Form**

#### Wellbeing

Weekly Wellbeing classes are held throughout the year. RSE is mainly taught during the Election Term, but many relevant areas are covered in the Play and Lent Terms:

- Respect for others
- Decision making
- Responding to prejudice and seeking help
- Impact of bullying, including cyberbullying and online harmful content
- Change and transitions
- The impact of tobacco, drugs and alcohol consumption on health and relationships.

In the Election Term pupils will consider the value and benefit of relationships of various kinds (including with ideas, memories, mementoes, places and concepts). Pupils will be encouraged to think more about intimacy, how healthy relationships can be recognised and enjoyed. They will also be encouraged to identify characteristics of unhealthy relationships and where these engage the law. Various scenarios are worked through using fictional characters who ask “agony uncles” for advice when dealing with various worries or dilemmas common during adolescence. The following are discussed:

- Puberty
- Contraception
- Consent, including the legal aspects which relate to sex (including rape and assault)
- Pornography and the implications for the individual and society.

Reporting concerns and seeking advice are raised at various points throughout the Wellbeing programme.

### Religious Studies

Throughout the Fifth Form in Religious Studies, pupils consider:

- The development of human rights through John Locke and Immanuel Kant
- Concepts of respect for persons and the idea that humans have innate dignity
- Freedom of speech and its limits
- Freedom of religion and conscience (for example what happens when freedom of religion comes into conflict with LGBT rights)
- Equality (which is both explored and affirmed).

### **Lower Shell**

#### Biology

Biology classes cover the following:

- Reproduction
- Male and female anatomy
- Male and female sex cells
- Fertilisation and pregnancy (and choices within pregnancy in accordance with the law).
- Methods of contraception
- IVF
- STIs.

There is an opportunity to ask questions through an anonymous question box. Staff also have a bank of commonly asked questions which can be used to supplement this.

### **Upper Shell**

#### Futures Day

The Head of Wellbeing and a Sexual Health NHS Consultant team up to answer questions (both those submitted in advance or arising during the session): questions are related to relationships and sexual health, and consent is also revisited.

Broadcaster and NHS Consultant, Dr Stuart Flanagan, has trained members of staff and met with Wellbeing teachers as well as parents (such as the RSE parent forum event, March 2020), so as to ensure that consistent messages are shared.

#### Biology

Biology classes cover the following:

- Nutrition
- Male body image
- Eating disorders.

## **Sixth Form and Remove**

### Social Media Law Lecture

This popular lecture is delivered by Dr Holly Powell Jones and allows pupils to learn the civil and criminal consequences engaged by a variety of social media scenarios. Youth-produced sexual imagery ('sexting') scenarios are included.

### Wellbeing lessons

As from September 2020, each Sixth Form pupil will follow a course of Wellbeing: relationships and sexual health will form a key part of this new course. Sixth Form is a particularly useful time for pupils to re-evaluate their relationships as they either welcome a sizeable number of new pupils to the School or join a new school for Sixth Form.

### Schools Consent Project

Schools Consent Project is an award-winning charity that deploys young lawyers to help pupils and students understand and engage with the issues surrounding consent.

### Tutorials

All pupils will encounter aspects of RSE in tutorial conversations (discrimination, equality, stereotyping, details of forthcoming pupil led Society talks – e.g.: Fem Soc, Pride Soc etc.).

### Pupil-led projects

Monitors annually take the initiative to lead a School-wide venture (e.g.: One World Week) which is designed to enhance the quality of relationships within the pupil body. Similarly, the Peer Supporters identify a particular area of concern and promote whole-School activities in response.

## **Resources**

Appropriate Sexual Health and Wellbeing resources are available for all pupils online on the School's Firefly site. There, pupils can find signposting for organisations offering support and access to confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

## **STAFF TRAINING**

Professionals working in the Sexual Health field have advised the School at various points in recent years.

The Wellbeing team were trained on site in November 2019 for two half days by the sexual health charity Brook. The Safeguarding Governor visited the team and observed some of the training.

Further, many staff will attend professional development seminars externally and share latest thinking with colleagues.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Head of Wellbeing is present at all pastoral evenings with parents, attends Housemaster meetings and reports to the Under Master at weekly meetings. The Head of Wellbeing also reports to the Deputy Head Academic. The programme is regularly evaluated by means of pupil questionnaires, assessment and evaluation of pupil needs, and will take into account staff and parental input or observations.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Westminster acknowledges the support of parents and their wide and long-term engagement, as expressed in many ways and not least by parental participation at Pastoral Evenings, Parents' Evenings and Parent Forum events.

The School seeks to reassure parents that, far from sexualising young people, RSE serves to protect and promote healthy relationships. This said, parents have the right to withdraw pupils from sex education as part of RSE, which is documented here:

### **Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as “the right to withdraw”):**

*Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request it would be good practice for the head teacher to discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Schools will want to document this process to ensure a record is kept.*

*Good practice is also likely to include the head teacher discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child 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 sex education to their child at home instead).<sup>3</sup>*

## **INVOLVEMENT OF SURGERY**

The medical and nursing staff in the Surgery are fully cognisant with the RSE teaching within the School. They are able to answer any general queries and to provide specific health advice regarding relationships, sexual health and contraception. If required, the Surgery team will signpost pupils to further resources or services as appropriate.

All the staff in the Surgery are trained professionals who are skilled at dealing with sensitive issues in a non-judgmental way. This can help pupils to make skillful choices around their relationships of all kinds as well their physical and mental health. The staff understand that very often all that is required is an informal chat or gentle support.

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<sup>3</sup> Paras 45/6: *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Draft statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers* (Feb 2019)