



## **HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL**

### **HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL: RELATIONSHIPS and SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY**

#### **1. Introduction**

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) forms part of the statutory curriculum for all schools (reference the DfE 2020, the Equality Act 2010, and IS Regulations, 2014) and is designed to empower pupils when making considered choices about a range of life experiences. At Holmewood House this policy runs in conjunction with our PSHE policy. The policy was developed with the co-ordinator of Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) through a variety of consultation methods involving pupils, parents and staff. It aims to provide guidance and information on all aspects of RSE in the school for staff, parents and governors.

#### **2. Policy statement**

At Holmewood the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum is built around lifelong learning about our physical, moral and emotional development. It centres on:

- personal safety
- caring for others and
- building strong family relationships.

Through high quality evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching, pupils are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. In the context of a supportive environment, the school is able to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, at school and in society.

Effective RSE helps develop pupils' skills in establishing and maintaining a range of relationships and enables them to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and well-being. It is designed to promote informed teaching about the characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships and relationships with children and adults. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, healthy relationships, recognising and managing feelings and sexual health. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity - this would be inappropriate teaching.

Other related policies and documents include the Anti-Bullying policy, Drugs Education Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and Equal Opportunities Policy.

### **3. How will this be taught at Holmewood?**

RSE at Holmewood House is intended to help pupils learn about relationships, emotions, sexuality and sexual health. Evidence shows that effective relationship and sex education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. This area of the curriculum explores the context of the family, friends and wider societal issues and address responsibilities that arise from within these relationships. RSE at Holmewood House will help young people to learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. Our aim is to present relevant and age-appropriate facts, information and skills, which will be delivered in an objective and balanced manner.

The delivery of RSE at Holmewood House is underpinned by the following statements:

- The delivery of RSE is factual, sensitive and balanced.
- RSE promotes meaningful, loving, and healthy relationships.
- Whilst delivering RSE, staff and external providers will avoid the imposition of personal opinion. Instead, they will stay focused on the social, moral, spiritual, health and education aspects of the topics.
- The religious background of all pupils must be taken into when planning teaching so that topics are appropriately handled. Staff must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics.
- The teaching should reflect the law so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider implications of decisions they make.

At Holmewood, RSE will be taught through our own bespoke PSHE program, 'My Heart, My Mind' (MHMM). RSE is not taught in isolation within the My Heart, My Mind lessons but embedded, as appropriate, in all curriculum areas. The school's Science and My Heart, My Mind schemes of work are central in the teaching of RSE. The main biological content is delivered in Science lessons while in PSHE the broader health, moral and social issues are raised. In addition, elements of the RSE curriculum are also explored through assemblies and form times and form part of our broad and balanced curriculum.

RSE is normally delivered in mixed gender groups other than when it is deemed more appropriate for topics to be covered in single sex groups. A variety of learning approaches which involve children's full participation is used.

- From Reception to Year 4 relationships education is taught through an integrated approach within our My Heart, My Mind programme and pupils will be taught by their class teacher.

- From Year 5 to Year 8, relationships education is taught through an integrated approach within our My Heart, My Mind programme by a team of teachers specifically trained in the aspects of My Heart, My Mind and RSE alongside the School Medical Officer.

Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced visitors from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE in school.

#### **4. Equal Opportunities and Accessibility**

The school is committed to the provision of RSE for all pupils and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Our programme aims to respond to the diversity of cultures, faiths, family backgrounds and sexual orientation, recognising the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Equal time and provision will be allocated for all groups but there may be occasions where pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are given extra support from SEND staff. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility.

Resources will be chosen to reflect diversity and a range of viewpoints. They will be shared with parents as this can be reassuring and enables parents to continue the conversations started in class at home. All RSE books and materials will be regularly reviewed and refreshed to keep all content as current as possible.

#### **5. Parents**

The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. We acknowledge the significant influence parents have in enabling their children to grow and mature and form healthy relationships. We have worked with parents to inform this policy and ensure it reflects the community of Holmewood. Details of the policy, including the key topics covered are made available to parents via the Holmewood House Parent Portal.

#### **6. Content of the RSE curriculum in Years 5 - 8**

##### **Year 5**

- Understanding of self and characteristics
- Friendships, conflict resolution and peer pressure
- Familial structures and a healthy family life
- Grief and loss
- Body image
- Managing changes and looking forward

##### **Year 6**

- Understanding the terminology 'girlfriend/ boyfriend' and what it means
- Body image
- Personal characteristics (nature and nurture) and gender identity
- Internal and external body parts and consent
- Healthy relationships, power dynamics and peer pressure
- Familial structure, global understanding and acceptance
- Body image
- Emotional and physical changes
- Menstruation, pregnancy and emotional changes

### **Year 7 RSE content**

- Prejudice based language and discrimination
- Relationships, feelings and emotions
- Identifying the features of healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Strategies to manage both physical and emotional changes during puberty
- Marriage

### **Year 8 RSE content**

- HPV and sexual health
- Intimate images and the associated risks
- Laws relating to consent
- Choice to delay intimate relationships, including sex
- Understanding and identifying characteristics of abuse
- Warning signs and the reporting of abusive behaviour
- Recognising the features and importance of positive, stable relationships
- Navigating peer pressure
- Discussions around the portrayal of sex in the media
- Gender and identity
- Sexual orientation

## **7. Explanation of the right to withdraw pupils from the sex education component**

## **of RSE**

New legislation, brought in through the Children and Social Work Act 2017, brought important changes in relation to parental rights to withdraw children from school RSE.

While parents of pupils in Years 7&8 retain the right to withdraw their child from some or all sex education delivered as part of a statutory RSE (other than the aspects of sex education which sits within the science curriculum), parents are not able to withdraw their child from **relationships education** in Reception to Year 6 or Year 7&8.

Before granting any such request, parents are invited to meet with the child's Head of Section who will ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. In addition, the meeting will explore any concerns and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. Should the family then wish to withdraw, this will be approved by the Headmaster and alternative provision arranged. This process will be documented for future reference.

Once these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child. The process remains the same for pupils with SEND and in this situation the pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND will be taken into account when making the decision.

The Headmaster will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered from Reception – Year 6, other than as part of the science curriculum. If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure appropriate, purposeful education is continued.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education.

## **8. Child Protection and confidentiality**

The importance of respecting confidentiality during RSE lessons is paramount. Staff need to regularly remind pupils of the 'safe space code of conduct' and that the teaching of RSE takes place within that safe space allowing all pupils to discuss issues openly.

Teachers should act in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy should a child make a disclosure of a child protection nature during an RSE lesson or discussion. Staff cannot guarantee complete confidentiality to pupils; concerns will always be listened to, taken seriously and, where necessary, pupils will be supported appropriately.

## **9. Controversial and sensitive issues**

Staff are aware that issues raised in RSE create differing viewpoints. Personal views are respected but RSE issues are taught without bias. Topics are presented so pupils can develop their own, informed opinions but also respect others who may have a different opinion.

To facilitate open discussions, the creation and agreement of ground rules will be completed as a class at the beginning of RSE lessons, facilitated by the teacher.

## **10. The use of appropriate language**

In order to support staff during lessons and to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings, the following guidance has been agreed:

- staff and pupils should use the correct terms for all body parts
- clear, unequivocal language should be used in an objective manner
- discussions should take place around what 'slang' words mean and explanations that some can be seen as offensive.
- staff will use their judgement when introducing language depending on understanding and maturity level of learners.

## **11. Dealing with Questions**

Both formal and informal RSE arising from pupils' questions are answered according to the age and maturity of the pupil concerned. The school anticipates that individual teachers will use their skill and discretion in this area and refer to the DSL if they are concerned.

## **12. Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation**

Holmewood School believes that RSE should meet the needs of all pupils 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. The school will liaise with individual parents on this issue regarding a particular child to reassure them of the content and context.

## **13. Dissemination and review**

All members of staff and governors receive a copy of the RSE policy. Training is regularly delivered to staff on the policy content. Copies for parents are available from the Parent Portal, and from school office on request from parents.

Date of policy December 2022  
Staff members responsible:  
Head of PSHE

Deputy Head  
DSL

### **References**

Documents that inform the School's RSE policy include:

Education Act (1996)

Learning and Skills Act (2000)

Education and Inspections Act (2006)

Equality Act (2010)

Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014)

Keeping children safe in education – Statutory safeguarding guidance (2016)

Children and Social Work Act (2017)

Every Child Matters (ECM) & Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>