



St Martin's School RSHE Policy



Introduction

The Department for Education produced a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education curriculum, which became mandatory from September 2020. This replaces the Department of Education 'Sex and Relationship Education Guidance' (2000). Both documents form a Relationships, Sex and Health Education Curriculum, referred to as RSHE and replace two existing separate policies. Relationships Education is compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools. At St Martin's School we have incorporated these elements into the curriculum subjects as we see them as key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online.

Policy Aims

St Martin's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all students fulfil their potential. RSHE 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.

Staff Support and Training

St Martin's School believes in the importance of appropriate staff training to enable staff to deliver effective RSE. SLT, co-ordinators and staff will access courses or deliver INSET opportunities and identify resources to assist all staff involved in the delivery of RSHE.

Underpinning Beliefs

St Martin's School believes that RSHE should:

- be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- be 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 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.

Inclusivity

RSHE will be accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. To support these pupils we will ensure High-quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised to ensure accessibility. Teachers will be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of any SEND. Teachers will tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages. In teaching Relationships Education and RSE, schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure that they comply 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 provide equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The relevant protected characteristics are: sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment and age. Both boys and girls receive the same input and understand the changes that occur in their own gender as well as that of the opposite sex.

We will ensure that all of their teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content.

At the point at which it is appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, we will ensure that this content is fully integrated into the children's program of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson.

Curriculum

As part of our RSHE programme of study, children will be taught:

- what a relationship is;
- the different types of relationships they might have e.g. with family members, friends, and other adults;
- the importance of healthy and secure relationships to wellbeing;
- what constitutes a healthy relationship, in person and online;
- how to set and observe appropriate boundaries in relationships;
- how to recognise when a situation is unsafe;
- strategies for dealing with situations that they find uncomfortable or that are unsafe;
- sources of help and advice.

Non-statutory sex education

As part of statutory Health Education, children are taught in an age appropriate way about puberty and the associated physical and emotional changes they experience. As part of the science curriculum, children will learn in about how reproduction occurs in some plants and animals. The DfE guidance 2019 also recommends that all primary schools have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of pupils, and this should include how a baby is conceived and born. Although sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, we believe children should understand the facts about human reproduction before they leave primary school. We therefore cover topics at an age appropriate stage such as: Personal Hygiene, Differences (between males and females) Changes in Bodies, Puberty and Reproduction.

We recognise that children in younger year groups may ask questions that cannot be answered without reference to content from older year groups. Should this occur, we will respond by telling them that they will learn about that when they are older. Please see the relevant section within this policy for further information on how teachers manage difficult questions in RSE.

We believe that teaching this additional content to pupils will ensure that they are better prepared for transition to secondary school and also support their personal and social development as they grow into young adults. As is legally prescribed, parents have a right to withdraw their children from these additional non-statutory sex education lessons – please see the relevant section within this policy in regard to this process.

Teaching of RSHE

All elements of our RSHE programme are delivered in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner as part of our regular weekly timetabled RSHE education programme. RSHE is delivered predominantly by teachers in mixed gender groups, other than when it is deemed more appropriate for topics to be covered in single sex groups; this will be decided by the class teacher after discussion with the subject lead.

Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSHE. All visitors will be familiar with and understand RSHE policy and be expected to work within it.

We aim to provide an environment and atmosphere where pupils feel safe, relaxed, unintimidated, and focused; and where they have confidence and trust in the knowledge, ability and skills of staff in school. This ensures that both pupils and staff feel fully confident in engaging in age-appropriate discussions around potentially sensitive topics and themes.

Examples of teaching and learning strategies utilised in RSHE to establish a safe learning environment include: Sharing books, listening to personal accounts, role play, case studies, videos etc. to normalise sensitive issues. Anonymous question boxes may also be used to help children to have the confidence to ask sensitive questions, and they provide an opportunity for teachers to pre-empt questions that might not be age appropriate or that might raise safeguarding or child protection concerns.

Although staff may draw on their personal experiences to answer certain questions, for example around menstruation, this should always be depersonalised and discussed in third person rather than first person. All staff teaching RSHE will be supported and advised by the RSHE lead and senior leadership team on these matters as required.

Managing difficult questions

During RSHE sessions, pupils are encouraged to ask questions. Any questions from pupils are answered according to the age and maturity of the pupil concerned, and if the teacher delivering the session deems it appropriate to answer. Teachers will: mitigate disclosures in class by clarifying that personal questions should not be asked, remind pupils that they should not give out personal information in class but speak to someone they trust after the lesson. Teachers will remind pupils of the school values around respect and remind them that this includes RSHE lessons in respect of the adult teaching the lesson and towards their peers. In lessons where an anonymous question box may be used, children will be reminded about 'anonymity' and depersonalisation when asking questions about potentially sensitive or embarrassing topics.

Teaching staff will endeavour to answer questions as openly as possible but if faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, or that is not age-appropriate (or within the school's RSHE policy), individual provision may be made to address the child/young person's requirements. The school believes that individual teachers must use their professional skill and discretion in this area and refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are concerned about any question from a safeguarding perspective.

If a teacher does not know the answer to a question or if a question is felt to be inappropriate, this should be acknowledged and, if considered necessary, this may be followed up outside of the classroom environment with individual pupils.

Children may also be signposted back to parents/carers who have ultimate responsibility in talking to their children about sensitive matters. We will also encourage parents to talk with school if they have any questions or queries, and if they would like advice on how to better support their child and continue learning outside of the classroom.

Recording and assessment

Pupils will have the opportunity to reflect on their learning within lessons and at the end of each unit. In addition to the pupils' self-assessment, teachers will assess through informal methods, such as observations and class or group discussions. Observations may have a particular focus; e.g. children's listening skills, empathy etc. Quizzes may be used before and after a unit of work to aid assessment.

Elements of RSHE that occur in the science curriculum will be assessed through recorded work to establish age related expectations of knowledge and understanding. This will be recorded in line with the school WASE assessment trackers.

Written by: Mrs Davies (RSHE Lead)

Ratified by: Governors

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To be reviewed: November 2023