



THE
KING'S SCHOOL
CANTERBURY

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy (Life Matters Policy)

Responsible Person: Deputy Head (Pastoral) & Head of Life Matters (PHSE)

Latest Review Completed: February 2023

The King's School, Canterbury takes its responsibility to provide relevant, effective and responsible relationships and sex education (RSE) and Health education to all its pupils as part of the school's personal, social, health and economic education, known as the Life Matters (LM) curriculum very seriously. The school wants parents and pupils to feel assured that sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both the age and development of pupils, and that it is safe to voice opinions and concerns relating to the sex education provision.

Policy aims

Through the delivery of high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate RSE and Health Education through the Life Matters programme, the school aims to help support pupils through puberty, give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene, create a positive culture in relation to sexuality and relationships and to ensure pupils know how and when to ask for help and where to access support. By the end of their education the school hopes pupils will have developed resilience and feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy in preparation for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Definitions

Relationships education

Relationships education is about pupils being taught different relationships including about friendships, family and the people that can help them. Respect for others is also taught in an age-appropriate way with a focus on healthy relationships that pupils will encounter. This also applies to online relationships to ensure that children are safe when online and how others can use their information in a way that they may not expect.

Relationships and sex education (RSE)

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching sex, sexuality and sexual health in a way that gives pupils the confidence to make sound decisions when facing risks and other challenges. It includes teaching about friendship, the importance of caring, stable and mutually supportive relationships with another person, and how to control and understand feelings that come with being in a relationship.

RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It teaches children and young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others, to build self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity so that they can develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

RSE will outline that there are different types of committed, stable relationships, the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships, the importance of marriage as a relationship choice and why it must be freely entered into, how relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for raising children, as well as highlighting the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, characteristics of successful parenting and how to judge when relationships have become unsafe as well as how to seek help or advice and report concerns about others.

Roles and responsibilities

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Head of Life Matters will ensure that staff are supported and up to date with policy changes. They will ensure that the Life Matters curriculum is well led, effectively managed and well planned across various subjects (to avoid unnecessary duplication of topics) and that the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation. The teaching will be age-appropriate, delivered in ways that are accessible to all

pupils with SEND and the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled appropriately. Teaching delivered by any external organisation is age-appropriate and accessible for pupils.

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) will manage parental requests for withdrawal of pupils from non-statutory, non-science components of Life Matters.

Staff

Teachers of Life Matters will ensure that they are up to date with school policy and curriculum requirements regarding sex education and will attend and engage in professional development training. Teachers will encourage pupils to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal and emotional development in confidence, listen to their needs and support them seriously. If a pupil comes to a member of staff with an issue that the member of staff feels they are not able to deal with alone, they will take this concern to their line-manager.

Parents

The school expects parents to share the responsibility of sex education and support their children's personal, social and emotional development. We encourage parents to create an open home environment where pupils can engage, discuss and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through school Life Matters lessons. Parents are also encouraged to seek additional support in this from the school where they feel it is needed.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend all Life Matters lessons that are in their school timetable and take them seriously. Although they are not assessed through examination, these classes are still a very important part of the curriculum and a tool to aid personal development and the school expects pupils to recognise this.

Pupils should support one another with issues that arise through Life Matters. Listening in class, being considerate of other people's feelings and beliefs. Complying with confidentiality rules that are set in class are key to effective provision. Pupils who regularly fail to follow these standards of behaviour will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy.

We also hope that pupils will feel comfortable to talk to a member of staff, in confidence, regarding any concerns they have in school related to relationships, sex education or otherwise.

Implementation and curriculum

It is important that the school implement the Relationships, Sex and Health policy consistently throughout the school and provide effective provision throughout lessons. The Head of Life Matters provides teachers with appropriate materials which encourage teachers to provide classes that are specific to the needs of the pupils in that class, and responsive to their behaviour and development.

Through this aspect of our curriculum, we aim to explore different attitudes, values and social labels, and develop skills that will enable our pupils to make informed decisions regarding RSE and Health Education. It is important that pupils know the difference between fact, opinion and belief.

The RSE, Relationships and Health Education will be delivered in Life Matters lessons, tutor time, year group assemblies and in a variety of other subject lessons and will build on the foundation of the RSE delivered in primary school. By the end of the 6a year the school expects pupils to know the information set out at Appendix 1.

The school wishes to promote pupils' health and wellbeing by encouraging self-control, their ability to self-regulate and strategies for doing so. This will enable pupils to become confident in their ability to achieve well and persevere even when they encounter setbacks or when their goals are distant, and to respond calmly and rationally to setbacks and challenges. The school believes that an integrated, whole-school approach to the teaching and promotion of health and wellbeing will have a positive impact on behaviour and attainment.

By the end of their secondary education the school expects pupils to know the information set out at Appendix 1.

Dealing with difficult questions

Staff training will include sessions on how to deal with difficult questions. There may still be times when staff are faced with a difficult question in class that they feel uncomfortable or ill equipped to answer. In this case, they may wish to put the question to one side and seek advice from any member of the Pastoral Team.

Ground rules in class are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter. Some strategies staff may use to support this might be:

- an anonymous question box; this will enable pupils to feel more comfortable to ask questions without being identified
- making the classroom a zone of silence; this means that whatever is discussed in the classroom stays in the classroom and should not be brought up at any other time. We hope this will give pupils the sense that they are in a safe zone to speak freely about sex and relationships.

Pupils with special educational needs

The school works hard to ensure that all aspects of the school curriculum are inclusive and support the needs of pupils of all ranges of abilities. Staff should differentiate lessons to ensure that all members of the class can access the information fully, and this is no different when it comes to RSE and health education.

The school will use a variety of different strategies to ensure that all pupils have access to the same information. Some of these include:

- interactive teaching methods
- use of expert guest speakers
- practical activities
- using video clips or documentaries
- group and paired activities

Withdrawal from RSE

The school hopes that parents will feel comfortable with, and understand the importance of, the education provided to their children as described in this policy. Before withdrawing or making a request, the school strongly urges parents to carefully consider their decision as sex education is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports child development. Parents cannot withdraw their child from Relationships or Health Education or the elements on human growth and reproduction which fall under the science curriculum.

Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from sex education should put their request in writing and send it to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child

turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

If a pupil is excused from sex education the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Complaints

Parents or carers who have complaints or concerns regarding the RSE curriculum should contact the school and follow the school's complaints policy.

Equal opportunities

The school has duties under the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that pupils are not discriminated against because of their sex, race, disabilities, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy or maternity. RSE and Health Education lessons provide a good background for talking openly and freely about the diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences. Prejudiced views will be challenged, and equality promoted. Any bullying that relates to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be dealt with swiftly and seriously. This is the case for bullying of any kind and the procedures regarding this are outlined in the school's behaviour policy.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

We hope to provide a safe and supportive school community where pupils feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at school or at home. Training around confidentiality will be provided to all teachers.

It may be the case that discussion around what is acceptable and not acceptable in relationships may lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. If this is the case, the school's child protection and safeguarding procedure will be followed.

Pupils with special educational needs may be more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to protect themselves from harmful influences. If staff are concerned that this is the case, they should seek support from the Safeguarding co-ordinator to decide what is in the best interest of the child.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and economic change. Our aim is to provide RSE that is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our pupils, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason, we review the RSE curriculum termly.

We aim to monitor the effectiveness of our sex education provision through:

- Yearly feedback from pupils
- feedback from staff
- classroom observations

The school will review this policy annually, evaluating its effectiveness by taking into account feedback from pupils, staff and parents, as well as what has come to light through classroom observations and information we receive from national reports and curriculum reviews.

Support

We hope that pupils will feel safe in the school environment to talk to any member of staff in confidence about any areas of concern regarding their personal, social and emotional development, including matters raised by or relating to sex and relationships education. We promote the school ethos as one of inclusion and acceptance throughout all areas of school activity and hope that pupils respond to this by feeling comfortable to ask questions and continue their learning both in and outside of the classroom.