



## Desborough College

# Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy

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# 1. Aims and definitions

## Aims

At Desborough College, we aim to develop **future leaders** who have the knowledge needed on personal, social, health and economic issues to make informed choices on issues they may face in their lives and who have respect and understanding for the differing and conflicting viewpoints that exist in our society. We will provide quality first teaching of age-appropriate content, and give student the opportunity to discuss their physical, emotional and moral development in a safe and respectful environment.

This policy refers specifically to the teaching of Relationships & Sex education (RSE) and Health education within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) curriculum. We recognise that some content covered within the RSE & Health education curriculum is controversial and can provoke the expression of strongly held beliefs and opinions. Students will be expected to treat others with the respect and dignity with which they would expect to be treated themselves. Content is delivered through consideration of British Law and fundamental British Values, whilst encouraging students to explore the moral and ethical dilemmas that are faced in today's society.

Keeping our students **safe** remains of the utmost importance to us, and so teaching topics pertaining to staying safe online and the importance of consent will be embedded through the RSE & Health education curriculum to enable our students to develop an age-appropriate understanding of these topics and know how to keep themselves safe from harm.

Through the curriculum, we will align the teaching of RSE is with the core values of Desborough College:

- Students learn to treat other people with **respect**, regardless of background or belief, by growing each student's individual sense of self and encouraging them to appreciate the good in others, showing **kindness** to all
- Students learn to **respect** the legal framework that protects certain characteristics from discrimination under UK law, namely age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion and sex.
- Students are asked to show **courage** in discussing views and opinions that may be in conflict to their own, and learn the value of differing perspectives in shaping a diverse and equitable society
- Students develop the knowledge and understanding required to become **leaders** of their own lives and to make positive contributions to society

## Definitions

To enable us to meet these aims, Desborough College works with the following definitions of Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education:

**Relationships education** involves learning about of the benefits of positive relationships in all situations, and developing mutual respect and understanding for the wide diversity of relationships that exist in the British Society.

**Sex Education** is the study of specific issues relating to intimacy, including lessons on contraception, STIs and pregnancy.

**Health Education** relates to topics pertaining to the physical, emotional and mental health of an individual

## 2. Statutory requirements

The Education Act [1961] and the Language and Skills Act [2000] require that all maintained secondary schools in England and Wales must provide a sex and relationship education (SRE) programme to all students up to and including KS4.

This Policy incorporates the following statutory guidance which provides the latest guidance on all aspects of Relationships and Sex Education:

- DfE 'Sex and Relationship Education Guidance' (2000)
- DfE 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance' (2019), made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017

As well as making RSE compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education, 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education' also makes Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools, with the new RSE curriculum being compulsory in schools since September 2020.

The RSE curriculum ensures that no person is unlawfully discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, as per 'The Equality Act 2010'.

## 3. Policy development

The original policy document was developed in consultation with all stakeholders, including staff, pupils and parents. The policy is reviewed annually, using the following information:

- New or updated guidance or regulations published by the DfE or PSHE association
- Feedback from teachers and students during internal quality assurance processes
- Feedback from parents, teachers and students through surveys/questionnaires
- Feedback from parents through meetings/focus groups

All views and opinions expressed throughout the consultation process were considered when updating the RSE & Health education policy.

## 4. Curriculum

At Desborough College, the RSE & Health education curriculum has been planned to ensure students will meet the key stage expectations laid out by the Department of Education in their statutory guidance (DfE, 2019). For a full list of these expectations, see Appendix 1 of this policy.

The content taught during RSE & Health education lessons can be broadly organised into key elements. Of these, four are classified by Desborough College as Relationships education:

- **Family**
- **Respectful Relationships**
- **Online and Media**
- **Being Safe**

One element is classed as Sex education:

- **Intimate and Sexual Behaviour, including sexual health**

Eight elements are classed as Health Education:

- **Mental Well-Being**
- **Internet Safety and harms**
- **Physical Health & Fitness**
- **Eating Healthily**
- **Drugs, alcohol & tobacco**
- **Health & Prevention**
- **Basic First Aid**
- **Changing Adolescent Body**

The elements of the RSE & Health curriculum are fully embedded into the wider PSHE curriculum; RSE & Health education is not taught as a standalone unit as the complexities link closely with other strands of the PSHE curriculum. Teaching timelines, by year, can be accessed in full from the PSHE page of the Desborough College website.

## 5. Delivery of RSE

RSE & Health education focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds. It is delivered during PSHE lessons. Students attend one, hour long PSHE lesson per week, delivered in curriculum time.

The resources we use for the delivery of RSE & Health education come from an external company, Chameleon. These are available for parents to view on request.

Activities are carefully selected to represent all parts of our school community and areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances. Issues of race, sexuality, gender, religious belief and socio-economic background are integrated into case studies, examples and discussion topics and are not taught as standalone issues. This is to ensure students have the opportunity to explore conflicting views and opinions in an honest, open and safe environment that is respectful and inclusive of all.

A number of different teaching strategies are used to support the creation of a safe and open learning environment in which each student feels valued and has the confidence to explore their RSE learning, including:

- Establishing ground rules linking to the Desborough Values of **respect**, **courage** and **kindness** to help manage class discussions
- Using 'distancing' techniques when encouraging students to consider a topic (such as asking them to consider how the person in a case study would feel in a particular situation, instead of asking 'how would you feel?')
- Encouraging personal reflection so students can consider their own thoughts and feelings without being judged
- Making students aware of the [listening@desborough-college.org.uk](mailto:listening@desborough-college.org.uk) email address that can be used to seek additional support if they are affected by the subject of an RSE lesson

## 6. Assessment

Pupils' development in RSE & Health education is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. As with any learning, the assessment of young people's personal, social and emotional development is important. It provides information that indicates their progress and achievement informs the development of the programme. Young people do not pass or fail in this area of learning, but have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning and personal experiences, and set personal goals and agree

strategies to reach them. This process of reflective assessment has a positive impact on young people's self-awareness and self-esteem, and there are opportunities to record learning and progress in different ways. We will assess pupil's learning through; in class question and answer, discussion, group work, peer assessment and self-assessment.

## **7. Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Belonging**

Our RSE & Health education programme recognises that young people will bring prior learning and real-life experiences to their lessons. We respect and build on these, providing an education that reflects both the universal and unique needs of our students.

In this way, the programmes recognise and respect pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example their own sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture (which may, depending on their age and maturity, not be something they have yet considered or may be emerging) or the sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture of their immediate family, close friends and wider community.

In a country with clear British and liberal values, including tolerance and mutual respect, it is essential that students are taught to be tolerant towards others and understand & respect differences between people.

### **7a. Pupils with additional needs**

The Desborough College RSE & Health education curriculum is accessible for all students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. As stated in 'The Equalities Act', it is essential that content is tailored to meet the specific needs of students at different developmental stages. As a result, teachers consider class and individual context when teaching RSE & Health education content.

Teachers and leaders are aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. This makes RSE & Health education a particularly important subject for all pupils and reinforces the school's decision to fully include all students in RSE & Health education lessons. However, where appropriate, teachers have the resources available to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of individual pupils.

The process for parent's withdrawing students with SEND from sex education is the same as for all other students; please refer to section 8 for further information.

## **8. Roles and responsibilities**

- **The governing board**

The governing board will approve the RSE & Health education policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

- **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE & Health education is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from sex education components of RSE & Health education.

- **Staff**

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE & Health education in a sensitive and unbiased way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE & Health education
- Monitoring progress

- Responding to the needs of individual pupils

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE & Health education. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE & Health education are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

- **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE & Health education (unless they have been withdrawn from the sex education components) and to treat others with respect and sensitivity.

## 9. Right to withdraw

Parents have the right to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE in secondary schools up to three terms before their child turns 16. This right does not extend to withdrawal from Relationships or Health education (DfE, 2021)

After this point, if the child themselves wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements for this to happen in one of the three terms before the child turns 16 - the legal age of sexual consent.

As per the definition of Sex Education in section 1, students will only be permitted to be withdrawn from lessons under the topic of '**Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health**'. All other content falls under the definitions of Relationships Education or Health Education, and so the Right to Withdraw does not apply.

Requests for withdrawal are to be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 2 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher. The request will be followed by a discussion with the headteacher about the benefits of receiving this important education and detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child.

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, Desborough College will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

## 10. Working with external agencies

From time to time, working with external organisations can enhance the delivery of RSE & Health Education by bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with students.

All organisations will be fully vetted by Desborough College to ensure that the teaching delivered by the organisation fits with the aims and values of the planned curriculum and this policy.

Visiting organisations will only be used to enhance the learning received in classroom lessons, and not as a replacement for teaching by Desborough College staff.

## 11. Monitoring and evaluation

The delivery of RSE & Health education is monitored by the Head of PSHE.

This will include:

- Teaching and Learning quality assurance in line with the internal QA process
- Learning walks and work scrutiny
- Staff and student feedback

- Responses to parent surveys

The curriculum is reviewed annually through the QA process, and at other appropriate times (such as when new or updated guidance is released).



## Appendix 1 – Expectations of content taught in UK Secondary School (DfE, 2019)

### Families

#### *Students should know*

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children
- what marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting
- how to:
  - determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy
  - judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships)
  - how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

### Respectful relationships

#### *Pupils should know:*

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

### Online and media

#### *Pupils should know:*

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them

- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- the impact of viewing harmful content
- that specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

### **Being safe**

*Pupils should know:*

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)

### **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health**

*Pupils should know:*

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

### **Mental Wellbeing**

*Pupils should know*

- how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary
- that happiness is linked to being connected to others
- how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns
- common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression)
- how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health

- the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.

## **Internet Safety & Harms**

*Pupils should know*

- the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including:
  - the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image)
  - how people may curate a specific image of their life online
  - over-reliance on online relationships including social media
  - the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt
  - how advertising and information is targeted at them
  - how to be a discerning consumer of information online
- how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.

## **Physical Health & Fitness**

*Pupils should know:*

- the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress
- the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardiovascular ill-health
- about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

## **Healthy Eating**

*Pupils should know:*

- how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.

## **Drugs, alcohol & tobacco**

*Pupils should know*

- the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions
- the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances
- the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood
- the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency
- awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks
- the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.

## **Health & Prevention**

*Pupils should know:*

- about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics
- about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist
- (late secondary) the benefits of regular self-examination and screening

- the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination
- the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.

### **Basic First Aid**

*Pupils should know:*

- basic treatment for common injuries
- life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR
- the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.

### **Changing Adolescent Body**

*Pupils should know:*

- key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing
- the main changes which take place in males and females
- the implications for emotional and physical health.

Appendix 2: Parent form - Withdrawal from sex education



TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	