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Relationships and Sex Education Policy (RSE) for Secondary Schools

1 Name of School: Uppingham School

Date of Policy: September 2025

Date of Review: September 2026

This policy was developed in response to: **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers (published 2019, updated July 2020).**

We have also used the updated guidance for 2026 to help shape this policy.

This policy has links to the Anti-bullying Policy, PSHEE (Wellbeing) Policy and also to the Child Protection Policy.

This policy should be read in reference to the following documents:

- Equality Act (2010)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance (2019)
- Education guidance (2019)

The policy was developed by RHK (Assistant Head Pastoral) in consultation with KMW (Senior Deputy Head), RKGH (Director of Wellbeing) and the working group for policy development.

Overall responsibility for the RSE policy lies with the Trustees and the Headmaster, although the direction and delivery of RSE is overseen by the Assistant Head: Pastoral and the Director of Wellbeing.

2 The consultation process has involved:

- Consultation with wider school community e.g. Woodfield, Pupils, Parents, Matrons, DSLs, Chaplain, Director of Wellbeing, Head of Lower School, Heads of Department.
- Consultation with external agencies eg RSE conferences, Medical professionals, Bish training, Leicester City Council (Alison Spooner)
- A regular parental review will take place every three years.

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3 What is Relationships and Sex Education?

The term Relationships and Sex Education RSE- is used in this policy rather than sex education. This is to stress that we go beyond the provision of biological information and also focus on attitudes and values, developing self-esteem and helping to provide the skills needed to manage relationships.

According to the DfE guidance (2019),

“Today’s children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and 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.’

4 Principles and Values

Uppingham School believes that RSE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people
- Encourage every student to contribute to our community and aim to support each individual as they grow and learn.
- Be set within a wider school context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.
- Encourage the respecting of different views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure. 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. We aim to work in partnership with parents and students, consulting them about the content of programmes.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

Relationships and Sex Education at Uppingham School has three main elements:

Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of values and individual conscience

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- learning the value of stable and loving relationships, whether in the context of marriage, civil partnership or other family models, for the nurture of children
- learning about the value of respect, love and care
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- learning to respect and value difference and diversity including diverse family models, genders and sexualities
- learning about the rights and responsibilities to oneself and others
- understanding responsibility for one's own safety and that of others both in the real and digital world
- understanding the importance of equality concerning genders and sexuality
- learning that violence and coercion in relationships is unacceptable

Skills

- learning to recognise one's own emotions and those of others
- learning to manage emotions and relationships with confidence and sensitivity
- learning to manage change
- developing self-respect
- learning how to use appropriate language in the real and the digital world
- learning to be empathetic to others
- learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- learning how to identify risk in relationships both in the real and digital world
- learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse
- learning how to keep oneself safe and how to extricate oneself from an unsafe situation
- developing critical thinking
- learning to make and carry out informed decisions
- developing decision-making skills both in the real and the digital world
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices both in the real and digital world
- learning to manage conflict and developing negotiation skills
- learning how to cope with and resisting unwelcome peer pressure
- learning to communicate openly and respectfully about relationships and sex
- learning how to ask for help and accessing advice/services

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Knowledge and Understanding

- learning and understanding emotional and physical development at appropriate stages
- learning about the impact of stereotyping and negative language – learning about and understanding reproduction
- learning about a safe and healthy lifestyle based on accurate information – understanding the positive benefits of loving, rewarding and responsible relationships
- learning protective behaviours
- understanding the nature of consent
- learning about the impact of coercion and violence
- knowing where to seek appropriate help and advice.

5 Aims

Research has shown that young people who feel good about themselves, and are knowledgeable and confident about sex and relationships, are more likely to be discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviours and are more likely to have fulfilling relationships.

There is no evidence to suggest that RSE makes students more likely to enter into sexual activity.

Uppingham School believes that pupils have an entitlement to age and circumstance appropriate RSE.

The aim of RSE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSE programme aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships.
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity.

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- understand the reasons for having protected sex.
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships.
- Understand how there may be links to other issues in PSHEE and to be able to manage the pressures a 'party atmosphere' may bring.

6 Organisation and Content of Sex and Relationship Education

Uppingham School specifically delivers Relationships and Sex Education through its Wellbeing Programme (lessons and talks), although some aspects are also delivered in academic lessons such as in RS lessons and Science lessons in KS3, and KS4. There are also parts of the programme that are delivered in the boarding Houses by external professionals, matrons, tutors and Heads of House (HSMs).

Much of the Relationships and Sex Education at Uppingham School takes place within timetabled Wellbeing lessons. Wellbeing teachers generally deliver the Wellbeing Curriculum with support from professionals, the Director of Wellbeing and the Assistant Head Pastoral where appropriate. In Year 7, Year 8, Fourth Form, Lower Fifth and Upper Fifth, pupils have one Wellbeing lesson a week. Sixth Form pupils participate in a "Futures Curriculum" which includes RSE lessons.

Tutors and HSMs work closely with their pupils over a number of years and we believe that they are usually the best people to work with the students on many of the RSE topics as they are aware of each student's individual circumstances. Therefore we endeavour to ensure that Tutors and HSMs provide more bespoke and personalised RSE education in the Houses when appropriate.

RSE lessons are set within the wider context of the Wellbeing curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of fertility and puberty are also included. The Science National Curriculum is largely followed by staff in the science department. These lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten.

Pupils in all year groups also receive talks from internal and external speakers on a yearly cycle which include RSE topics (eg consent). The content of these talks is dependent on feedback from the pupil surveys and also allows us flexibility to address current issues in the School or nationally.

A focus on the importance of relationships is also a crucial part of our RISEupp Framework, which is a whole school pastoral framework designed to allow pupils to work towards positive wellbeing.

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RSE Programme

At the start of Year 7 and the Fourth Form, all pupils' previous RSE is audited through the use of a survey. Pupils are asked what they have been taught in previous schools and how confident they feel in each area. This is because of the nature of a majority 13+ entry boarding school with a diverse and multi-national intake. The results of this survey help inform the programme of additional speakers and workshops and therefore the timing and content of lessons/sessions may vary year on year although the broad topics remain the same.

Safe and Effective Practice

It is imperative that RSE is conducted in an environment which is open and safe for pupils. As such, teachers, nurses and those helping to deliver aspects of RSE are expected to establish clear ground rules and boundaries, being sensitive to the needs of the group and any individual needs. Particular attention should be given to ensure there is fair treatment of any pupil with SEND, or a protected characteristic, and pupils should be signposted to who they can speak to should they have any concerns about any aspect of RSE (these can be found on the Safeguarding Hub or the 'Advice and Support' posters on house notice boards.)

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons, ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson.

When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

Those delivering RSE sessions should be aware of the importance of making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up.

Any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously; staff should be aware that statistically it is more likely that females will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment than males, and that it is more likely that it will be perpetrated by males. However, males can also be the victims of sexual violence and it can also happen in same-sex relationships. It is, however, essential that assumptions are not made about the behaviour of boys and young men and that they are not made to feel that this behaviour is an inevitable part of being male.

In-house sessions which are delivered by, or overseen by a school nurse, are valuable in signposting pupils to the confidential sexual health services offered by Woodfield Health Centre and the Uppingham Surgery.

Wellbeing teachers receive regular guidance in department meetings about the delivery of sensitive topics.

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Methodology and Resources

A wide range of teaching methods are used so that pupils can participate actively in their own learning. Quizzes, case studies, scenarios, role plays, guest speakers, group discussion and debate are all utilised throughout the RSE Programme. Teaching resources are kept up to date and are selected carefully for their appropriateness to the pupils.

If a teacher is uncomfortable with delivering part of the curriculum, support is offered by the Assistant Head: Pastoral, Director of Wellbeing or by more experienced teachers/HSMs/Tutors.

Monitoring and evaluation

The programme is regularly evaluated by the Assistant Head: Pastoral and the Director of Wellbeing and the views of pupils and teachers are used to make changes to the programme on a regular basis. Current issues/news items are also incorporated into the curriculum to make it relevant to pupils.

Informal assessment is carried out during Wellbeing lessons and comprises of questionnaire feedback and summary sheets. We also include assessment points during Wellbeing lessons but these are not reported on formally. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning throughout the course.

7 Inclusion

Ethnic and Cultural Groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular topics in mixed groups. Our RSE education therefore allows for some elements of RSE to be delivered in single sex groups in Boarding Houses.

Students with Special Needs

We will ensure that all young people receive Relationships and Sex Education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them. LGBTQIA+ content is included throughout our curriculum from the Fourth Form upwards and fully integrated into our lessons and resources. Our pastoral support will also take into account the needs of gay, lesbian, transgender or bi-sexual students. We shall actively tackle any homophobic bullying.

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Gender

Both boys and girls have the right to equal RSE at Uppingham School and we consider topics and approaches that actively engage both. We shall also be proactive in combating sexism and sexist bullying. By delivering selected parts of the curriculum in mixed sex groups, pupils are able to listen to, and engage with the views of people of differing genders to themselves.

8 Working with Parents/carers and the wider community

Uppingham School works closely with parents/carers when planning and delivering RSE sessions and aims to inform parents in advance of what will be covered in Wellbeing lessons. Parents are given opportunities to fill in surveys and participate in forums when necessary.

9 Right of Withdrawal of Students from Sex Education within RSE

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. This does not include those parts which are in the wider statutory curriculum (i.e. in Science lessons).

Parents are encouraged to discuss their decisions with the Assistant Head: Pastoral and the Headmaster at the earliest opportunity. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, Uppingham 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, Uppingham School will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Headmaster may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

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

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

Parents are welcome to review any RSE resources the school uses.

10 Safeguarding, Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.

It is recognised that effective RSE may give rise to disclosure and any safeguarding or child protection concerns arising within, or as a result of RSE should be reported immediately to the DSL or a member of the Safeguarding team.

In a case where a teacher learns from an under 16 year old that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

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- the young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice.
- child protection issues will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead under the School's procedures.
- the young person will be properly counselled about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

In any case where Child Protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the School's confidentiality policy.

11 Support available to pupils

The school takes its role in the promotion of pupil welfare seriously. Staff endeavour to make themselves approachable and provide caring and sensitive pastoral support to pupils. Staff may be approached through the pastoral system and offer support if appropriate. Health care is provided on site and if necessary, pupils can be referred to internal or external counselling provision. The school will keep up to date with the development of local services and national agencies/helplines.

12 Ensuring provision of RSE during periods of remote learning

Where possible, RSE lessons will be delivered remotely by the class teacher or group facilitator and resources will be adapted to ensure they are appropriate for pupils isolating or working from home. Where lessons are judged to include sensitive material that is not suitable to teach remotely, we will arrange catch up sessions for those pupils/year groups when they return to school, even if this carries over into the next academic year. We will also offer parents support in having conversations with their children whilst they are at home.

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