

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Introduction:

To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need to be equipped with knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.

- Independent School Standards, as well as statutory guidance within the U.K. and Portugal make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education.
- The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.
- Oporto British School recognises that there will be a range of opinions regarding RSE. Government regulations require the School to have as its starting principle when teaching RSE that the applicable law should be taught in a factual way so that pupils are clear on their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Responsibilities:

The taught RSE curriculum is under the responsibility of the Pastoral Lead, and taught by tutors and class teachers as part of the PSHE programme.

The Pastoral Lead monitors and evaluates all elements of the RSE programme together with the Heads of Section and the Key Stage Pastoral Coordinators.

The provision of lessons and the wider elements of the RSE curriculum, including liaison with visiting speakers and parents, is under the responsibility of the Pastoral Lead

The Pastoral Lead works with SLT so that parents are fully informed about what is being taught each term and their rights to withdraw their child.

This policy is approved annually by SLT, and there will be a section on RSE in the annual Pastoral report to the Board of Governors.

This policy will be updated at least annually but on an ongoing basis when needs or requirements change.

Delivery of the RSE Curriculum:

Pupils receive RSE education as part of their PSHE curriculum. The PSHE Curriculum is primarily delivered through the “Votes for Schools” programme and resources which is covered in Secondary in the 55-minute Tutor group lesson (currently Tuesday period 1) and in some of the daily 20-minute tutor periods. The aspects of sex education inherent within the Science National Curriculum are delivered within Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 science lessons. In Primary school it is also primarily delivered through Votes for Schools and the Emotional Literacy Programme. In Forms 4 students learn about the human body, specifically the changes that occur during puberty, which is taught in their Science Lessons. In Form 5 students are taught about the human reproductive cycle as a series of science lessons.

Relationships and Sex Education is taught within the first two themes of the Votes For Schools programme, namely:

- Key Theme 1: Health and Wellbeing
- Key Theme 2: Equalities and Identity

Teaching is supplemented by sessions from outside agencies where appropriate and in accordance with the guidance below.

The Votes For Schools resources related to RSE are shared with the Key Stage Pastoral Coordinators who then liaise with tutors and class teachers (in Primary) who ensure consistent and high-quality delivery.

Teaching is non-judgmental and factual, allowing scope for students to ask questions.

In Secondary, teaching is informed by pupil voice, through a system of anonymous feedback, and by meetings with pupil groups such as the Student Council.

Required topics (each specific element is only covered when age appropriate):

Families - Pupils are taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult. This teaching should enable pupils to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful. Pupils could see how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.

Respectful relationships, including friendships – Pupils are taught the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect. They are taught that there are different types of committed, stable relationships. Through gaining the knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, they should be empowered to identify when relationships are unhealthy. They are taught that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing.

Online and media – Internet safety is addressed. Pupils are taught the rules and principles for keeping safe online. This will include how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues. Pupils are taught how data is generated, collected, shared and used online, for example, how personal data is captured on social media or understanding the way that businesses may exploit the data available to them. Pupils are made aware of harmful behaviours online, and via other forms of media, which may normalise violent sexual behaviours. A focus on healthy relationships and broader Relationships Education can help young people better understand acceptable behaviours in relationships.

Being safe - Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, is addressed sensitively and clearly. The physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM) is taught. Pupils are taught where to find support and that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM or fail to protect a person for whom you are responsible from FGM.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health – The Oporto British School RSE programme does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It teaches young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. The aim is that the young people develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time. RSE is delivered in a non-judgmental, factual way and allows scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment. Knowledge gained about safer sex and sexual health will ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This will include teaching specifically related to the risks and dangers of consuming pornography, as well as the promotion of positive sexual relationships.

Character education – The wider Wellbeing, pastoral and co-curricular programmes aim to cultivate resilience and character in the individual: belief in achieving goals and persevering with tasks, as well as personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice, underpinned by an understanding of the importance of self-respect and self-worth.

U.K. Equality Act (2010) – Pupils are taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. All pupils should feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Sexual orientation and gender identity should be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner. When teaching about these topics, it must be recognised that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. There should be an equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same sex relationships. This should be integrated appropriately into lessons or lectures, rather than addressed separately or in only one lesson.

Parents:

This policy is made available to parents. The Pastoral Leads and the Heads of Section ensure that parents know what will be taught and when. Parental views will be sought whenever this policy is reviewed by invitation to contribute, contextualised within OBS's statutory obligations under the terms of its RSE policy.

Oporto British School informs parents of the nature of the RSE programme and explains that they can request that their child be excused from the sex education element within RSE, or indeed from a specific lecture or session related to sex education, by responding to the school email to that effect.

If a parent requests that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE, the Pastoral Lead will discuss the request with the parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The School will document this process and ensure a record is kept. This will be held by the Pastoral Lead.

Once those discussions have taken place, save 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.

There may also be exceptional circumstances where the Pastoral Lead may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from SEND into account when making this decision.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the School's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

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

Safeguarding:

Pupils may also need support to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk. Teachers should refer any issues to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or another member of the Safeguarding team.

Teachers should be mindful that for pupils who are or have experienced unhealthy or unsafe relationships at home or socially, the School may have a particularly important role in being a place of consistency and safety where they can easily speak to trusted adults, report problems and find support. Counselling is available.

Religion and belief

The religious background of all pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that the topics are appropriately handled. The School is required to comply with the relevant provisions of the U.K. Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics.

The School will teach about faith perspectives to allow a balanced debate to take place about issues that are seen as contentious.

In all schools, teaching should reflect U.K. and Portuguese Law as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

U.K. Equality Act 2010:

Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics).

The Pastoral Lead and any teachers or visiting lecturers must be mindful of the following aspects when delivering RSE:

- Wider school policies including the Child Protection and Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, Device Use, Equal Opportunities, Harmful Sexual Behaviour – Child on Child abuse, and Mental Health and Wellness policies.
- The gender and age range of their pupils, and consider whether it is appropriate or necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with particular protected characteristics (which mean that they are potentially at greater risk).
- The need to foster healthy and respectful child to child communication and behaviour between boys and girls, and provide an environment, which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on

their gender or any other characteristic, including through these subjects and as part of a whole-school approach.

- The need to highlight issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Staff have an important role to play in modelling positive behaviours.
- 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 reported directly to the DSL.
- It is 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; most young men are respectful of young women and each other.
- An understanding for all pupils of healthy relationships, acceptable behaviour and the right of everyone to equal treatment will help ensure that pupils treat each other well and go on to be respectful and kind adults.
- The teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach.
- Reasonable adjustments are made for SEND pupils to alleviate disadvantage and they are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects.

The RSE course at Oporto British School will ensure that pupils understand what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

The pupils should be well informed about the full range of perspectives and, within the law, should be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs. Key aspects of the law relating to sex which should be taught include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy. Pupils are made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage;
- consent, including the age of consent;
- violence against women and girls;
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.);
- pornography;
- abortion;
- sexuality;
- gender identity;
- substance misuse;
- violence and exploitation by gangs;
- Extremism / radicalisation;
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement)
- hate crime;
- female genital mutilation (FGM).

Visiting Speakers:

It is important that the teacher booking the speaker discusses the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils. They should ask to see the materials visitors will use as well as a lesson plan in advance, so that they can ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs (e.g. special educational needs). It is important to agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with school policy.

In line with school policy on visiting speakers the person booking the speaker is responsible for ensuring that they check the visitor or visiting organisation's credentials and that the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with their planned programme and their published policy.

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