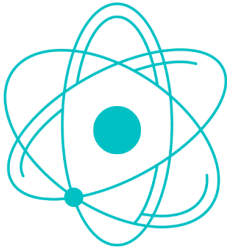


# RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY



## HARDWICK HOUSE SCHOOL

**Date:** September 2023

**Review Cycle:** Annual

**Next Review Date:** September 2024

Hardwick House School is part of Newcome Education, which is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Hardwick House School's documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility September 2018](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative

- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR
- LRB (Health and Safety)
- Atlantic Data (DBS)
- SchoolPro (data protection)
- Marsh Commercial (insurance)

Hardwick House School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Hardwick House School.

The policy documents of Hardwick House School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

## **1 Statement of Intent**

This Policy applies to all staff, volunteers, therapists, and anyone working on behalf of Hardwick House School, pupils, parents/carers, external agencies and members of the public.

## **2 Introduction and Aim**

Hardwick House School ('the School') is proud of the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils, and is committed to a safe and secure environment in which every child and young person can learn effectively in line with DfE guidance.

This document is a statement of the aims, values and strategies used for the development of the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum undertaken within Hardwick House School. The policy aims to take into account diversity of beliefs and needs, and provide equality of opportunity.

Hardwick House School is an independent special school which provides a broad and balanced curriculum for Pupils in Key Stage 2 through to Post-16 Education, who hold an Education, Health & Care Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Pupils at the school have a wide range of needs and abilities, but broadly have similar cognitive abilities to children in maintained primary and secondary schools. The nature of pupils with autism can create an uneven academic profile both within the individual young person and within the year groups. Additionally, heightened anxiety and school refusal are frequent traits within our Pupil community, many of whom have experienced lengthy periods out of school and / or had a history of multiple school placements. This presents particular demands to ensure that each Pupil has the opportunity to achieve their full potential in all areas of the curriculum. Accordingly, Hardwick House School offers a differentiated curriculum that meets the range of different ages, aptitudes, needs and interests of the Pupils and is permeated with a specialised autism-specific curriculum and delivered within an ethos of empathy, understanding, and structure.

The primary focus of Post-16 Education at the school is to prepare pupils for transition into post-school providers and develop the skills for living and working independently in modern day Britain. The Post-16 Education curriculum comprises predominantly of Level 2 qualifications and is designed to give a balanced and varied programme, predominantly over one year, with a two-year option for those pupils with extenuating circumstances. The curriculum is effectively an extended opportunity for pupils to complete their Key Stage 4 education.

The curriculum offered to each pupil is based upon their individual needs as outlined in their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Their individual timetables reflect their personal needs and abilities with opportunities throughout the week to mix with a variety of people in a wide range of situations.

The aim is that children and young people will leave Hardwick House School with comparable qualifications to those available in a non-specialist school and transition to an appropriate setting.

### 3 Legislation and Guidance

Hardwick House School follows the statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education from the Department for Education issued under Section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996, along with the following:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014)
- Keeping children safe in education (2023)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)

### 4 Purpose

This policy describes how Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is taught and coordinated at Hardwick House School.

The Department for Education introduced compulsory Relationships Education for primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for secondary pupils from September 2020. Also, from September 2020 it will be compulsory for all schools to teach Health Education.

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity.

RSE has three main elements:

#### **Attitudes and Values**

- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral considerations
- Learning the value of family life; marriage and stable, loving relationships for the nurture of children
- Learning the value of respect, love and care
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making

### **Personal and Social Skills**

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- Managing conflict
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy

## **5 Scope**

Hardwick House School is an independent special school for 43 learners from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 5 with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and a diagnosis of autism or similar impairment.

The principal aims for RSE at Hardwick House School are for learners to:

- Have knowledge and understanding of their physical, social and sexual development through childhood and adolescence which informs their decision making, personal relationships and behaviour through into adult life.
- Develop positive self-esteem and skills in successfully managing their sexuality and relationships in private and public settings, including the skills and confidence to identify and resist unwanted sexual experiences and exploitation.
- Understand the need to value and respect themselves and others, the possible consequences of their sexual behaviour and the need to take responsibility for their actions.
- To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction and to promote an understanding of informed consent, assertion skills and confidentiality.

- Identify sources of support and advice to help them positively manage their sexuality and relationships.

## 6 Philosophy

The philosophy of Hardwick House School is to put the needs of its learners first and believe it is the right of our learners to be treated with dignity and respect. Our teaching approach is learner-centred and, although access to the National Curriculum is in place, we believe its principal focus should be on the unique learning difficulties associated with autism.

Hardwick House School places a high priority on Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education to maximise opportunities for personal autonomy and to enhance quality of life. Hardwick House School believes that structure and positive intervention with built-in opportunities for change and risk-taking achieve the best results for learners with autism. Children and young people learn best when teaching approaches allow for generalisation and concentrate on real-life situations rather than abstract concepts. We recognise that many of our learners have very special difficulties but believe that compassion, tolerance and positive intervention effect change. The culture and ethos of our school is open and non-judgmental.

A whole school approach will be adopted for RSE that actively involves the whole school community. All groups who make up the school community have rights and responsibilities regarding RSE. In particular:

- **The Senior Leadership Team** will endeavour to support the provision and development of RSE in line with this policy by providing leadership and adequate resourcing.
- **The PSHCEE Lead and Primary Lead** will maintain an overview of RSE provision and have overall responsibility for its development. This will include keeping up to date with developments and good practice, accessing training, developing the provision to meet pupils' needs, providing support and resources for staff, arranging staff training, liaison with outside agencies and monitoring and evaluation.
- **All classroom staff**, including teachers and Learning Support Assistants, are involved in the school's RSE provision. All teaching staff play an important pastoral role by offering support to pupils. Any member of staff can be approached by a pupil who experiences a difficulty regarding relationship and

sex issues. Staff will be consulted about the school's approach to RSE and aided in their work by provision of resources, background information, support and advice from experienced members of staff and access to appropriate training.

## 7 Policy

### 7.1 Relationships and Sex Education Overview

RSE is taught to pupils in KS2, KS3, KS4 and Post 16 within the PSHCEE curriculum. The curriculum for each Key Stage is defined in the long-term plan and the scheme of work for each stage with learning objectives, vocabulary, possible teaching and learning activities, learning outcomes and resources. The schemes of work are termed curriculum units and teachers use these units as a curriculum framework to undertake medium term planning and lesson preparation. In addition, certain biological aspects are delivered through Science lessons.

Where it is regarded as particularly beneficial pupils are divided into single gender groups for a part of lessons or whole lessons.

**Post-16 Provision:** the school recognizes the importance of continued health education within the post-16 context. Part of the post-16 PSHE curriculum will include Relationships and Sex Education, which will consciously build upon the KS4 curriculum.

### 7.2 Organisation, Planning and Assessment

RSE is incorporated into the PSHCEE curriculum and is delivered during one half term a year for each Key Stage. RSE is coordinated and managed by the PSHCEE Lead in consultation with the Head of School. The PSHCEE Lead consults with class teams, the speech and language therapist, the school counsellor, parents, and most importantly, the learners. RSE is monitored and evaluated within the school by the adults working with the children as they progress through the curriculum.

Key Stage 3 and 4 Pupils' progress in RSE is assessed as part of the PSHCEE assessment. Pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes are assessed through a range of methods including teacher assessment. Assessment procedures are followed as outlined in the assessment, marking and feedback policy. Current school policy requires a Key Assessment to be completed per learner, per subject every half term. This assessment is evidence of current achievement levels and can take many forms; photographs/video/pieces of written work. Each Key Assessment is filed in the

individual learner's Assessment Folder. *Hardwick House School has the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in RSE as for other curriculum areas.* Feedback to pupils is provided regularly on pupil progress and assessments are used to identify where pupils need extra support and intervention.

### **7.3 Teaching and Learning Styles**

Teaching RSE within a PSHCEE context necessitates the use of a wide range of teaching techniques including:

- Group work and discussions for social interactions and social skills development.
- Individually targeted instruction.
- Stimulating and motivating presentations using objects of reference, symbols and audio-visual resources.
- Practical activities which engage pupils' abilities and extend their skills, particularly within the community.
- Setting learning objectives which are challenging for pupils.

Learning activities in PSHCEE will include auditory, visual and kinaesthetic dimensions which complement the learning styles of pupils and which should be reflected in lesson planning.

### **7.4 Resources**

The school will purchase appropriate RSE teaching materials which have been identified by staff as useful and which have been approved by the Head of School, within the normal budgetary framework and as general school resources allow. Curriculum materials and resources are held by the PSHCEE Lead and held centrally.

A key resource used as a basis of planning for RSE is the Fiona Spiers programme: 'Sex & Relationships Education: A visual programme for learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorders or Learning Disabilities'. This is an excellent resource that is useful for learners of all ages; there are units of work suitable for Key Stage 2 learners through to those in Key Stage 5.

Other useful resources are from Image in Action and Leeds NHS ('Puberty and Sexuality for Children and Young People with a Learning Difficulty').

The school also subscribed to the PSHE Association and can access a range of resources along with up to date guidance and training.

### **7.5 Staff Responsibility**

Teaching is conducted in a safe learning environment using ground rules and



distancing techniques so that neither the pupils nor the teachers are put 'on the spot' or expected to discuss their own personal issues in class. Teachers are careful to ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes do not influence the teaching of RSE. Staff have a responsibility to ensure:

- The importance of creating a safe environment in which pupils will not feel unnecessarily anxious and/or embarrassed.
- That no one will be forced to take part in the discussion.
- Only the correct names for body parts are used.
- Meanings of words are explained in a sensible and factual way.
- Teaching resources are selected based on their appropriateness to pupils.

### **7.6 Staff Training**

Staff training is an essential part of planning and implementing the RSE programme. Staff must feel that they have the correct level of knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver a Relationships and Sex Education programme which will be appropriate to the different needs of each individual pupil.

It is the school's responsibility to ensure that training is tailored to the whole school population. Relevant school staff should also be CEOP trained (Child exploitation and online protection). All children and young people are vulnerable to the dangers of online grooming and pupils with Autism may be even more easily persuaded to do things or keen to make 'friends' so teaching and support for online safety should go alongside RSE education.

### **7.7 Using visiting speakers and others**

It is school policy that most of the RSE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However, visitors can enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of RSE. The PSHCEE Lead will provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of this RSE policy.

### **7.8 Answering Questions**

The school understands that a number of pupils may have questions regarding RSE. We will offer opportunities for pupils to have their questions answered in a sensible and matter-of-fact manner. Staff will establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in class by discussing ground rules with pupils and by taking an approach that ensures pupils feel confident and well supported. If a teacher does not know the answer to a question they will acknowledge this and suggest that they and the pupils research the answer to the question later.

Pupils forming relationships, developing social skills and developing sexual awareness is readily observed in school due to the need for greater supervision to maintain a safe environment for all pupils. School staff need to be aware that a sensitive positive response both to questions about developing sexuality and social behaviour is required.

It may not be appropriate to deal with some explicit questions in class. Teachers may choose to say that it is not appropriate to deal with that question at this time. If a member of staff becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised, he/she should seek advice from the Headteacher. When deciding whether or not to answer questions the teacher should consider the age and readiness of the learners, the RSE programme content, the ethos of the school and the RSE policy.

**If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse they will follow the school's safeguarding procedures.**

### **7.9 Offering Advice**

The school's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception - however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. Teachers may provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. their doctor or other suitable agency. Advice offered should not be directive and should be appropriate to the age of the pupil.

### **7.10 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Education**

Teachers do not promote any one life-style as the only acceptable one for society and therefore it is inevitable and natural that the topic of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender will be discussed during a programme of sex education. One of the advantages of exploring issues concerning LGBT is the opportunity to correct false ideas, assumptions and address prejudice. Discussion of LGBT should be appropriate to the age of the learners.

### **7.11 Safeguarding and Confidentiality**

RSE plays a very important part in fulfilling the statutory duties all schools have to meet. RSE helps children understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships and equips them with the skills to get help if they need it.

Safeguarding procedures must be followed when any disclosures about abuse are made. It is school policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Leads. The Head Teacher will decide whether to inform the parents and/or appropriate authorities and may signpost towards further sources of support.

School staff cannot promise confidentiality if approached by a learner for help. Staff must make this clear to learners.

### **7.12 Right to Withdraw**

Parents have a right to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE in secondary schools which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, should be granted up to three terms before their child turns 16. At this point, if the child themselves wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, Hardwick House School will make arrangements for this to happen in one of the three terms before the child turns 16 – the legal age of sexual consent.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at KS2 as the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

## **8 Equal Opportunities**

All work carried out in the school seeks to comply fully with the Hardwick House School Equal Opportunities Policy, in particular:

- That all learners should have equal access to learning opportunities, activities, resources and experiences regardless of race, language, religion, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation or class.
- That resources, activities, opportunities and experiences should reflect all the above and avoid stereotyping of any group and as much as possible.

## **9 Monitoring and Assessment**

The RSE programme is regularly evaluated by the PSHCEE Lead. The views of pupils, parents and teachers who deliver the programme are used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis.

The RSE policy is reviewed annually.