



RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation		
Created	January 2000	Vice Principal
Last Review	September 2023	Head of Compliance and Health & Safety
Approved	September 2023	Education Board

This Policy applies to all year groups at Thomas's Schools, including the EYFS. Thomas's London Day Schools operates as a united group of schools with a similar ethos and values and as such is referred to as a singular body. However, in some areas, it is appropriate for each school to adopt discrete procedures, acknowledging the individual identity of each school and its specific personnel and systems. These procedures can be found by clicking on the relevant school link below the contents list of this Policy.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Thomas's Confidentiality Policy, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, PSHE Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Wellbeing Policy.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

[Thomas's Battersea Relationship and Sex Education Policy Supplement](#)
[Thomas's Clapham Relationship and Sex Education Policy Supplement](#)
[Thomas's Fulham Relationship and Sex Education Policy Supplement](#)
[Thomas's Kensington Relationship and Sex Education Policy Supplement](#)
[Thomas's Putney Vale Relationship and Sex Education Policy Supplement](#)

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and off line. 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. The School recognises its responsibility to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of its pupils.

To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need 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 can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.

High quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. They can also enable schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, at school and in society

This Policy follows the DfE statutory guidance '[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#)' June 2019.

It was developed following consultation with Principals, Heads, and staff and the parent and pupil body. It is also underpinned by the stated school aim that Thomas's, while welcoming pupils of all faiths or none nevertheless adheres to the principles of Christian belief, which govern the behaviour of one person towards another. Each individual is encouraged to behave in a natural, happy and responsible way and to be mindful of the needs of others.

2. AIMS

The aim of Relationships and Sex Education is to put in place the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online. This will sit alongside the essential understanding of how to be healthy, both physically and mentally.

Through the provision of high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching, the School aims to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adolescence and adult life.

It seeks to provide a safe and stimulating environment which, in partnership with parents and the wider community, will enable pupils to learn about moral, physical and emotional development.

3. PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING RSE

Relationships Education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It prepares children for the changes and challenges of puberty and allows them to consider the responsibilities of adulthood. It teaches about reproduction and sexual health but does not promote early sexual activity or any one type of relationship.

At all times, teaching of RSE will be sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law. The school will ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. The school will comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act (2010) under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are protected characteristics.

3.1 *Why should it be taught in school?*

Relationships and Sex Education begins at a very early age and, while much of it is learnt from parents, it is also received from friends, books, magazines, television, internet, music, films and so on. Some of this information can be incorrect, confusing or frightening.

Relationships and Sex Education in school provides a secure framework and environment in which pupils can be given the facts using appropriate materials. It also allows them to develop necessary personal skills and a positive attitude to sexual health and well-being.

Wide ranging research has shown that children want information about changes and situations they will experience before they happen to them. A structured programme in school increases the probability of this being achieved. Also, although children want to be able to discuss relationships and sex with their parents, many parents and children prefer the school to take a lead and provide a springboard for the discussion. A partnership between home and school and open dialogue between parent and child are the ideal.

3.2 What does the School want Relationships and Sex Education to do for the pupils?

Relationships and Sex Education will:

- provide information which is easy to understand and relevant and appropriate to the age and maturity of the children;
- include the development of communication and social skills;
- encourage the exploration and clarification of values and the development of positive attitudes.

Through Relationships Education we want to ensure that pupils:

- develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings, friendships and relationships;
- are able to name parts of their body and describe how their bodies work;
- can protect themselves and ask for help and support;
- are prepared for puberty;
- learn about the nature of marriage/stable relationships and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children;
- understand and respect different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships and dealing with strangers;
- understand the characteristics of healthy relationships;
- understand how relationships may affect mental and physical health.

Through Relationship and Sex Education (from KS3) we want to ensure that pupils:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour;
- understand the law regarding the age of consent and the arguments for delaying sexual activity to maturity and within a loving, responsible relationship;
- are aware of online safety with regard to forming relationships;
- understand the reasons for protected sex, avoiding casual sex and the importance of sexual health;
- understand and respect all sexual orientations;
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within relationships including the concept of consent;
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others
- communicate effectively;
- have sufficient skills and information to be able to protect themselves.

Sex Education is defined as 'Human reproduction and sexual behaviour' including:

- How human reproduction can happen (e.g. sexual intercourse, IVF, surrogacy)
- Anatomy and biology
- Reproductive health, choices, rights and responsibilities
- Sexual behaviour and sexual health, risks, reasons, rights and responsibilities

4. PROCEDURES

Relationships and Sex Education is not taught in isolation. It is rooted in our PSHE programme and the Science curriculum and it is supported by the whole School's ethos.

Lessons are accessible to all pupils including those with special educational needs and disabilities. These pupils can be more vulnerable to bullying; therefore sensitive and age appropriate relationship education is an essential part of their learning and the learning of others.

Lessons or assemblies may also be introduced into the curriculum in response to issues as they arise in the school and wider community

4.1 Curriculum

Reception - Year 6

The focus is on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and the relationships with other children and with adults.

Relationships Education is made of 5 areas of focus:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

A breakdown of aspects of these areas can be found in Appendix 1 of this Policy.

The pupils are also introduced to the early concepts of sex education in a graduated age appropriate way, drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the Science curriculum and ensuring that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings. Details of the curriculum covered by each school can be found in the school specific links at the start of this policy. The Science National Curriculum requires that pupils in Reception to Year 2 are taught:

- that animals, including humans, move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce
- to recognise and compare the main external parts of the bodies of humans and other animals
- that humans and other animals can produce offspring and that these offspring grow into adults
- to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others, and to treat others with sensitivity

In Years 3 to 6 the following concepts are revisited as part of the compulsory Science curriculum:

- that the life processes common to humans and other animals include nutrition, growth and reproduction
- about the main stages of the human life cycle

Where any of this information or these topics are introduced through the Relationships Education syllabus earlier than the year designated by the Science syllabus, parents have the right to withdraw their children from the lessons.

KS3 (Y7) and above

Pupils are taught about intimate sexual relationships, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity and the relevant legal provisions (e.g. consent) in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. The issues of grooming, sexual exploitation and internet safety are addressed sensitively and clearly. The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds.

Relationship and Sex Education covers the following themes:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being Safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

A breakdown of aspects of these areas can be found in Appendix 1 of this Policy.

The following topics are covered in Science KS3 curriculum (Y7-9):

- reproduction in humans (as an example of a mammal), including the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycle (without details of hormones), gametes, fertilisation, gestation and birth, to include the effect of
- maternal lifestyle on the foetus through the placenta
- reproduction in plants, including flower structure, wind and insect pollination,
- fertilisation, seed and fruit formation and dispersal, including quantitative investigation of some dispersal mechanisms.

In KS4 (Year 10) the following are covered as part of the Science curriculum:

- communicable diseases including sexually transmitted infections in humans (including HIV/AIDs)
- hormones in human reproduction, hormonal and non-hormonal methods of contraception
- sex determination in humans (Evolution, inheritance and variation)

Discrete lessons are allocated for those parts of the Relationships and Sex Education syllabus that cannot be delivered via Science, PSHE, Assemblies, Circle Time and other subjects. From Reception to Year 2 these are taught by the form teacher. From Year 3 these are taught by the form teacher, members of SMT plus supplementary specialist visitors from outside agencies. . In the Senior School lessons are taught by form tutors, members of SMT and supplementary specialist visiting speakers.

4.2 Delivery

All form tutors are familiar with this policy and the syllabus and will be prepared to support pupils and answer direct questions as appropriate.

The School is committed to employing active learning methods which involve pupils' full participation. It is essential that schools can help pupils develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about relationships and sex. When developing the

curriculum, the School recognises that pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues.

Most lessons will be taught to full classes, with gender groups for certain topics as deemed appropriate.

- **Ground rules** help to create a safe environment for both teacher and pupil. They should be established with each class before lessons commence.
- **Distancing techniques** help to avoid embarrassment and protect privacy. Role play, case studies with invented characters, appropriate videos, etc can help pupils to discuss issues in a depersonalised, safe environment.
- **Dealing with questions.** Children of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to differing types of questions or behaviours. Teachers will be supported and prepared for the unexpected, for example:
 - the ground rules should be referred to if a question is too personal;
 - if a teacher does not know the answer to a question they should acknowledge this and research it later;
 - question boxes may be used so pupils may ask a question without having to do so publicly;
 - if a teacher feels that a question is too explicit, is too advanced for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class or raises any safeguarding concerns, the teacher should acknowledge the question and promise to deal with it on an individual basis. The teacher will inform parents about any issue or question that he/she feels needs to be followed up at home unless that matter raises safeguarding concerns when advice will first be sought from the DSL;
 - if a teacher is concerned that a child has disclosed any matter which raises a safeguarding concern they should follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and make a report to the DSL immediately.
- **Discussion and reflection** should be a part of the lessons. Active learning ensures opportunities for considering beliefs and attitudes and for developing greater understanding. Watching a video or reading written material must be used only to support or to complement wider structured activities.

Factual information in written form may be useful for the pupils to have for future reference.

4.3 Assessment and Pupil Voice

Pupil progress and understanding is assessed through formative assessment at the conclusion of themes during the year. RSE does not include summative assessment such as tests and exams

Pupil voice regarding the effectiveness and relevance of sessions is sought through feedback forms, surveys and the School Council.

4.4 Working with Parents

Parents are the key people in:

- teaching their children about relationships and sex
- maintaining the culture and ethos of the family, in whatever form it takes;
- helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up
- preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings.

The curriculum, key themes and lesson outlines are shared with parents via parents meeting, school news, letters and online.

Parents need to know that the personal beliefs and attitudes of the teachers will not influence the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education. Teachers will work within the guidelines of this policy and the scheme of work.

The school will provide support for parents through sharing with them the school's Relationships Education programme contents and by working with the PTA to invite external speakers to contribute to the parent education programme.

Parents of pupils up to Year 6 have the right to request the withdrawal of their children from all or part of the Sex Education provided at school except for those parts included in the Science syllabus. Any such request should be made to the Head or member of SLT with oversight for the RSE curriculum. The Head (or appropriate member of the SLT) will discuss this with the parents, to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Following this meeting, if the parent still wishes to withdraw their child, the school will make alternative arrangements for pupils in such cases and will make available an information pack for parents. Where a child is withdrawn from Sex Education, the School will document this process and ensure a record is held in the pupil management database.

For parents of pupils in Year 7 and above, any request to withdraw their child from the Sex Education delivered as part of statutory RSE should be made to the Head.

The Head will discuss this with the parents, and where appropriate with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Except in exceptional circumstances, the Head will respect the parents' request. Where a child is withdrawn from Sex Education, the School will document this process and ensure a record is held in the pupil management database.

If a pupil is withdrawn, the school will respect the parents' wishes until three terms before the child turns 16. At this stage, if the pupil wishes to receive sex education the school will arrange to provide it during one of these terms. Pupils will receive purposeful education during the period of withdrawal

4.5 Safeguarding and Confidentiality

The best interests of the child are our main concern. Children have a right to expect school to be a safe and secure environment. Teachers need to be aware that effective Relationships Education can lead to disclosures from pupils, often unintentionally, that raise child protection concerns. Key points to be aware of are:

- the school has in place a Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and a Confidentiality policy;
- teachers can never offer or guarantee unconditional confidentiality;
- any visitor from an outside agency involved with pupils in Relationships Education will be made aware of the confidentiality rules and whom to approach on the staff with concerns.

4.6 Resources and Training

The School is committed to using the best teaching materials and to providing appropriate training and support for staff. PSHE Leaders are responsible for monitoring training needs and for researching and providing appropriate resources.

5. MONITORING

The provision of the RSE curriculum and Science curriculum are monitored annually. The Head and the school's nominated subject leader are responsible for the Relationships and Sex Education scheme of work. Monitoring of the relationship and sex education provision is undertaken by pastoral/ subject leads of each school through lesson observation, self-evaluations and discussions with pupils. Pupil voice regarding the effectiveness and relevance of sessions is sought through reflection, discussion, safeguarding audits and feedback forms.

6. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This Policy bears due regard to the following statutory guidance and other advice.
DfE Statutory Guidance 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (Relationships Education) and Health Education' (June 2019)
DfE Statutory Guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2022)
DfE 'Parental Engagement on Relationships Education' (2019)
DfE 'Mental health and behaviour in schools' (November 2018)
The Education Act (2002)

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: DfE Guidance on RSE areas of focus

APPENDIX 1: DfE 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' Areas of Focus

By the end of primary school (Year 6) pupils should know:

Families and people who care for me

- that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability
- the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives
- that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care
- that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up
- that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong
- how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed

Caring friendships

- how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends
- the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties
- that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded
- that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right
- how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed

Respectful relationships

- the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- the conventions of courtesy and manners
- the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness

- 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 those in positions of authority
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help
- what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive
- the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults

Online relationships

- that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not
- that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous
- the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them
- how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met
- how information and data is shared and used online

Being safe

- what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)
- about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe
- that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact
- how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know
- how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult
- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard,
- how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so
- where to get advice, for example family, school or other sources

By the end of secondary school

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary.

Pupils should know:

Families

- 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 – for example, 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, including friendships

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as:
 - trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict
 - reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
- 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 (for example, 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

- 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, for example 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

- 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

- 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, for example 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 and 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

The Law

It is important to know 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.

Pupils should be 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 and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)