



THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL
RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Date of last review:	May 2023	Review period:	2 years
Date of next review:	Summer 2025	Owner:	Student Welfare
		Approval:	



TBSHS: A truly all-round education



1. School Values

The school values underpin every aspect of life at TBSHS and are designed to help students develop as responsible, considerate young people that can make a positive contribute to society. The school values are:

- Commitment
- Aspiration
- Respect
- Integrity
- Community

The culture and ethos at TBSHS is epitomised through our 'Black & Gold' spirit which is the values enacted, promoted and modelled by staff and students. The Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum plays a major role in helping our students understand, appreciate and enact the values in their lives. This is further underpinned by our equality core values

2. What is RSE?

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity. Health Education involves teaching students about physical health and mental wellbeing, providing them with the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. The school's approach to RSE is balanced and takes account of, and is sensitive to, different viewpoints and is not based on personal bias; it is delivered in an appropriate manner with regard to the age and stage of students. The school's approach to RSE consists of:

- RSE themes explored throughout the planned PSHE programme Years 7 to 11 and Citizenship in years 9-13, monitored by Heads of Year in consultation with the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for RSE.
- The taught National Curriculum Science Programme of Study.
- Pastoral support for students who experience difficulties, including access to the School Counsellor.
- Provision of appropriate information and education through Head of Year and Senior Leader assemblies.

3. Aims and objectives of RSE at TBSHS

This policy was produced in consultation with our staff, board of governors, students and parents. We ensure the policy is effectively communicated to staff and parents by publishing the policy on our school website. TBSHS seeks to provide a balanced and broad curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the school and of society, and prepares students at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. The aims of RSE at TBSHS are to:

- Help students develop self-respect, confidence and empathy towards others including those of diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- Help students to make informed decisions and understand the importance of relationships in ensuring their mental health and wellbeing, academic achievement and future success.
- Provide students with an understanding of sexual development (including the importance of health and hygiene) and help them prepare for puberty.
- Develop a culture in which sensitive discussions can take place, and are valued.
- Help students learn about the safety and risks in relationships.
- The right not to be abused by other people or be taken advantage of.
- The importance of consent and its necessity in maintaining healthy and positive relationships
- The right of people to follow their own sexuality (within legal parameters).

- Ensure students understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.
- Ensure students understand family structures, committed relationships and the legal status of different types of long-term relationships.

TBSHS provides RSE and Health Education to all students in accordance with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This Policy and the TBSHS RSE Curriculum have been updated to comply with statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), “2019 Guidance. Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education”, which has been compulsory since September 2020. The TBSHS RSE and Health Education framework is based upon three core themes:

Core Theme	Examples of content taught
1. Relationships education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental wellbeing • Internet safety and harms • Physical health and fitness • Healthy eating • Drugs, alcohol and tobacco • Health and prevention • Basic first aid • Changing adolescent body
2. Health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families • Respectful relationships, including friendships • Online and media • Being safe • Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
3. Living in the wider world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Skills • Choices and pathways • Work and career • Employment rights and responsibilities • Financial choices • Media literacy and digital resilience

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following TBSHS policies:

- Behaviour for Learning policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and
- Child Protection Policy

4. Legal obligations

TBSHS provides RSE and Health Education to all students in accordance with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This Policy and the TBSHS RSE Curriculum have been updated to comply with statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), “2019 Guidance. Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education”, which has been compulsory since September 2020

5. Equality

RSE is delivered at TBSHS in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and in observance of the protected characteristics of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership and sexual orientation. The school strongly believes that all students should have access to RSE that is relevant to their particular needs, circumstances and background. To achieve this, the school's approach to RSE will take account of:

- Different ethnic, cultural and religious groups that may have different attitudes and beliefs with regard to RSE. The school promotes respect for, and understanding of the views of different ethnic, cultural and religious groups in line with the school's statutory duty to keep students safe and deliver the statutory RSE curriculum.
- The need to foster healthy and respectful relationships and behaviour between boys and girls. TBSHS is resolute in its stance in challenging sexism, misogyny, sexualised behaviour and sexist bullying.
- Students that have emotional or behavioural needs, or special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) that require specific support with RSE.
- Those students that may define themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Others (LGBTQ+). TBSHS is LGBTQ+-inclusive and the teaching of the RSE curriculum reflects this, being both sensitive and age appropriate in content and approach. This content is integrated into the programme rather than as a stand-alone lesson or unit. TBSHS is resolute in its stance in challenging homophobic bullying.

6. A Whole School Approach

The designated RSE co-ordinator (Assistant Headteacher: Key Stage 4) is responsible for RSE and its development. Heads of Year will support the delivery and monitor the quality of RSE in their respective year groups. This includes keeping up to date with developments and good practice, developing the provision to meet students' needs, providing support and resources for staff, arranging staff training, liaison with outside agencies and monitoring and evaluation.

- **Teaching staff:** All teachers play an important pastoral role by offering support to students. (Any teacher can be approached by a student who experiences a difficulty regarding sex or relationships issues). Teachers 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.
- **Non-teaching staff** may be involved in a supportive role in some RSE lessons and also play an important, informal pastoral support role with students.
- **Governors** have responsibilities for school policies. They will be consulted about the RSE provision and policy and have regular reports at Governor's meetings.
- **Parents/carers** have a legal right to view this policy and to have information about the school's RSE provision. They also have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated sex education lessons if they wish (see section 9). Parents and carers of students at TBSHS have been consulted as part of the development of this Policy. A consultation questionnaire was published to all parents/carers (alongside a draft of this Policy) and they were given an opportunity to feedback on the draft.
- **A dedicated school nurse**, who works with all secondary schools in Bishop's Stortford, will work in collaboration with the pastoral team at TBSHS.
- **Outside agencies and speakers** may be involved in the delivery of RSE lessons. The school will only work with agencies and speakers who are appropriate to students' needs. TBSHS will work in partnership with them and jointly plan their work within the school. TBSHS will ensure any visitors or external speakers understand the cohort of children involved, including the different ability levels and diversities in identities across protected characteristics. They will also be made aware of any specific issues relating to child protection.

7. A safe and respectful learning environment

In order for RSE to be conducted appropriately and respectfully the following will be adhered to:

- Teachers are careful to ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes do not influence the teaching of RSE.
- Ground rules or agreements are agreed in lessons to provide a common values framework within which to teach. There are clear parameters as to what will be taught in whole class setting and what will be dealt with on an individual basis (and by whom).
- Confidentiality will be clearly explained to students in RSE lessons. Students will understand how disclosures will be handled.
- Students will be given preparation so that they will know how to minimise any embarrassment that they may feel.
- Distancing techniques (such as the use of scenarios), will be used to help to ensure students can engage in RSE lessons without feeling embarrassed or unable to participate.
- No one (teacher or student) should be expected to answer a personal question.
- There will be no need for anyone to discuss personal issues.
- Sources of support when dealing with sensitive issues will be signposted to students.
- No one will be forced to take part in a discussion, and this is made clear at the start of lessons.
- Only correct anatomical names will be used.
- Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.
- Care will be taken not to use materials or approaches that may trigger trauma or distress.
- Students at risk will be identified and arrangements made for them to access the learning in a comfortable way.

8. Safeguarding

TBSHS acknowledges that RSE is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the school and for meeting our statutory obligations as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2020). RSE helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing abuse, or have experienced, abuse. TBSHS recognises that when discussing some of the issues RSE covers, some students could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory training around child protection and will follow the schools safeguarding policy and procedures. TBSHS recognises that some children may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes to their personal life. For those children, additional support will be given to prevent them being affected by the scenarios or topics in their planned lessons.

9. Parental concerns and withdrawal of students

As outlined within the Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSE, however:

- Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education.
- Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum.
- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education.

All children will have the right to opt into sex education three terms before they turn 16 and the school will make arrangements for this to happen. In practice, this means that when a child turns 15 they have the right to be taught sex education if they want to. Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of Relationships Education, it is our aim to encourage parents

to see the value of RSE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice. Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, TBSHS asks that they first speak to the Assistant Headteacher: KS4 to discuss their concerns. The Assistant Headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum. If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the Headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this. Except in exceptional circumstances, we will respect the parents' request to withdraw their child from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

10. Confidentiality and informing parents/carers

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a student for help. Staff must make this clear to students. Child protection procedures must be followed when any disclosures about abuse are made; (please refer to the Child Protection policy). It is very rare for a student to request absolute confidentiality. If they do, in situations other than those involving child protection issues, staff must make a careful judgement about whether or not a third party needs to be informed. This judgement will be based upon:

- The seriousness of the situation and the degree of harm that the student may be experiencing.
- The student's age, maturity and competence to make their own decisions.

Where it is clear that a student would benefit from the involvement of a third party, staff should seek the consent of the student to do so. If appropriate, staff might inform the third party together with the student. Unless clearly inappropriate, students will always be encouraged to talk to their parent/carer. In addition, the school may promote counselling services, both in and out of school, so students know what is available for additional confidential support.

11. Monitoring

TBSHS regularly monitors its RSE scheme of work to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, that the curriculum is meeting the national requirements under the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance, and that learning outcomes are reflective of students' needs. This policy will be reviewed by the school's leadership team in conjunction with Governors on a regular basis. If changes are needed, members of staff, parents/carers and students will be consulted and any subsequent changes made clearly communicated.

12. Evaluation

Evaluation of our programme is crucial to ensure that we can continue to improve on provision and teaching effectiveness. The evaluation process involves structured and informal student and staff feedback including but not limited to:

- Teacher evaluation of lessons and the overall RSE programme
- Evidence from lesson observations
- Feedback and evaluation by students (for example, using student interviews, questionnaires/surveys, or focus groups)