



RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Date of last review	25 September 2024
Review cycle	Annual
Policy due for review and approval by Local Governing Body	September 2025

This policy is written in the context of and with regard to the statements below:

MISSION STATEMENT

The Saffron Valley Collegiate (SVC) seeks to provide a personalised educational experience that identifies and responds to the circumstances and needs of each individual child or young person. In doing so it enables them to progress academically and become successful learners through the reengagement of the young person with education.

EQUALITIES STATEMENT:

All who work within the Saffron Valley Collegiate are committed to the celebration of diversity, and the challenging of disadvantage and discrimination, in all its forms.

These values are explicit to the ethos of the Saffron Valley Collegiate and implicit in all policies and practices.

This policy is written in conjunction with the SVC Safeguarding, Early Help and Child Protection Policy.

This policy has been updated to reflect the changes to Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) outlined in the Draft Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education Guidance published by the Department for Education on 16th May 2024. This revised guidance is open to consultation and changes to current school policies and curriculum are not statutory until final publication. This policy will be reviewed on publication of the final guidance to ensure Saffron Valley Collegiate meets its statutory responsibilities.

The updated draft guidance outlines significant changes to previous statutory guidance issued to schools in 2019. This draft guidance includes age limits on teaching specific topics, the topic of gender identity should not be taught and that parents should be consulted with regarding changes to RSHE policies and on curriculum. The guidance also makes clear the right for parents/carers to request that their child is withdrawn from RSE.

The Aims of Relationships & Sex Education

To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships. High quality, evidence-based teaching of RSE can help prepare pupils for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life, and can promote pupils' moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development. Effective teaching will support young people to cultivate positive character traits, including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness, and trustworthiness.

(DfE Draft RSHE Guidance 2024)

This policy covers Saffron Valley Collegiate's whole school approach to Relationships and Sex Education. We believe that RSE is vital for the personal, social and emotional development of our pupils. It equips children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, respectful and enjoyable relationships and empowers them to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

SVC is aware that pupils attending the SVC may be more vulnerable than their peers to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual abuse, exploitation, bullying and other issues. RSE is particularly important for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs or SEND. RSE at SVC will be adapted to ensure these subjects are accessible for all pupils. Where appropriate some sessions may be delivered in single sex groups or on a 1-2-1 basis to facilitate greater learning for pupils. SVC aims to provide inclusive education for all pupils; therefore, the planning, delivery and resources for RSE will give consideration to the cultural and religious beliefs of our students and additionally we will recognise that family structures will vary across the cohort.

The curriculum and resources will be reviewed annually to ensure that SVC is compliant with the age restrictions on sensitive topics and that resources covering the broader concept of gender identity are removed and that harmful stereotypes around sex and gender are dispelled. Discriminatory beliefs, language and behaviour will be challenged appropriately and monitored with additional support and intervention made available for students as necessary.

SVC aims to ensure that all pupils are provided with RSE that supports their physical, emotional and moral development; and helps them to learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

Each Key Stage receives age appropriate RSE learning which is delivered through assemblies/tutor time/PSHE lessons/1:1 support and targeted group work. RSE planning and delivery is underpinned by the values of belong, relationships, achieve, and move on.

Curriculum

"Relationship and Sex Education should contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, emotional and physical development of students at school and of society and preparing students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life."

(DfE and Health Education Guidance 2020)

RSE teaching and learning in SVC aims to provide pupils with a greater understanding of the following concepts:

Attitudes and values

- Learning the importance of values, individual responsibility and moral considerations.
- Learning the value of family life, and stable and loving relationships.
- A clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure.
- Link RSE with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour such as drugs, smoking and alcohol.
- Exploring healthy relationships.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.
- Understanding the law with regard to consent and legal age of consent.
- Exploring violence against women and girls and how to recognise coercive and controlling behaviour in relationships.

Personal and social skills

- Learning to explore and manage emotions and feelings in 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 understanding of the consequences of choices.
- Managing conflict.
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at age-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 gained from such delay.
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy and terminations and repeated terminations.

Staff who have been specifically trained may provide additional support where needed for pupils about different types of contraception, including emergency contraception and its effectiveness, and give pupils additional information and guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling and where necessary, support the young people in getting specialist health advice and prevention through contraception treatment, as part of a discussion about healthy and safe relationships.

Young people are also able to ask to see the school nursing team. SVC recognises the importance of parental involvement in all aspects of their child's development and education therefore pupils will be encouraged to speak to their parents/carers and parents/carers will be kept informed of support offered to pupils unless it is deemed that informing parents/carers would increase the risk of harm to the pupil.

PARENTAL RIGHT TO WITHDRAWAL

Parents and Carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Pupils are not able to request to withdraw. Parents/Carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction or to request withdrawal from relationships education.

Any request for withdrawal from sex education will result in the parent/carer invited for a meeting with the Headteacher or other senior member of staff to discuss the request. This is to understand the request and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. This will include discussing the benefits of sex education, and any detrimental effects of withdrawal, including social and emotional impacts on the child, and the likelihood that the child will hear their peers' version of what was said in class, which may not be accurate. These meetings will be documented and a record kept of this process.

Safeguarding

Where safeguarding concerns arise, staff will report these to the Safeguarding Team, who will investigate further and take any necessary action. Pupils are made aware that staff at the school will share information in the best interests of the child, and as such confidentiality cannot be taken for granted. However, when information is shared, pupils are always informed how and why and are given support and reassurance around this, where further concerns may arise.

In relation to health concerns and queries, pupils are signposted towards appropriate agencies – such as health care providers, clinics, the School Nursing Team, and so on – for further support, confidential advice, resources and treatment.

In the event of staff becoming aware of a pupil under the age of 16 who is having, or considering having, sexual intercourse the pupil would be encouraged and supported to speak to their parents/carers, as well as signposted to the above services.

When signposting pupils, due diligence will be given to ensure pupils are signposted to appropriate organisations that are free from agenda or ideology and who employ suitably qualified staff.

Person responsible for updating this policy:
Headteacher