

Earlscliffe Ltd

Policy: Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Member of SLT responsible: Deputy Head (Academic) and Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding)

Date of review: November 2024

Date of next review: June 2025

Introduction

This policy covers Earlscliffe's approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). We believe that RSE is vital for the personal, social and emotional development of our students. It equips our 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. Earlscliffe believes that all children and young people have a right to holistic, inclusive and needs-led RSE. We believe that through providing high quality RSE, we are upholding the ethos and values of our school and its commitment to equality and celebration of difference. We will ensure the policy is effectively communicated to staff and parents, including through publishing the policy on our school website. The information below complies with our statutory obligations to deliver RSE under sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It will have due regard for the DfE's statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance and other relevant guidance. We will review the policy on a regular basis to ensure that it is in line with current Government guidance and legislation and to ensure that our RSE programme continues to meet the needs of our pupils. The policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies including but not limited to the following: Equal opportunities policy, Anti-bullying policy, Behaviour policy, and Safeguarding policy.

Equality, inclusion and social justice

We believe that RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. Our RSE is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes and sexism and sexual harassment in schools. We take these issues seriously and ensure that we embed content on gender equality throughout the curriculum. We are also committed to an RSE that makes every pupil feel valued and included and is relevant to them. This means we are committed to an LGBT+ inclusive and SEND inclusive curriculum and are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice 2014. We will also ensure that we take into account the religious and cultural background of all students when teaching RSE. An inclusive RSE at Earlscliffe will seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010. As a boarding school, this is also reflected in our espousal of National Minimum Standard 16.

Definition of relationships and sex education

We define 'relationships education' as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human relationships including friendships, intimate, sexual and committed relationships and family life. We define 'sex education' as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections and sexual health. We take the approach that Relationships and Sex Education are best approached in an integrated way and using a gender equity and human rights framework. We will seek to nurture students' curiosity about the world around them, supporting their development and their respect for themselves and each other.

To cover the curriculum content outlined in the RSE Guidance, we will equip our students to build positive and respectful relationships online and offline. We seek to ensure that it gives students the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help them to

- realise their health (including sexual health), wellbeing and dignity *f*
- build self-esteem and self-worth *f*
- explore and value their personal and sexual identity and the personal/sexual identities of others *f*
- understand family structures, committed relationships and the legal status of different types of long-term relationships *f*
- understand and make sense of the real-life issues they are experiencing in the world around them *f*
- manage and explore difficult feelings and emotions *f*
- consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others *f*
- develop as informed and responsible citizens *f*
- understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives

We believe that high quality, comprehensive RSE builds young people's confidence and self-esteem and helps them understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Evidence shows that effective RSE plays a role in behaviour change, including reducing unprotected or unwanted sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Subject content

The curriculum is developed by the School's Deputy Headteachers in conjunction with the views of teachers and students. At Earlscliffe, we will meet the learning objectives and content outlined in the Relationships Education, Relationships & Sex Education and Health Education Guidance. All content will be delivered in a timely way and will be age and developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of our pupils, including those pupils with SEND. In addition, we deliver forums and assemblies focused on RSE topics.

RSE is primarily delivered at Earlscliffe as part of our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all key stages. The School's Deputy Headteachers work closely with colleagues in all curriculum areas to ensure a holistic and

joined up approach to what is taught in RSE. We also supplement learning through using a whole school approach and utilising time outside of the classroom, such as in forums and assemblies. RSE will address aspects of relationships and sex in an integrated way within a single topic. We also use external agencies where appropriate to deliver aspects of Relationships and Sex Education (see section below). The programme will be delivered in a non judgemental, factual way, using the correct medical terms where appropriate (for example when teaching about external body parts). School staff will not express or be expected to express their personal views or beliefs when teaching RSE.

Monitoring

We regularly monitor our RSE scheme of work to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, that the curriculum is meeting the new national requirements under the Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education guidance, and that learning outcomes are reflective of student need. This policy will be reviewed by the school's leadership team in conjunction 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. The School's Leadership Team monitors the implementation of the programme through lesson observations and looking at samples of students' work.

Student assessment and evaluation

Earlscliffe uses a range of assessment methods to get regular feedback on student progress in RSE. Lessons are planned to ensure that students of differing abilities, including the most able, are suitably challenged. Although the subject is not examined, assessment methods used include project work, students' pre and post unit self-evaluation and reflective statements.

Student voice

Student voice is central to the culture and ethos of Earlscliffe. We use student voice to evaluate how relevant and engaging RSE is to children's lives. Throughout our RSE scheme of work we embed student voice practices to enable students to express their views on the range of topics and issues that RSE covers and to ensure that they listen to other opinions and evidence, reflect on their own perspectives and take a broader view. We want to ensure that all student voices are heard but that those views that are hurtful, offensive or exclusionary do not dominate and are addressed. We want to ensure a culture where human rights, social justice, inclusion and diversity are promoted.

Answering student questions

RSE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from students. We view questions as a positive sign that students are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others. As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group. There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class. Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way. School staff will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct

personal questions of their students that could make either party vulnerable. We believe that an open approach to answering questions prevents students from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and older students. We believe exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSE. Importantly, we believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they are able to discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

Working with parents/carers

We believe that the successful teaching of RSE involves parents/ carers and schools working together. If parents/carers have any concerns or special circumstances the school should be aware of, or would like any further information about the curriculum, they are welcome to contact their child's Senior Tutor at any time.

Parental right to request their child be excused from sex education

The majority of our students are aged over 16. However, should a parent of a student under 16 ask to withdraw their child from sex education, the following guidance will be in place:

If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform their child's Senior Tutor in writing and the school will keep a record of this. A Senior Tutor will share this information with the School's Deputy Headteachers and Head Teacher. Except in exceptional circumstances, we will respect the parents' request to withdraw their 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. We will remind parents annually that the request to withdraw is still in place and invite them to confirm whether they still want it.

Working with visitors and external agencies

From time-to-time Earlscliffe may invite external experts and visitors to deliver parts of our RSE scheme of work. External visitors will be selected in order to enrich and supplement our RSE by bringing particular skills, methods and expertise to the classroom and the whole school. A teacher will always be present throughout these lessons so as to build on the students' learning after the session/s as well as answer any questions the students may subsequently have. Any external visitor will be expected to comply with this policy and other related policies, including the school's confidentiality and child protection policy. We will also ensure that: ^f

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- There is appropriate planning, preparatory and follow up work for the session. ^f
- The visitor understands 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.

Safeguarding and child protection

Earlscliffe 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. 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. We recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSE covers, some pupils 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. We also recognise 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.

While Earlscliffe wants to create a learning space that feels safe for young people to disclose, we also want to protect their privacy. We do this by using a number of teaching techniques including the use of a working agreement, where rights respecting ground rules are created with students on what makes a safe and welcoming environment for all. Once ground rules have been set, we will check they are in place throughout the year and actively referred to. Through the use of ground rules and other approaches, such as distancing techniques, we believe the school can create a supportive environment for discussions that can be sensitive or difficult.