

# Heathermount School

## Relationships & Sex

(RSE)

## Policy

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Approved by:

Review date: December 2018

Next review due by: 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019\*

\*It is noted that this document is highly likely to be reviewed again in late 2019; as we are mindful that new statutory guidance is due to be published at that time.



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## Rational and Ethos at Heathermount School

The school is a specialist non-maintained setting that is educating and supporting students who are on the autistic spectrum with associated disorders. Students in attendance range from 4-19 years old and are typically high functioning and verbal, or with emerging verbal skills.

At Heathermount we want all of our students to have the skills to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. Our school ethos is:

### **“Stepping forward: Building Confidence for Life”**

Difficulties with understanding emotions and feelings, as well as difficulties with social communication and interaction are likely to place students with ASD at a disadvantage than those without ASD.

Due to the nature of the difficulties associated with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) it is essential that Heathermount School provides its students with a robust and informative Relationships and Sex Curriculum that will ensure that all students are able to cope with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up, irrespective of the impact on the special educational needs.

## Values and aim of RSE

RSE is about the emotional, social, moral and cultural development of pupils and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring knowledge, issues and student's values regarding relationships and sex.

SRE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

**Aim:** The aims of RSE at Heathermount School are to provide all our students with quality and effective RSE which is differentiated to meet age and individual needs:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive & safe discussion can take place;
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene;
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, morality, confidence and empathy;
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality, identity and relationships;
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- To enhance student understanding and skills regarding risk taking and keeping themselves safe
- For our students to know where to go to and how to ask for help regarding relationships, wellbeing and health advice/guidance
- On key aim of RSE within the school is to ensure student safeguarding. This is through increasing their knowledge, exploring their values as well as developing their skills in order to help keep them safe.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The **Head teacher** is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and of managing requests to withdraw students from components of RSE.

The PSHE lead is responsible for ensuring that the programme is reviewed, relevant, up to date and is appropriate for our students, their needs and their ability. This will ensure that all students are able to access the curriculum and develop their knowledge, skills and have a safe environment within which they can explore their own values.

**Staff** are responsible for:

- Ensuring a safe environment for delivering RSE/PSHE
- Delivering SRE in a sensitive way; ensuring that all teaching and materials are appropriate and has regard to the age and cultural background of the pupils concerned.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE; parents and pupils may need to be reassured that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of sex and relationship education;
- Monitoring progress;
- Responding to the individual needs of each student;
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents have requested them to be withdrawn from aspects of RSE.

**Students** are responsible for engaging fully in RSE sessions and will treat others with respect and sensitivity.

**Heathermount's Governing body** will ratify the school's RSE policy and task the head teacher with its implementation.

**The Disabilities Trust** hold overall responsibility in ensuring that the RSE policy is implemented in full.

## Legislation (Statutory regulations and guidance)

RSE is now a statutory provision within schools. It is expected that all schools have provision by September 2019. RSE plays a vital part in meeting schools' safeguarding obligations. Ofsted is clear that schools must have a preventative programme that enables pupils to learn about safety and risks in relationships (SRE for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century). Schools maintain a statutory obligation under the Children Act (2004) to promote their pupils' wellbeing, and under the Education Act (1996) to prepare children and young people for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life. A comprehensive RSE programme can have a positive impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and their ability to achieve and can play a crucial part in meeting these obligations. (SRE for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century)

This policy has been developed and written with regards to the Education Act 1996 and "Sex and Relationship Education Guidance" July 2000 (DfEE 0116/2000). In addition, the following documentation (Guidance) has also been considered:

- Preparing for Statutory Relationships and Sex Education (PSHE Association 2018)
- SRE in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Supplementary guidance Brook, PSHE Association & Sex Education forum)
- Writing your school's relationships and sex education policy (PSHE Association 2018)
- Equality Act 2010
- Heathermount Behaviour Policy 2017
- Heathermount Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy April 2017
- Heathermount Safer Working Practice Guidance January 2016

This policy has been developed using the following steps:

1. Consultation with the PSHE curriculum team and SMSC team.
2. Staff consultation
3. Pupil consultation via student feedback
4. Ratification – shared and ratified with the schools Governing body. In addition, consultation has been sought from the schools' proprietor The Disabilities Trust.

## Curriculum Design

At Heathermount School RSE is embedded within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in individualised Speech and language sessions.

SRE will be made accessible to all students and adapted to meet their particular SEN needs.

Class sessions will be provided via small groups or some students may be provided with individual sessions in line with their specific needs.

All students will be provided with information about the way their bodies function, how to look after their bodies as well as safety and relationships.

Students will be reminded in each session that they must respect the views and beliefs of others at all times and discussions/revelations by others during the sessions are not to be shared outside of the sessions.

However, it is essential that staff recognise that there may be times where student's reveal information that comes under safeguarding and child protection of children and young people. These items cannot be kept confidential and students need to be told that these will be shared with the school's safeguarding leads.

There are three main elements:

**1. Attitudes and values:**

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

**2. Personal and social skills:**

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Consent and the skills associated with recognising it and giving it
- developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;
- understand risk and the potential consequences
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- managing conflict; and
- learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

**3. Knowledge and understanding (Topics KS1&2):**

- Being a good friend
- Healthy/positive & joy of friendships
- Positive choices with friendships
- Online safety
- How our emotions affect us and others
- Communicating our feelings
- Reacting to unwanted contact
- Puberty and changes (KS2)

**4. Knowledge and understanding (Topics KS3,4&5):**

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- Consent
- Risks in relationships and keeping safe
- Sexting and use of social media
- The law and how it is meant to protect young people
- 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; and the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.
- Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Online safety
- Understanding the influence of media on relationships and its accuracy
- Substances and their effects on decision making and choices
- Private and non-private acts
- Different levels of intimacy
- Pornography (challenging its use by young people and what it portrays)
- Recognition of pressure and how to deal with it

- Signposting to relevant agencies and support services.

## Teaching of RSE/PSHE

The teaching methods within RSE/PSHE are varied and are aimed to engage students through multiple learning methods. The majority are listed below:

- Small group work
- Class discussion
- Activities/games
- Visiting speakers
- External visits to GP and local services
- Work booklets
- Independent research on topics
- Presentations

There is an opportunity for students to be entered for an AQA PSHE award/Cert (5800). This would give the entered student a recognised qualification dependent on the level entered in for. One of the optional units is in Relationships education. This can be accessed via the AQA website or through contacting the school.

## Visiting specialists and health professionals

Where possible, we will invite external professionals, if it can add value to our students learning. External visitors are expected to follow school safeguarding procedures as well as school policies whilst onsite. All visits will be pre-arranged and will have an agreed session that will have been checked to ensure that our students learning needs have been addressed.

## Working with parents

Some parents and carers of children with special educational needs may find it difficult to accept their children's developing sexuality.

We also acknowledge that for some parents, elements of RSE can be difficult to engage with and we will:

- Treat parents sensitively;
- Respect their beliefs and views;
- Advise them how to discuss RSE elements within the home environment;
- Make provision of resources where individuals require further support.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of RSE. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing to the head teacher, with an outline of why the child should be withdrawn. A copy of the withdrawal request will be entered into the student's educational record. The head teacher will discuss any request with parents direct and will ensure that alternative work is given to students who are withdrawn from RSE sessions.

## **Training**

The head teacher will ensure that all staff directly responsible for the implementation of RSE are trained appropriately in its delivery. In addition, Heathermount School may at appropriate moments, invite external RSE professionals and other agencies to support the curriculum delivery and training of staff.

## **Monitoring**

Delivery of RSE is monitored by the head teacher and the Senior Leadership Team through evaluation of Individual student's progress, Classroom observations, and Staff HEX meetings. Student's development in RSE will be monitored by class teachers as part of the internal assessment systems.

## **Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or when any significant legislative changes occur.

## **Related policies:**

- PSHE Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Learning and teaching Policy