

15 October 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

Year 10 Relationships, Health and Personal Development

As part of our broader Year 10 Relationships, Health and Personal Development curriculum I am writing to let you know that your child's RHPD class will be taking part in lessons which will focus on the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) aspect of our programme. Our lessons will build upon gaps of knowledge in an age-appropriate way for the context using the correct language, in an environment which ensures that students keep safe and feel confident to ask questions. The topics will be discussed in an open, mature and appropriate way.

There is evidence to show that increasing numbers of young people are accessing pornography and that this type of content, along with the media representation of men and women, is shaping young people's expectations about sex, the opposite sex, body image and views on safer sex. There is also concern nationally about an increase in violence in teenage relationships. Child on child abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and/or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age. In autumn 2020, the NSPCC announced a 29% increase in children seeking help from Childline due to child on child abuse. The issue has, understandably, been scrutinised in the media recently. To support students to increase their awareness and safety, peer on peer abuse will be one of a number of topics being covered in upcoming lessons.

The following outlines the topics being explored:

- What is normal?
- Breast and testicular cancer
- Risky behaviour
- Substances
- Alcohol
- County Lines - Criminal exploitation
- Peer on peer abuse - Cyber bullying
- Peer on peer abuse - Sexual harassment
- Peer on peer abuse - Consent and coercive control
- Contraception and STI recap
- Blurred lines of pornography, the laws and the misrepresentation

As with all relationships, sex and health education, these lessons will be taught within a safe learning environment by trained teachers who will aim to be as sensitive as possible to faith issues whilst responding appropriately to the concerns and issues faced by young people in today's society. Resources have been reviewed and chosen carefully to ensure

that they represent fundamental British values and beliefs. For example, students will explore what is normal in terms of body image and the pressures that they face from media representations using materials from Channel 4 and Dove.

Parents and carers have the right to request and excuse their child/children from sex education with the exception of those parts that are included in the statutory Science National Curriculum. There is no right to withdraw from Relationship and Health Education at secondary level and we believe the content of these subjects - such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) and ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle - are important for all children to be taught.

We are confident you would rather be secure in the knowledge that our young people have learned about relationships, sex and health in a safe environment, rather than learning through hearsay or gossip and be exposed to learning through harmful online influences such as pornography and inappropriate websites. Any parent or carer wishing to excuse their child/children should put their request in writing to their child's Head of House and to me.

Please note that this parental and carer right to exclude is limited up to and until three terms before the child turns 16 (typically Year 11). 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.

There are huge personal and social benefits of a young person receiving sex education; any withdrawal may have detrimental effects on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher.

A copy of our school policy can be found at:

<https://www.theweald.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=2518&type=pdf>

Young people often operate very freely in the online world and by secondary school age some are likely to be living a substantial proportion of their life online. We also recognise that parents and carers are the most important educators of young people in personal issues and many welcome the support that we as a school can offer to supplement their home teaching.

Yours faithfully,



Mr N Everest
Head of Character and Culture