

28 March 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Year 8 RHSE

As part of our broader personal development curriculum your son/daughter will be exploring relationships, sex and health education during their PD lessons over the coming months.

The purpose of relationship, sex and health education is to provide knowledge within the context of relationships based on love and respect and to develop an understanding of attitudes and choices. All of these things will foster self-awareness and self-esteem to help our students form relationships in a responsible and healthy manner, as well as to appreciate the value of a stable family life and the responsibilities of parenthood and marriage. We want our students to be equipped with the skills to understand the range of positive qualities necessary to form and maintain long lasting and satisfying relationships, including trust, respect and honesty.

This part of our relationship, sex and health education programme will cover:

- Attraction, feelings and sexuality
- Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Thoughts and feelings around sexual language and what is appropriate
- Dispel myths and stereotypes, thoughts and feelings
- The law, sex and the internet
- Exploitation
- Types of contraception
- Feelings about contraceptive methods and the effect their feelings have on contraceptive choices and behaviour
- Risks and consequences
- The power of saying no, unwanted pressure and consent

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.

The up-coming lessons may reinforce what you are already discussing at home. Having open and honest discussions about sex and relationships helps your child to recognise the positive behaviours and to protect and safeguard them when they are ready to explore relationships, sex and sexuality. Talking to your child about sex does not mean they will go out and do it. Helping your child to learn about age appropriate sex and relationships means that they can be empowered to make more informed choices and they are more likely to talk to you when they are concerned or worried. Should you wish for some guidance on how to approach the topic of relationships, sex and health with your child the NSPCC provides some guidance: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sex-relationships/>.

Nowadays there is a vast amount of information about relationships and sex on social media, the internet and TV which young people may have access to. This can sometimes make an already confusing time seem even more complicated! There is evidence to show that increasing numbers of young people are accessing pornography and that pornography, along with the media representation of men and women, is shaping young people's expectations about relationships, the opposite sex, body image and views on safer sex. There is also concern nationally about an increase in violence in teenage relationships. In addition, our young people are having to deal with issues in the media surrounding cyber bullying, safe internet and mobile phone use, and safety in and out of school settings. We encourage you to discuss such issues with your child; www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents is a useful resource to assist this.

Please be reminded that 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.

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. Any parent or carer wishing to excuse their child/children should put their request in writing to their son/daughter's Head of House and to me.

We are confident you would rather be secure in the knowledge that our young people have learned about relationships and sex and health in a safe environment, rather than learning through hearsay, gossip and being exposed to learning through harmful online influences such as pornography and inappropriate websites. Here is our school policy on Relationship and Sex Education:

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

There are huge personal and social benefits of a young person receiving RSHE education; any withdrawal may have detrimental effects on the child. There is a strong likelihood of the child finding out the incorrect information, forming ill informed judgements, being unaware of the legal and personal risks and choices.

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. But 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. Please contact your child's Head of House if you have any concerns about the relationship, sex and health education programme.

Yours faithfully,



Mr N Everest
Head of Character and Culture

