



Cambridge House Grammar School

Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE) Policy

Signed:

Hella

Chair of Board of Governors

Signed:

PMU

Principal

Reviewed

1. Introduction and Rationale

The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy is designed to demonstrate the ethos and values of Cambridge House Grammar School and be concordant with the rights of the child as detailed in the Children (NI) Order 1995.

Relationship and Sexuality Education is a life-long process which encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues.

RSE is a statutory element of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and is delivered in line with CCEA guidance and relevant DE Circulars.

It contributes to pupils' emotional, social, moral, spiritual and physical development. The programme for RSE has been developed within Cambridge House Grammar School in line with best practice to complement and support the role of parents/guardians and their fundamental right and responsibility as primary educators of the family.

This RSE Policy represents a framework suitable for post-primary schools in Northern Ireland and aligns with DE Circulars including the 2001/15, 2010/01, 2013/16, 2015/22, 2016/27, 2017/14, 2024/01. It also reflects the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, CCEA guidance, safeguarding legislation, and current statutory obligations.

Cambridge House Grammar School recognises their central role in helping pupils make informed and responsible decisions about relationships, personal safety, sexual health and wellbeing.

2. School Ethos and Values

The school aims to develop in all pupils the ability to make informed and mature choices about relationships within their own lives. Cambridge House Grammar School has tailored a programme to support this development, and aspects are encouraged through weekly school assemblies, collective worship and the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum. Teaching within Science and seminars, led by external agencies, deal with the physical implications of sexual relationships and the understanding of their own changing bodies. It is acknowledged that the building of a values framework and factual understanding are tightly linked.

This policy is grounded in a values-based approach based on:

- Respect, dignity and equality for every pupil, regardless of religion, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation or family background.
- The importance of healthy, caring, stable and respectful relationships.
- The responsibilities of parenthood and appreciation of family life.

- Informed decision-making and responsible behaviour guided by a moral, social and spiritual framework.
- Recognition that abstinence and delayed sexual activity are valid options and appropriate within many school communities.

RSE should never be value-free; it should be sensitive, balanced and respectful of the diverse values held within the school community.

3. Aims of the RSE Programme

The programme aims to:

1. Enhance personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing.
2. Help pupils develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships.
3. Promote responsible behaviour and informed decision-making.
4. Foster an understanding of human sexuality within moral, social and spiritual contexts.
5. Help pupils value family life, stable relationships and parenthood.
6. Prepare pupils for adult life and support them in navigating physical and emotional changes.
7. Ensure age-appropriate, comprehensive and scientifically accurate learning about sexual and reproductive health and rights, in line with Article 5(1A) education requirements.

4. Objectives of the RSE Curriculum

This RSE programme enables pupils to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of self, emotions, feelings and relationships.
- Develop positive self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth.
- Develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- Acquire accurate information about puberty, reproduction, fertility, contraception and sexual health.
- Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important part of self-identity.
- Explore sexual identity, gender issues, stereotyping and cultural influences including media.

- Acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development.
- Understand the law regarding sexual behaviour, consent and digital safety.
- Develop decision-making, communication, problem-solving and interpersonal skills.
- Learn strategies to protect themselves and others from abuse, exploitation, peer pressure and unsafe behaviours.
- Critically evaluate external influences and online environments.
- Appreciate the diversity of family structures and relationships.
- Develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflicts and threats to personal safety and strive to exercise a positive influence on others.
- Be able to competently steer the digital environment and make responsible and informed decisions and protect themselves.

5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality of Opportunity

The provision of RSE is an equal opportunity issue. All pupils will receive adequate preparation for the emotional and physical changes at puberty and beyond. The programme of study will, therefore, take account of all pupils with special educational needs and may vary in methodology and resources used accordingly.

This policy promotes:

- A safe environment free from discrimination or bullying related to gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religious belief, disability or family structure.
- Respect for difference and diversity in all RSE discussions.
- Inclusion of all pupils, with differentiated materials where necessary for pupils with special educational needs.

6. Organisation and Delivery of the Programme

The remit of RSE is a broad one, covering everything from biological facts and attitudes to morals and values within relationships. Accordingly, RSE is delivered within the school through:

- A cross-curricular approach incorporating LLW, Science, Religious Education, English, Home Economics, ICT and PE.
- A progressive and age-appropriate Personal Development programme at Key Stages 3 and 4.

- Assemblies, seminars, workshops and collective worship, where appropriate.
- Contributions from external agencies that complement internal provision and adhere to school safeguarding procedures.

The programme for RSE is co-ordinated by the LLW Coordinator, the Heads of Key Stages and the Vice Principal (Pastoral). All teachers involved in the delivery of the programme are provided with the appropriate guidance. Where appropriate, the school enlists the help of qualified professionals to advise on, and assist in, the delivery of the programme. Sensitive issues within the programmes of study are covered with the help of external agencies to allow for more frank and open discussions. All visiting speakers are vetted through the school's Visitors' Policy before having contact with pupils. School staff maintain a presence during all sessions led by external agencies.

A teacher approached by a pupil concerning sexual matters should, where appropriate, encourage the pupil to seek advice from their parents/guardians. If the teacher believes that there is a moral or physical danger, or a breach of the law, they have the duty to inform the pupil of the risks involved and to inform the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, who may, depending of the particular circumstances, take the matter further by informing the Principal, the pupil's parents/guardians, specialist support services, the Education Authority or the Police.

Teaching approaches will:

- Use correct anatomical terminology.
- Provide a safe, respectful, non-judgmental space for discussion.
- Avoid requiring pupils or teachers to give personal disclosures.
- Uphold safeguarding duties where disclosures indicate risk of harm.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This is the responsibility of Vice Principal (Pastoral) together with the Heads of Key Stages.

It includes:

- co-ordination of the annual programme;
- advising on training and staffing needs (including INSET planning), programme of study development and evaluation;
- liaison with other staff, relevant bodies and parents/guardians, where appropriate.

The RSE programme is monitored and evaluated on a regular basis, through consultation with Key Stage and School Councils, Parents/Guardians and those staff involved in delivering the

programme. The responses are collated and then reviewed by the Senior Team. Appropriate action is taken regarding further development and amendment of the programme within the School Development Plan and accompanying Whole School Action Plan. The policy is reviewed bi-annually by the Board of Governors, or in the light of experience or new legislation/guidance.

7. Responding to Sensitive Issues

Cambridge House Grammar School recognises that sensitive topics may arise, including:

- Pregnancy, sexual activity, abortion, consent and sexual orientation.
- Gender identity, online risks, sexting and sexual exploitation.

Procedures include:

- Staff cannot guarantee confidentiality and must follow safeguarding policy.
- Sensitive discussions will be factual, balanced and age-appropriate.
- Pupils will be signposted to qualified professionals for medical advice.
- Concerns about pupil welfare will be reported to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

8. Parental Partnership and Rights

Parents/Guardians are primary educators, and the school aims to work in partnership with them.

Following 2023/2024 regulatory changes:

- Parents/Guardians of pupils in KS3–4 may request excusal from Article 5(1A) elements of RSE. Requests must be in writing. The school will consult with parents/guardians (and Year 12 pupils, where relevant) and keep appropriate records.
- The school will endeavour to support parental wishes while ensuring compliance with statutory obligations.

The school will provide information about the RSE programme to parents/guardians and the policy will be available online.

9. Involvement of External Agencies

External agencies enhance RSE by offering expertise and specialist knowledge.

Their involvement requires:

- Vetting and adherence to school policies.
- Alignment with school ethos and safeguarding procedures.
- Collaborative planning and presence of a teacher during sessions.
- Review and approval of resources used.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Principal:** Ensures implementation of policy and programme, liaises with Board of Governors and parents/guardians.
- **Vice Principal (Pastoral or Curriculum):** Oversees coordination, training, resources and evaluation.
- **LLW Coordinator:** Plans curriculum delivery, updates materials and liaises with external agencies.
- **Teachers:** Deliver the programme sensitively, uphold safeguarding and follow school policies.
- **Parents/Guardians:** Support their child's learning and engage with the school regarding concerns.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

A whole-school approach is used to evaluate the effectiveness of RSE provision. This includes:

- Consultation with pupils, parents/guardians, staff and governors.
- Review of teaching resources and external agency input.
- Regular policy review in line with changes in legislation, guidance and school development planning.

12. Dissemination of Policy

- The policy will be available to parents/guardians on the school website.
- New parents/guardians will be informed of the RSE programme at Induction events.

- Copies will be provided upon request.

Conclusion

This RSE Policy ensures a consistent, legally compliant, values-based approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education across the school community. It draws on the strengths of the policy to create a coherent and comprehensive framework that supports all pupils as they grow, develop and prepare for adult life.