



Relationship and Sex Education Policy – Secondary Only

13 June 2025

About This Document

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History

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1. Relationships and Sex Education Policy

- 1.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's PSHE and SMSC Policy.
- 1.2. This policy covers Relationships and Sex Education for students who are 11+
- 1.3. This policy has been written with regard to the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Guidance published in 2019 and the statutory requirement to teach Relationship and Sex Education from September 2020.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. The Vine Christian School aims to provide all our young people with a curriculum that ensures they are prepared for adult life in modern Britain. Relationships and Sex Education, and Personal Social Health and Economic Education (PSHE) can help to provide students with the key knowledge to:
 - i. Develop the skills and knowledge to make good decisions.
 - ii. ensure that they can keep themselves safe
 - iii. develop healthy and positive relationships
 - iv. maintain good mental health
 - v. build resilience
 - vi. manage their finances
 - vii. prepare for the workplace and
 - viii. successfully navigate the changing world in which they are growing up
- 2.2. We understand that all secondary schools (maintained, academies or independent) are required to provide Relationships and Sex Education (RSE); this policy reflects that guidance.
- 2.3. Our focus in the secondary area of the school is on developing the students' understanding of healthy adult relationships in more depth, with sex education delivered in that context, and in accordance with our faith.
- 2.4. We aim to develop an integrated approach that is sensitive to the needs of our students and the school community, and in accordance with our faith. We honour and affirm the role of Parents including their right to withdraw their child from sex education, whilst parents have the right to withdraw their child from the sex education within the science PACEs, we would encourage parents to come in and look at the material before doing so.
- 2.5. As a Christian school, we believe that any teaching on relationships, love and sex should be delivered in accordance with our faith and within the context of the Bible, the Word of God.
- 2.6. As a Christian school, we believe that any teaching on these subjects must be within the whole context of our faith in God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ. In relationships and sex education, we place the emphasis on the understanding and formation of respectful, loving relationships which exist between friends and within families.

- 2.7. One such relationship is marriage. Marriage is a sacred vow between a man and a woman. It is a shared commitment of loyalty and closeness, into which the gift of life may be brought.

Matthew 19: 4-6 “And he (Jesus) answered and said unto them, have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

- 2.8. Understanding how relationships work and developing relationship skills gives a context for understanding human sexuality and sexual health.

3. Relationships And Sex Education

3.1. Definition:

- i. Relationships and Sex Education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of loving and caring relationships.’ Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DfE 0116/2000)

- 3.2. As a Christian school, we believe that parents have the right to have a say in what sex education their children should be taught. In this regard, the school confirms that it will teach sex education in a way that considers the views of the parents. Parents will also have the right to withdraw their child from sex education, but not from learning about relationships in primary or secondary.

- 3.3. We believe that children and young people have not yet attained full maturity and are not always able to assimilate this information; therefore, staff will keep this in mind when delivering sex education and ensure that the information comes at an appropriate time and in a manner matched to their age, needs, physical and psychological maturity. Awareness of where each child is in their development and their individual differences will be key factors in choosing when to deliver this education.

- 3.4. We will provide our students with clear, helpful, and accurate sex education which is compatible with the ethos and values of the school. Sex Education will reflect the values of the PSHE and Citizenship requirements. It will be taught in the context of adults, within committed, long-term, loving relationships. In addition, it will promote self-esteem and emotional health and well-being and help pupils form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the wider community. All questions will be answered openly but sensitively.

- 3.5. Our students will learn that there are different types of relationships, in a way that is sensitive, age appropriate, and in accordance with our faith. We will also adhere to our duty to comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010

4. Aims and Objectives

- 4.1. To provide our students with a knowledge and understanding of Biblical teaching on relationships and sexual love, depending on their age and maturity levels.

- 4.2. To provide our students with a positive understanding of what constitutes good, loving relationships.
- 4.3. To clarify and reinforce existing knowledge.
- 4.4. To provide our students with a knowledge and understanding of the biological facts about human reproduction, depending on their age.
- 4.5. To provide our students with the skills and confidence to defend themselves against unwanted pressures to be sexually active and to keep them safe.
- 4.6. To provide our senior students with an understanding of sexual health including how to protect themselves against unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), depending on their age and maturity levels.
- 4.7. To teach our senior students the biblical view of refraining from sexual intercourse outside of marriage, whilst also providing them with a clear understanding about contraception.
- 4.8. To raise students' self-esteem and confidence, especially in their relationships with others.
- 4.9. To help students understand their feelings and behaviour, so they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives.
- 4.10. To help students develop skills (language, decision making, choice, assertiveness) and make the most of their abilities.
- 4.11. To provide the confidence to be participating members of society and to value themselves and others.
- 4.12. To help gain access to information and support.
- 4.13. To develop skills for a healthier safer lifestyle.
- 4.14. To develop and use communication skills and assertiveness skills to cope with the influences of their peers and the media.
- 4.15. To respect and care for their bodies.
- 4.16. To be prepared for puberty and adulthood.

5. Teaching Following the Legal Redefinition of Marriage

- 5.1. Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013: Students will be made aware that the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 extends civil marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales, although the law prevents ministers of the Church of England carrying out SSM. Nothing in the act affects the rights of Christian schools to teach on marriage or on same sex relationships in accord with Biblical principles, provided it is done in an appropriate and sensitive way.
- 5.2. Recent guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) provides helpful clarification that the traditional, Biblical nature of marriage can continue to be taught in schools.
- 5.3. "Maintained secondary schools have a legal requirement to teach about the 'nature of marriage'" and in so doing they "must accurately state the facts about marriage of same sex couples".

However, “no school, or individual teacher, is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same sex couples.”

- 5.4. As an independent school this requirement does not apply to us; however, due to the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, and with regard to British Values, this topic will be discussed in an appropriate and sensitive manner, in accordance with Biblical principles and with regard to the age and maturity levels of our students.
- 5.5. The EHRC also states:
 - i. “Teachers, other school staff, governors, parents and pupils are all free to hold whatever personal views they choose on marriage of same sex couples, including a view that marriage should only be between a man and a woman. The Government recognises that the belief that marriage can only be between a man and a woman is a belief worthy of respect in a democratic society.”
 - ii. “Schools with a religious character can continue to deliver sex and relationship education in accordance with their particular religious doctrines or ethos. They must do so in a sensitive, reasonable, respectful and balanced way.”

6. Curriculum Planning

- 6.1. The School Leadership and Management will:
 - i. Ensure that all aspects of the programme are covered in sufficient depth.
 - ii. Ensure that, at the appropriate age, staff emphasise resisting peer-pressure in relation to drugs, alcohol, and sexual consent.
 - iii. Ensure that staff teach about respect for others, different types of bullying and how to prevent and tackle them.
 - iv. Ensure that students’ economic well-being and financial capability is developed.
- 6.2. The Following will be taught at the Appropriate Levels from Year 7:
 - i. Attitudes and Values
 - a) The importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.
 - b) The value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
 - c) The value of respect, love and care.
 - d) The value of keeping sex within marriage.
 - e) Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
 - f) Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.
 - ii. Personal and Social Skills:
 - a) Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.

- b) Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
 - c) Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.
 - d) Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
 - e) Managing conflict.
 - f) Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.
- iii. Knowledge and Understanding
 - a) Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
 - b) Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions, and relationships within the context of God's new creation.
 - c) Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception, unplanned pregnancy, and support services, in line with orthodox Christian teaching.
 - d) Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay.
- 6.3. Our Relationships and Sex Education is woven throughout our curriculum.
- 6.4. Our Relationships and Sex Education will not encourage early sexual experimentation. It will teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It will enable our young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. It will build up knowledge and skills that are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on young people.
- 6.5. In light of this, sex education will be taught from age 11+ according to statutory guidelines; However, to promote tolerance, children under this age will be made aware that people may choose to identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual, or may choose to be in a same-sex marriage. This will be taught depending on their age and maturity levels and in accordance with the Christian faith.

7. Responsibilities

- 7.1. The Headteacher is the designated teacher with responsibility for coordinating relationships and sex education.
- 7.2. It is the responsibility of the Governing Body, working with the Head Teacher, to ensure that the Relationships and Sex Education must be in accordance with the teachings of the Bible and the wishes of the parents. This will be achieved through careful monitoring of the teaching resources used.
- 7.3. Therefore, in considering the resources which will be used to teach this subject, governors should consider:

- i. The need to support parents and carers by providing education which is faithful to the teachings of the Bible and appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the students.
 - ii. The extent to which specific materials can be used to illustrate the beauty of the human being created by God.
 - iii. The values implied by specific resources and the way in which they may be used to enhance students' understanding of human development and Biblical teaching.
 - iv. The accuracy and clarity of material presented.
- 7.4. It is important that any external visitor to the school is also clear about their role and responsibility while they are in a school. Such visits should complement the school's current programme. Visitors may need guidance to ensure that sessions they deliver are respectful of this policy.
- 7.5. Relationships and Sex Education is usually delivered in mixed gender groups. However, there may be occasions where single gender groups are more appropriate and relevant.
- 7.6. Relationships and Sex Education is delivered through science, PSHE, and Citizenship.
- 7.7. Relationships and Sex Education is taught by classroom teachers, teaching assistants and if appropriate, outside visitors.
- 7.8. A range of teaching methods which involve children's full participation are used to teach relationships and sex education. These include use of video, discussion, looking at case studies and drama.

8. Specific Issues

8.1. Parental Consultation

- i. Full details of the Relationships and Sex Education provided by the school are available on request.
- ii. The school informs parents when aspects of the relationships and sex programme are taught and provides opportunities for parents to view the videos and resources being used.
- iii. By working in partnership with parents they recognise the importance of this aspect of their child's education. Parents do however have the right to withdraw their children from those aspects of relationships and sex education. In this case, alternative work would be set.

8.2. Parents' Right to Withdrawal

- i. Some parts of Relationships and Sex Education are contained within the children's Science PACEs at ICCE level. Whilst parents have the right to withdraw their child from the sex education within the science PACEs, we would encourage you to come in and look at the material before doing so.
- ii. Parents may also withdraw their children from any lessons focused on sex education if they wish to do so.

- iii. However, the Head Teacher will discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The schools will document this process to ensure a record is kept.
- iv. The Head Teacher will discuss with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have 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 (although the 18 detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead).
- v. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the 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 decide to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.
- vi. This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Head Teacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. This will be assessed and documented on a child-by-child basis.
- vii. Parents will be given two weeks' notice of any afternoon lessons regarding specific sex education. They will have the right to withdraw their children from these lessons providing they make this request in writing three school days before the activity. This is needed to allow time to make other appropriate, purposeful education available during the period of withdrawal for their child.

8.3. Child Protection / Confidentiality

- i. Teachers need to be aware that effective relationships and sex education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, may lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.
- ii. The staff member will inform the Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the school's procedures for child protection.
- iii. A member of staff should not promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

8.4. All school staff members should adhere to the following policy:

- i. When talking with students, it is important for you to be aware of maintaining your professional boundaries.
- ii. You must be clear to students that you cannot offer unconditional confidentiality when a student first begins to talk about something where confidentiality may become an issue.
- iii. Students should be warned that if there is a child protection issue where the student, or others, is likely to be at risk of significant harm, you are under a duty to inform the school's Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead who may have to involve other agencies. It is important that each member of staff deals with this sensitively and explains to the student that

they must inform the appropriate people who can help the child, but that they will only tell those who need to know in order to help.

- iv. In all cases where you feel that you have to break confidentiality with the student, you must inform the student, (unless there is a good reason not to inform them e.g., risk of harm) and reassure them that their best interests will be maintained.
- v. In talking with students, you need to encourage them to talk to their parents / carers about the issue that may be troubling them, unless doing so places them at risk, and support in doing this should be offered where appropriate.

8.5. Dealing with Difficult Questions

- i. Ground rules are essential to provide an agreed structure to answering sensitive or difficult questions. Sessions may use an anonymous question box as a distancing technique.
- ii. Teachers will endeavour to answer questions as honestly as possible but if faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, provision would be made to meet the individual child's needs.

8.6. Children with Special Needs

- i. Teaching and resources will be differentiated as appropriate to address the needs of these children in order for them to have full access to the content of relationships and sex education.

9. Links with Other Policies

9.1. This policy is linked with the following policies:

- i. PSHE & Citizenship
- ii. SMSC
- iii. Equal Opportunities
- iv. Child Protection / Safeguarding
- v. Confidentiality
- vi. Behaviour
- vii. Anti-Bullying

9.2. These policies can be provided on paper by contacting the school office.

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1. This content has been agreed in consultation with governors, parents, and teaching staff.