

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Senior School

1. Definitions, Rationale and Ethos.

At Kent College, we believe that relationships and sex education is important for our students in order to prepare them and equip them to live responsible and fulfilling lives both at school and in the future. We believe that people of all ages need to be able to make informed choices about their behaviour and relationships. Our ASPIRE values and the Methodist Ethos of our school underpins all we do.

The Department for Education guidance on [Relationships and Sex Education](#), published in June 2020 (updated 2025), outlines the following overarching principles:

To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.

We define relationships education as education that is designed to help students understand and develop healthy relationships of all kinds, including friendships, family relationships and romantic partnerships. This includes understanding what constitutes a healthy relationship, recognising unhealthy or abusive relationships, building skills for effective communication and conflict resolution and understanding the importance of consent and respect in relationships. Equally as important is navigating online relationships safely.

We define sex education as providing students with information about human sexuality, including physical, emotional and social aspects. This equips students with the knowledge about their bodies, reproduction, and sexual health. This includes topics such as human anatomy and reproduction, contraception and safe sex practices, understanding sexual orientation and gender identity and the emotional aspects of sexual relationships. Additionally includes the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies.

At Kent College we aim to ensure that our students are provided with a preventative curriculum that supports our students and equips them with the knowledge to navigate different experiences in a positive way before they occur, to prevent harm.

This policy was produced through consultation with governors, parents, students and staff.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The RSE policy at Kent College is developed and reviewed by the PSHE lead alongside the safeguarding governor. The PSHE lead is responsible for ensuring that all statutory elements are met. The Head is responsible for oversight of this policy. Additionally, the Head is also a member of the PSHE department and therefore teaches RSE.

RSE is taught as part of the PSHE (Life Skills) curriculum by a small body of teaching staff, including the Head and Deputy Head Pastoral. Staff meet and discuss the topics ahead of delivering the sessions. Staff are clear that they must provide a safe and inclusive environment in which to teach RSE. Ground rules are established to that effect. PSHE staff are all provided with relevant training from the PSHE Association (Staff Plus Programme) to ensure that they are equipped to teach sensitive topics to students.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the general principles of the Methodist Board and with reference to their policy for use in Methodist schools.

3. Curriculum Design

At Kent College we have embedded the Department for Education's guiding principles for RSE through a structured and spiral programme which will help our students acquire knowledge and understanding of relationship, health and sexual matters. This programme is built using a whole-school approach which is supported by other policies with including our Safeguarding, Anti-bullying, PSHE, and Rewards and Consequences policies. Our RSE programme is an integral part of our whole school PSHE education provision, and this provides a safe place for students to develop emotional literacy, feel able to discuss their feelings and raise questions without embarrassment.

We will aim to engage with our students to ensure that the curriculum is relevant, this will be done through Student Voice committees and surveys. We will also aim to be transparent with parents about all the materials used in RSE.

The programme aims to build positive attitudes and skills, promoting healthy norms about relationships and reassurance that change is part of the life cycle, and to give help to students adjusting to these changes. Character, resilience and high self-esteem are integral parts of valuing oneself and are reflected in our behaviour in relationships with others. Students will be encouraged to understand the value of family life, the implications of parenthood and the importance of responsibility in all relationships. Students are encouraged to make their own informed choices and not be unduly swayed by external pressures. Through a growing understanding of risk, pupils will develop the motivation and skills to keep themselves healthy and safe.

As the curriculum is spiral topics may be covered several times during the Senior School, as different detail and approach varies according to age. This means that the programme is carefully sequenced to cover all statutory topics and recognises that young people can start developing healthy behaviour and relationship skills as soon as they start school. We aim to ensure that pupils learn at appropriate times in their school life, about their own sexuality in the context of loving and lasting commitment. We work along side local partners and other bodies to understand specific local issues that might be relevant to our students.

While emphasis is placed on the emotional and spiritual aspects of sexuality, the programme includes the teaching of factual knowledge. The pupils will learn about human reproduction, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS. Types of contraception will be discussed and shown to students, as will ways to prevent catching a sexually transmitted infection. The matter of unexpected

or unwanted pregnancy will also be discussed, and again students will be given details of where to go for more help.

The lessons are designed to be accessible for students with SEND and those with EAL. For example, glossaries are added to resources and there are clear visual cues when teaching. Staff also follow the recommendations and strategies provided by the SENCO and EAL co-ordinators. The school is aware that some students are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND and will take this into consideration when designing and teaching these subjects.

We recognise the individuality of each person, and this includes his or her sexuality. We recognise that people express their sexuality in different ways; our students need to learn to treat with understanding those whose behaviour they may find unacceptable in their own lives. This approach is in line with the principles of the Equality Act 2010.

Human sexuality should not be isolated from other aspects of life. Topics such as homosexuality, homophobia, gender, consent and criminal sexual exploitation may also be discussed in sensitive and inclusive ways where appropriate. The issue of rape (and date rape) will also be covered, including ways to keep safe, the role of the police and likely support needed and available. The sex education programme therefore will be integrated with other aspects of the curriculum. Science staff, the school nurse, the Chaplain and other visiting professionals may contribute. Discussions in the senior years will aim to help the students determine their own attitudes.

The RSE curriculum makes clear links between the importance of physical and emotional wellbeing and healthy relationships, including sexual relationships. Emphasis throughout will be placed on developing good inter-personal skills and the self-confidence to take informed and responsible decisions.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT): we will ensure that the teaching of relationships and sex education is sensitive and age appropriate in content and will consider when it is appropriate to teach pupils about LGBT. This content will be fully integrated into the programmes of study rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson

Kent College knows that the evolving online world presents many challenges to our students now and are aware that for many young people online is where they are being exposed to sexual content, views and inappropriate materials. Therefore, teaching Online Safety and how to access new digital technologies safely is essential as part of tackling the topics of healthy relationships and consent.

As part of the PSHE (Life Skills) programme of study students' knowledge and understanding of RSE will be assessed at both the start and end of each unit of work taught. Assessing refers to gauging what has been learnt and what still needs to be learnt. Students are not graded in Life Skills but instead Ipsative assessment is used. Ipsative assessment compares where a student is at the end of a lesson or series of lessons against where they were before the lesson(s). This is predominantly achieved through Baseline assessments which are carried out at the start of each unit of lessons and then returned to at the end of the series of lessons

4. Safe and Effective Practice

We ensure a safe learning environment in RSE lessons by first establishing clear ground rules for discussions in the classroom setting. Additionally, encouraging students to ask questions which ensures that that students do not leave the classroom with unanswered questions.

We teach with the assumption that at least one student in the class may have been effective by the topic being covered. Where there are known vulnerabilities, we make sure to discuss this content with students before the lessons and ensure that students are given a time out card that they can use if they wish to leave the classroom.

Pupils are able to answer questions anonymously during sex education lesson by the use of a suggestions box which students can use to ask. Students can also ask questions via the help@kentcollege.kent.sch.uk email address and are given the opportunity to add comments or questions anonymously via the Student Voice Survey.

Additionally, we use distancing techniques such as using case studies which helps our students consider topics and scenarios objectively without it being about them and their behaviour.

Whatever the topic we always ensure that our students are signposted to relevant sources of support at school, at home and through external agencies.

5. Openness and Engagement with parents and other stakeholders

We recognise that the role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow to maturity and to form healthy relationships. The Kent College's relationships and sex education programme is intended to complement and support the role of parents and carers in educating their children about sexuality and relationships.

Parents are informed about the RSE policy through a webinar forum and offered the opportunity to consult on its contents. The policy then remains on the school website so that parents can view this.

We notify parents when RSE is taught by termly letters which detail the topics that students will cover in the upcoming term. Parents may be invited to attend some talks by outside speakers and will also be advised of the contents of each year's programme.

Governors are also given regular updates via the safeguarding governor regarding the curriculum and current issues. Teaching materials are available to parents on request.

6. Right to withdraw from sex education

According to the Department for Education guidance, parents/ guardians may withdraw their children from PSHE lessons specifically dedicated to Sex Education. Should a parent/guardian make this request we will make alternative arrangements for students in each case so that they receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. When a child is three terms away from turning 16, and has the right to opt back into sex education if they wish, the school will ensure the school will provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

7. Safeguarding

Our staff are aware that effective RSE can at times lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. In such cases the teacher who has received this information will consult with the designated safeguarding lead and follow our school processes for reporting this.

This policy supports our school's approach to safeguarding and is informed by other policies and statutory and non-statutory guidance for schools, including our Safeguarding Policy, Anti-bullying policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education and Staff Code of Conduct.

Any visitors/external agencies supporting the delivery of RSE will be required to...

Additionally, we would expect to give support to any student who finds themselves with an STI or unexpected pregnancy. In these circumstances the medical team on site will operate within the Fraser guidelines (attached) to decide whether a pupil is competent to understand the consequences of choices and actions. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be kept informed where appropriate

8. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The RSE curriculum is regularly reviewed to evaluate its effectiveness, and we will inform parents of any revisions to the school policy or curriculum as required. Teachers will reflect on the effectiveness of the RSE provision and the PSHE co-ordinator will gather staff views through regular staff meetings. The Education Committee of the governing body monitors and reviews our RSE policy on a regular basis and agrees any modifications to the policy as necessary. Parents have been consulted and informed about the content of the RSE curriculum and the school's approach when delivering it.

9. Policy Review

AEU/PSHCE Co-ordinator: January 2004

Reviewed by GPWG: May 2005

Agreed by Governors: June 2005

Reviewed by SLT: June 2009

Reviewed by Head of PSHCE: September 2012

Reviewed by Head of PSHCE: September 2015

Reviewed by SLT: September 2015

Approved by Education Committee: October 2015

Reviewed by Deputy Head, Pastoral: October 2018

Reviewed by Deputy Head, Pastoral, September 2020

Approved by Education Committee: November 2020

Reviewed by Deputy Head Pastoral February 2022:

Approved by Education Committee: March 2022

Reviewed by Deputy Head Pastoral February 2025

Approved by Education Committee: March 2025

Annex A: What pupils will have covered by the end of Senior School

Families- Pupils should know	1. That there are different types of committed, stable relationships. 2. How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children. 3. Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony. 4. That 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children. 5. That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.⁸ 6. How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships. 7. The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development. 8. How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust
Respectful relationships, including friendships- Pupils should know	1. The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. 2. How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal. 3. The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others. 4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs. 5. The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict. 6. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help. 7. Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration. 8. The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just

	because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok. 9. How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice. 10. How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others. 11. How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others. 12. Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called "involuntary celibates" (incels) or online influencers.
Online and media- Pupils should know	1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online. 2. Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues. 3. The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online. 4. Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images. 5. That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime. 6. What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online.⁹ 7. About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them. 8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or

	use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong. 9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice. 10. How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns 11. That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it. 12. How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online. 13. That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising). 14. That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion. 15. That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk
Being safe - Pupils should know	1. How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent. 2. That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others. 3. How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed. 4. How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions. 5. What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it. 6. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting.

	7. The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault. 8. The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language. 9. The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour. 10. That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed. 11. The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation. 12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage 13. The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible. 14. That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death. 15. That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful. 16. How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault.
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health- Pupils should know	1. That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive. 2. The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex. 3. Sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent. 4. That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing. 5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful. 6. The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision making. 7. That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help.

	8. How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma 9. The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment. 10. How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour. 11. How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms. 12. How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.
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Annex B: Sex & the Law: The Fraser Guidelines

The Fraser guidelines apply specifically to advice and treatment about contraception and sexual health. They may be used by a range of healthcare professionals working with under 16-year-olds, including doctors and nurse practitioners. Following a legal ruling in 2006, Fraser guidelines can also be applied to advice and treatment for sexually transmitted infections and the termination of pregnancy (Axton v The Secretary of State for Health, 2006).

Using the Fraser guidelines

Practitioners using the Fraser guidelines should be satisfied of the following:

- the young person cannot be persuaded to inform their parents or carers that they are seeking this advice or treatment (or to allow the practitioner to inform their parents or carers).
- the young person understands the advice being given.
- the young person's physical or mental health or both are likely to suffer unless they receive the advice or treatment.
- it is in the young person's best interests to receive the advice, treatment or both without their parents' or carers' consent.
- the young person is very likely to continue having sex with or without contraceptive treatment.

(Gillick v West Norfolk, 1985)

Child protection concerns

When using Fraser guidelines for issues relating to sexual health, you should always consider any potential child protection concerns:

- Underage sexual activity is a possible indicator of child sexual exploitation and children who have been groomed may not realise they are being abused.
- Sexual activity with a child under 13 should always result in a child protection referral.
- If a young person presents repeatedly about sexually transmitted infections or the termination of pregnancy this may be an indicator of child sexual abuse or exploitation.

You should always consider any previous concerns that may have been raised about the young person and explore whether there are any factors that may present a risk to their safety and wellbeing.

You must always share child protection concerns with the relevant agencies, even if a child or young person asks you not to.

NSCPCC, June 2020