



RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) Policy

Policy number	BS077
Applies to	Whole School
Endorsed by	Head Master
Responsibility	Deputy Head Academic/ US Head of General Education/ PS Assistant Head Pastoral/ PS Head of Personal Development
Date reviewed	September 2025
Next review	September 2026

Bedford School RSE Policy (Relationships and Sex Education)

Documents that inform the school's RSE policy include:

- Equality Act (2010)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children(2018)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\)](#)
- [Sex and Relationship education guidance \(2020\)](#)
- Bedford School Anti Bullying and Anti Cyberbullying Policy
- Bedford School Behaviour Policy (Upper School)
- Bedford School Behaviour Policy (Prep School)
- Bedford School Curriculum Policy (Upper School)
- Bedford School Curriculum Policy (Prep School)
- Bedford School Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

This policy is reviewed through consultation with staff, pupils and parents.

Aims

The aims of Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) at Bedford School are to:

- provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place;
- help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy;
- create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships;
- promote inclusivity by an awareness and acknowledgement of diversity; and,
- allow pupils to make informed decisions about sex and relationships and contextualise these within the digital age.

Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSE does not promote sexual activity either directly or indirectly.

Teaching of RSE

In the Prep School, lessons are mainly taught by the Head of Personal Development Department, or by specialist teachers within each year group. We aim for all teachers who deliver RSE to develop positive relationships with all the pupils in the year and monitor any vulnerable pupils. The Prep School's RSE curriculum is also supported, where possible, by accredited external speakers, such as IT Happens Education.

In the Upper School, RSE is taught within the Citizenship programme and is a natural progression from our programme of study in the Prep School. The Citizenship programme is taught by Upper School teachers and a variety of external bodies and specialists. Some components of RSE are taught within the Biology curriculum in the Remove form (Year 10). The school does all required to keep both pupils and staff up to date according to the latest policy changes, through appropriate changes

to the programme of studies each year.

In addition, across the school, themes are supported in Tutor Periods, House Assemblies, Year Group Assemblies, Whole School Assemblies and Chapel services. The core school values of Integrity, Responsibility, Curiosity, Endeavour and Kindness are reflected in our approach.

Across the school, classroom practice and pedagogy will consider pupils' age, ability, readiness, cultural background and SEND and will be adjusted to enable all students to access the learning.

Across all sections of the school, pupils will be provided with the knowledge needed and supported in developing in the following areas:

- understanding the characteristics of healthy relationships and the benefit on mental health these can have. Additionally, pupils will be aware of unacceptable behaviours and strategies for how these might be managed;
- an awareness of how to develop healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time, and the need to respect themselves and others. Pupils should feel equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life;
- an understanding, at the appropriate time, that sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics and the importance of equality and respect;
- knowledge of the law around sex and relationships, including, the age of consent, pornography, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy;
- an awareness of the specific sensitive issues of grooming, sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and domestic abuse and how to access support for oneself or others at risk;
- the knowledge on how to make well-informed, positive choices about their own health and wellbeing, whilst recognising the signs for when there is an issue in themselves or others and know how to seek support from appropriate sources;
- an understanding of the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental and physical health conditions, drugs, alcohol and information about effective interventions;
- an awareness of how to stay safe online as well as the impact of time spent online, both positive and negative; and
- the knowledge of basic first aid, including how to administer CPR, the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.

Current curriculum information is detailed in the PSHE schemes of learning and is available to parents/guardians on request and reflects statutory guidance fully.

Roles and responsibilities

The school governors will approve the RSE policy and hold the school to account for its implementation.

The Head Master (Upper School) and Headmaster *(Prep School) is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing any requests to withdraw pupils.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- teaching RSE in a factual, non-judgemental manner, ensuring it is inclusive and age-appropriate;
- maintaining professional boundaries;
- modelling positive attitudes towards RSE;

- monitoring discussions and progress;
- answering pupils' questions in an age-appropriate manner;
- passing on any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- responding to the needs of individual pupils including special educational needs and disability (SEND) students; and
- responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from sex education.

Staff do not have the right to opt-out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Vice Master.

The Head of General Education/ Head of PD is responsible for:

- compilation of the whole-school scheme of work;
- working with teaching staff to ensure the provision of age appropriate and inclusive RSE resources;
- Providing support to staff teaching RSE
- Monitoring RSE teaching and learning, and pupil progress
- Ensuring that the curriculum is informed by pupil voice and responds to issues as they arise.

Parents' right to withdraw

Every pupil is provided with relationships education. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. All withdrawal requests should be put in writing and addressed to the Head Master (Upper School) or Headmaster (Prep School). The Head Master will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action; the Headmaster may discuss the request with parents based on the age of the child or may grant withdrawal automatically for younger pupils. Alternative purposeful education will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from Sex Education. Parents can withdraw pupils up until a pupil's sixteenth birthday.

Pupils' right to opt-in

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity. Pupils who have been withdrawn by their parents have a right to opt back into RSE up to three terms before their sixteenth birthday; their right takes priority in these circumstances.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Head of General Education/ Head of Personal Development. Resources are audited and learning walks will be carried out during Citizenship mornings and feedback from pupils sought at appropriate times during the year. Feedback from parents is requested following amendments to this policy, and invited at any time by contacting the Head of General Education/ Head of Personal Development.