



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Bancroft's
Independent Co-educational Day School 7–18

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1. Policy Aims

This policy covers Bancroft's Senior School's approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). We believe that RSE is vital for the personal, social and emotional development of our pupils. Bancroft's School believes that all children and young people have a right to holistic, inclusive and needs-led RSE. We believe that through providing high quality RSE, we are upholding the ethos and values of our school and its commitment to equality and celebration of difference. RSE is delivered as part of the Learning for Life curriculum to all year groups.

The School publishes this policy as a statutory requirement and with the following aims:

- Defining RSE within the Learning for Life curriculum and explaining its delivery at school; to offer a clear guide to parents, staff and visitors.
- To give information to parents about their involvement with RSE.

2. Statutory Requirements

The policy complies with our statutory obligations to deliver RSE under sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It will have due regard to the DfE's statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance and other relevant guidance. We will review this policy on a regular basis to ensure that it is in line with current Government guidance and legislation and to ensure that our RSE programme continues to meet the needs of our pupils.

"All schools should ensure that their Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum is age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, and sensitive to the needs and experiences of all pupils. It should equip young people with the knowledge, skills and values they need to form healthy relationships, stay safe—both online and offline—and understand their own and others' rights and responsibilities." *Department for Education, "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory Guidance" (Updated 15 July 2025), Section 2: Principles for Effective RSHE.*

3. Definitions

Our RSE curriculum is taught across three integrated but distinct strands. **Relationships, Sex and Health** which is defined respectively as: the skills and knowledge to build healthy relationships; factual and safeguarding-focused education about bodies, sexual development and sexual health; and the knowledge and skills to protect and promote physical and mental wellbeing. Teaching is age-appropriate, sequenced and delivered in line with DfE statutory guidance

Our Sex Education programme builds on the statutory science curriculum by exploring the emotional, moral and social aspects of human sexuality within a safeguarding and equality framework. The biological elements are compulsory under Science, while the wider contextual learning forms part of our Relationships and Sex Education provision.

Some aspects of Sex Education naturally overlap with Relationships Education. Topics such as consent, sexual orientation, puberty, contraception, sexually transmitted infections,

pornography, and sexual harassment have both sexual health and relational dimensions. In our curriculum, these are taught in an integrated way, emphasising both the factual, safeguarding-focused elements of sexual health and the skills, respect, and communication needed for healthy relationships, in line with statutory guidance.

Sex education

Sex education covers factual, age-appropriate information about bodies, sexual development and sexual health, and the behaviours and choices that affect sexual wellbeing. It includes biological facts (puberty, reproduction), practical sexual health information (contraception, STI prevention, testing and treatment), consent and the law about sexual activity, and how to recognise and respond to sexual harm (including sexual violence, exploitation, sexting and pornography). This element is taught with sensitivity to pupils' developmental stage and safeguarding needs.

Relationships education

Relationships education covers the knowledge, skills and values needed to build healthy, respectful relationships of all kinds: friendships, family relationships, romantic and intimate relationships, and relationships online. It covers communication, boundaries, respect, consent in context, recognising unhealthy or abusive behaviours (including coercive control), diversity in family structures and sexual orientation, and how to seek help or support.

Health education

Health education covers physical and mental wellbeing across the life course. It includes physical health (nutrition, sleep, exercise, menstrual and gynaecological health), mental health and emotional literacy, personal hygiene, substance use, safety (first aid, online safety, gambling risks), and how lifestyle, environment and relationships influence health. Where topics overlap (e.g. puberty, sexual health, mental health), teaching should be coordinated and age-appropriate.

4. Ethos and Aims

Young people today grow up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives seamlessly on and offline. While this brings many opportunities, it also presents challenges and risks. In this context, children and young people need the knowledge and skills to stay safe, healthy, and manage their personal, social, and academic lives positively. Effective RSE equips pupils with the skills to build and maintain healthy relationships, make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing, and supports their ability to learn, achieve, and flourish. This is why RSE is compulsory in all secondary schools.

Pupils are provided with comprehensive scientific and medical information within a moral and ethical framework. Our RSE programme emphasises responsible attitudes towards sexual relationships, highlights emotional and ethical implications, and encourages respect for different religious and cultural traditions. Pupils learn that healthy relationships can take many forms and are built on mutual trust, tolerance, and respect, along with a sense of personal responsibility. The programme provides balanced factual information about relationships and sex, alongside the broader emotional, moral, ethical, and social dimensions of sexual health.”

Our RSE programme aims to prepare students for adult life, enabling them to:

- Develop positive values, confidence, self-esteem, and the ability to make informed decisions about relationships.
- Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly in all types of relationships.
- Recognise and resist exploitation or pressure into unwanted or unprotected sexual activity.
- Communicate effectively using appropriate terminology for sexual and relationship issues.
- Develop awareness of their own sexuality, challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity (in line with the Equality Act 2010).
- Understand reasons for delaying sexual activity and the importance of protected sex.
- Have the knowledge and skills to prevent unwanted sexually transmitted infections for themselves and their partner.
- Recognise the impact of relationships and sexual activity on mental health and know how to manage this.
- Identify sources of support and develop the confidence to access confidential advice and treatment.
- Understand how the law applies to relationships and sexual activity.

At Bancroft's School RSE also helps to safeguard children and is an integral part of their learning journey. Our RSE programme also focuses on developing pupils' personal and social skills, enabling them to communicate effectively, reason, listen to others, and build positive friendships and relationships. Pupils are taught about their bodies, personal boundaries, privacy, and appropriate behaviour, within a safe and supportive learning environment where they can ask questions and access reliable information.

The curriculum promotes understanding of the diversity of relationships in the wider world, and fosters values of love, respect, equality, and care. We recognise that parents and carers are central to teaching children about growing up and relationships, and we work in partnership with families, consulting them on programme content and supporting open dialogue.

5. Parental information on withdrawing pupils from sex education.

Parents are entitled to withdraw pupils from sex education classes delivered as part of RSE within Learning for Life. However, the Department for Education states that you may not withdraw your child from the wider Relationships Education curriculum, any aspect of Health Education, or from the elements of the Science curriculum that cover puberty, conception and reproduction. Before granting any such request, parents will meet with the Deputy Head Pastoral and Head of Learning for Life to discuss the request. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the School will respect the parents' request to withdraw their 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 should plan to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, we will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships or Health Education.

6. Inclusion

We believe that RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. Our RSE programme is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes and sexism and sexual harassment in schools. We take these issues seriously and ensure that we embed content on gender equality throughout the curriculum. We are also committed to an RSE that makes every pupil feel valued and included and is relevant to them. RSE is taught in a way that does not subject pupils to discrimination and is mindful of individuals' religious, spiritual and moral beliefs. Bancroft's School will seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

7. Delivery

To cover the curriculum content outlined in the RSHE Guidance, we will equip our pupils to build positive and respectful relationships online and offline. We seek to ensure that it gives pupils the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help them to:

- realise their health (including sexual health), wellbeing and dignity
- build self-esteem and self-worth
- explore and value their personal and sexual identity and the personal/sexual identities of others
- understand family structures, committed relationships and the legal status of different types of long-term relationships
- understand and make sense of the real-life issues they are experiencing in the world around them
- manage and explore difficult feelings and emotions
- consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others
- develop as informed and responsible citizens
- understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

We believe that high quality, comprehensive RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation but in fact builds young people's confidence and self-esteem and helps them understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Evidence shows that effective RSE plays a role in behaviour change, including reducing unprotected or unwanted sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

All content will be delivered in a timely way and will be age and developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of our pupils, content is also revisited as part of a circular curriculum.

For example: -

- Thirds** – Mental Health, Friendships, Prejudice and Discrimination, Digital Literacy, Puberty, Physical Health
- Removes** – Personal Safety, Online Safety, Boundaries and Consent, Drugs and Alcohol
- Lower Fourth** – The Criminal Justice System, Extremism, Disinformation, Relationships, Drugs and Alcohol, Sharing Images,
- Upper Fourth** – Politics, Emotional and Physical Wellbeing, Drugs, Parenting and Pregnancy, Relationships, Coercive Control, Domestic Abuse,
- Fifths** – Economic Wellbeing, Personal Safety, Sexual Violence, Mental Health
- Sixth Form** - Media Literacy and Digital Resilience, Mental Health and Emotional Well-being, Managing Risk and Personal Safety, Forming and Maintaining Respectful Relationships, Bullying, Abuse and Discrimination.

The Learning for Life programme is delivered by a small specialist team in KS3 and KS4, and tutors in Sixth Form. We also have talks from professional topic-based speakers. Each lesson moves through a PowerPoint with topics for discussion in groups and by the whole class. Some year groups use booklets and there is also written work completed during the lesson. Teaching and learning are monitored by the Head of Learning for Life and Deputy Head of Learning for Life through observations and by looking at the reflection and feedback pages completed by the students at the end of each term. The Learning for Life programme also embeds the Values of Bancroft's School: Balance, Integrity, Excellence, Kindness, Curiosity, and Courage.

Learning for Life curriculum plans can be found on the school website and provide an insight into how we scaffold the curriculum in an age-appropriate way. Parents also receive termly emails with a curriculum overview. Some of the lesson content provokes healthy class discussion and occasionally this may touch on sensitive material. The students know they can always approach a range of staff if they have any worries about lesson content.

In **Religious Studies**, pupils who choose to do RS GCSE will cover the issue of abortion, from both religious and ethical perspectives. They will also look at religious attitudes towards homosexuality as part of a broader study of prejudice and discrimination.

In **Science**, the Thirds cover sexual reproduction as part of a topic on Cells. They are taught the correct names for the male and female anatomy, the changes that bodies undergo during puberty and learn how fertilisation occurs. They look at the development of the human foetus from conception to birth and consider infertility without looking at treatment.

In **Biology**, U4th students consider sexually transmitted diseases and the production of gametes (sex cells) by meiosis and, in the 5th Form, the menstrual cycle, the development of secondary sexual characteristics and different forms of contraception.

Depending on their age and level of maturity, pupils may discuss controversial and sensitive topics in class. Examples include homosexuality, abortion, fertility treatment, adoption, parenting, and single parenthood.

The School Nurse is available to give advice and information, in confidence, to individual pupils on contraception and sexual health matters. Teachers do not give advice to individual pupils on contraception or sexual health. Bancroft's provides a safe and secure environment and provides support to the students in their care. We actively promote positive relationships, which helps prevent negative behaviours in and around our school community.

8. Review

As part of effective RSE provision, the RSE policy will be reviewed biennially to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff and parents and that it is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance.

If you would like further information, or wish to discuss Sex Education provision, please contact the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

