Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

The English School

The person responsible for policy	Leoni Hadjithoma (PSHCE/RSE coordinator)
Ratified by	Board of Management
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Introduction

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) became compulsory for all secondary-age students in Cyprus in 2022 following the implementation of the CY Holistic Sex Education Law. This initiative addresses the critical need to equip children and young people with the knowledge and skills to maintain safe and healthy relationships. It also aims to enhance their academic performance and personal development. The importance of this education has grown due to the increased risks associated with online activities, making it essential for safeguarding students in the digital age.

The English School's RSE policy and its implementation have been developed in accordance with the following:

- CY holistic sex education law
  Ο περί της Ολιστικής Σεξουαλικής Διαπαιδαγώγησης Νόμος του 2022 - 205(I)/2022 (cylaw.org)
- Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας Κύπρου, Μάθημα Αγωγής Υγείας Μέσης Εκπαίδευσης Διδακτικό Υλικό (schools.ac.cy)
- Statutory guidance published by the DfE for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education in England (2019) and further updates in 2024
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) (Secondary) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- New RSHE guidance: What it means for sex education lessons in schools – The Education Hub (blog.gov.uk)
- Guidelines by World Health Organization (WHO)
  international-technical-guidance-on-sexuality-education.pdf (who.int)
- Programme of study for PSHCE education of the PSCHE Association UK
- PSHE Association Programme of Study for PSHE Education (Key stages 1–5), Jan 2020.pdf (hubspotusercontent00.net)

Definitions, rational and ethos

As stated above, the English School's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy is guided by statutory requirements from the Department for Education (DfE), the CY Holistic Sex Education Law, and global guidelines, including those from the World Health Organization (WHO). We define Relationships Education as the teaching of positive relationships, including family, friendships, and intimate relationships, while Sex Education provides students with knowledge about sexual health, consent, and safety.

We believe RSE is crucial for equipping students with the skills and knowledge to form healthy, respectful, and fulfilling relationships throughout their lives. Our RSE curriculum is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It is underpinned by the school's values of respect, integrity, and inclusivity, ensuring that all students are supported in developing a strong sense of self-worth and the ability to make informed decisions.

The intended outcomes of our RSE program include fostering equality, promoting mental and physical well-being, and preparing students for the responsibilities of adult life. This policy was developed through consultation with students, staff, and parents, reflecting the needs and values of our school community.

Roles and responsibilities

The implementation and oversight of the RSE program at The English School are clearly defined in the following key roles:

- **Headteacher**: The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the RSE policy is consistently implemented across the school. This includes managing parental requests for withdrawal from components of Sex Education and liaising with the PSHCE/RSE coordinator to ensure the policy aligns with the school's overall educational goals.
- **PSHCE/RSE Lead**: The PSHCE/RSE lead is responsible for the planning, coordination, and delivery of the RSE curriculum. This includes developing the curriculum, selecting appropriate resources, and providing support to teachers delivering RSE content. Also, the RSE lead is responsible for establishing and maintaining contact with the relevant local authorities such as Family Planning and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth for the purposes of ensuring that the school's RSE policy aligns with CY Law and securing development opportunities for the teachers of RSE.
- **Teachers**: PSHCE teachers are responsible for delivering the RSE curriculum in accordance with the school's policy. They are expected to create a safe and supportive learning environment, model positive attitudes, and adapt lessons to meet the needs of all students, including those with SEND.
- **Professional Development**: Teaching staff receive ongoing professional development to ensure they are equipped to deliver RSE effectively and sensitively. This training includes strategies for creating safe learning environments, handling sensitive topics, and responding to student needs.

The RSE program is led by the PSHCE/RSE lead and is supported by all teaching staff, with a commitment to continuous improvement through professional development and reflection.

Curriculum Design

Our RSE program is deeply embedded within the broader PSHCE curriculum and delivered through regular, timetabled lessons. The curriculum is developed in consultation with staff, students and parents. The school ensures that the curriculum is age-appropriate, relevant, and sensitive to the needs and feelings of all students. Core knowledge is carefully sequenced into manageable units, allowing students to build a solid foundation that is further developed as they progress through school.

RSE content is designed to address a wide range of contexts, including online safety, and covers essential topics such as family, respectful relationships including friendships, intimate and sexual relationships (including sexual health), along with the legal provisions surrounding these issues. Lessons are differentiated by PSHE teaching staff, with guidance from the inclusions office to ensure all learners, including those with SEND, can fully access and benefit from the curriculum. The emphasis on social and communication skills ensures that students with literacy needs can succeed through verbal participation. The school recognizes that pupils with SEND may need more support in navigating the physical and emotional aspects of growing up and understanding appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. Staff are aware that certain aspects of SEND can increase a pupil's vulnerability to abuse. Consequently, extra care is taken to support these students in building resilience, tailored to their level of understanding, to ensure they are better equipped to protect themselves and navigate social interactions safely.

The RSE program is delivered using a variety of teaching methods, including group discussions of videos and scenarios, role-play, quizzes, and specialist workshops. In addition to the regular curriculum, some biological aspects of RSE are taught within the Science curriculum. While our RSE program is primarily delivered by our staff, we selectively incorporate visitors and external speakers to enhance learning.
These contributors are carefully selected to ensure their sessions align with our curriculum objectives and uphold our school's values. They are not intended to replace planned lessons but to provide additional perspectives that enrich student understanding. Prior to any external session, thorough planning and clear objectives are established, and post-session evaluations are conducted to assess the impact on student learning.

Safe and effective practice

The delivery of RSE lessons is guided by key principles that ensure a high-quality, supportive learning environment. To ensure that all learners feel secure and supported, we are committed to creating and maintaining a safe learning environment characterized by trust, respect, and open communication.

PSHCE lessons are delivered following the establishment of clear ground rules, collaboratively developed with students, to promote mutual respect and confidentiality, encouraging students to express opinions without fear of negative feedback.

Distancing techniques, such as using case studies or hypothetical scenarios, are employed to help students engage with complex issues without feeling personally exposed. This approach encourages objective discussion and deeper understanding. Students' questions will be addressed by PSHE teachers with sensitivity and honesty. During Relationships & Sex Education lessons, controversial topics may arise. Pupils' questions will be answered honestly and sensitively while considering the context, with an emphasis on providing accurate and age-appropriate information. If a teacher is unsure how to respond, they will seek further information or refer the student to appropriate support.

Teachers will use their professional judgment to determine if these topics are suitable for class discussion.

Engaging parents and other stakeholders

At The English School, we recognize that effective RSE education is a partnership between the school and parents.

The PSHCE coordinator will be communicating with parents about the content and purpose of our PSHE and RSE programs by letter in the beginning of the school year so that they can learn more about the curriculum. Parents may view the resources being used upon request and discuss how they can support their child's learning at home. This proactive approach helps foster a positive perception of the subject and an understanding of its importance.

The RSE curriculum is published as Appendix 1 of this policy for easy access. One-to-one meetings upon request to address any specific concerns or questions parents may have about the RSE content or delivery.

We also engage with other stakeholders to ensure that our RSE curriculum aligns with broader educational goals and statutory requirements. Stakeholders are kept informed about the curriculum's content and delivery, and their input is considered in policy reviews and updates.

By fostering open communication and collaboration, we ensure that our RSE program is not only comprehensive and effective but also supported by the entire school community.

Monitoring, reporting, and evaluating

The English School's RSE provision is closely monitored and evaluated to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with educational goals. RSE provision is monitored through lesson observations, learning walks, and scrutiny of student work. These activities are conducted by the school leadership team and the PSHCE coordinator. Feedback from these evaluations informs ongoing improvements to the curriculum.

Student voice plays a crucial role in evaluating and adapting RSE content. Through discussions, surveys, and Student Voice activities, students provide feedback that influences the development and adjustment of RSE lessons, ensuring the curriculum remains relevant and engaging for all learners.

The involvement of visitors and external agencies in RSE is carefully monitored and evaluated to ensure their contributions align with the school's educational objectives. Feedback is gathered from both students and staff following these sessions to assess their impact.

The outcomes of these evaluations will be reported to the school community, highlighting theeffectiveness of the RSE program and any areas for development.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in May 2025 by the PSHCE coordinator. This will ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff, parents and carers, and that it is in line with current DfE and Cyprus Ministry of Culture, Education, Sports and Youth guidance.

Appendix 1 – Curriculum map

By the End of KS3

- **Puberty and Sexual Health**: Students will understand the physical and emotional changes during puberty, the role of hormones, and the importance of recognizing and addressing sexual harassment and abuse.
- **Positive and Respectful Relationships**: Exploration of social relationships, understanding family, friendship, and school relationships, recognizing healthy behaviors, and the importance of consent and effective communication in maintaining positive relationships.
- **Personal Values**: Introduction to personal values and their impact on choices, exploring responsibility, respect, acceptance, and setting personal goals.
- **Gender Roles and Stereotypes**: Understanding biological and social gender roles, recognizing stereotypes, and addressing their consequences, including gender inequality and violence.
- **Strong Feelings and Attraction**: Recognizing and expressing romantic feelings, understanding sexual maturation, and setting personal boundaries in relationships.
- **Interpersonal Relationships**: Differentiating between friendly and romantic relationships, recognizing the influence of peers, and identifying unhealthy relationship signs.
- **Bullying and Discrimination**: Identifying and addressing various forms of violence and bullying, understanding legal frameworks, and learning prevention and defense strategies.
- **Sexual and Reproductive Rights**: Understanding sexual and reproductive health, the importance of safe practices, and identifying protective factors.
- **Unintended Pregnancy**: Exploring the causes, consequences, and legal aspects of unintended pregnancy, including available options.
- **Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)**: Understanding STDs, their transmission, symptoms, prevention, and treatment.
- **Contraception**: Overview of different contraception methods, including their use and the importance of making informed choices.
- **Consent**: Understanding the significance of consent in relationships, recognizing sexual bullying and violence, and knowing how to seek help and legal protections.

By the End of KS4

- **Healthy Relationships and Violence Prevention**: Students will deepen their understanding of the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships, the impact of media, and strategies to address and prevent violence and harassment.
- **Sexuality and Self-Empowerment**: A focus on understanding sexuality, the impact of personal values and media on sexual behavior and promoting equality and respect for all individuals.
- **Self-Awareness and Sexual Behavior**: Emphasizing informed decision-making regarding sexual health, understanding the consequences of unintended pregnancies, and practicing safe sexual behaviors.

By the End of KS5

- **Healthy Relationships and Violence Prevention**: Exploration of workplace relationships, understanding violence, sexual harassment, and intimidation, and promoting a zero-tolerance approach.
- **Responsible Sexual Behavior**: Emphasis on informed and consensual sexual decision-making, understanding contraception, and respecting sexual and reproductive rights.
- **Importance of Families in the Modern World**: Understanding the role of family in society, responsibilities within family structures, and the legal frameworks supporting family life.
- **Sexuality and Self-Empowerment**: Understanding the influence of social and cultural factors on sexuality, the role of media, and the importance of accessing reliable information for healthy sexual behavior.