



Belong... Believe...

# Islwyn High School

## Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Reviewed by: Mr M Thomas – Assistant Headteacher

Ratified by Governors: December 2021

Date to be reviewed: December 2024

**Signed:** Mr J Hicks  
Headteacher

Mr G Bryce  
Chair of Governors

## **Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy**

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What is Relationships and Sexuality Education?

Humans are social beings and healthy relationships are a vital component of establishing and maintaining good physical, mental and emotional health. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) explores the interconnected ways in which a wide and diverse range of social, cultural, technological and biological influences affect the ability to form and maintain positive relationships. Understanding how relationships are formed, developed and maintained enables us to develop the skills and attitudes that allow us to create healthy relationships of our own. It supports young people to develop the knowledge and skills needed to effectively navigate these rapidly changing influences and establish respectful, fulfilling relationships throughout their lives. These may include family relationships, friendships, professional relationships and sexual relationships. RSE is an important element in creating a whole school approach to supporting overall physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. The change in name to Relationships and Sexuality Education reflects the internationally recognised World Health Organisation (WHO) standards for sexuality education. This definition seeks to encourage schools to take a joined up approach to education around relationships and the broader range of topics included under sexuality.

### **Rationale, Legislation, Aims and Objectives**

**Rationale:** As part of sex and relationship education, (RSE) pupils should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children. But we recognise that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. Therefore pupils should learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society. Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances. Sex and relationship education should contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and of society and preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

**Legislation:** The reference is to the inclusion of sex education in the school curriculum. Secondary schools, must include provision for sex education for all registered learners. RSE should not be delivered in isolation. It should be a planned and integrated part of the whole curriculum, with effective coordination to ensure continuity and progression in learning across key stages. Although the School will deal with issues around sex and sexual health in a developmentally appropriate, factual and non-judgemental manner, it must be remembered that the age of consent for sexual activity in the UK is 16. The age of consent is the same regardless of the gender or sexual orientation of a person and whether the sexual activity is between people of the same or different gender identities.

## **RSE for learners with special educational needs or additional learning needs.**

Schools providing education for learners with moderate and severe, profound and multiple learning need to meet the needs of all learners whose understanding of sexual health and well-being issues may not match their development. All staff, including ancillary staff, physiotherapists, nurses and carers should be aware of the school's sex education policy when working with learners with additional learning needs. RSE provision, within the SSRB, should be a planned and integrated part of the curriculum, coordinated effectively to ensure continuity and progression in learning across key stages. The SSRB will decide the precise content of the RSE programme and the strategies for learning adopted to meet the differing needs of learners.

### **Aims**

An Inclusive RSE recognises the importance of diversity and difference across a range of identities related to relationships, sex, gender, sexuality and that this diversity is a source of strength and is foundational to a cohesive, fair and equitable society.

In the attempt to enable pupils to acquire knowledge, skills, responsible attitudes and behaviour with regard to RSE, Islwyn High School aims to provide a worthwhile educational experience for all its pupils which will present opportunities:

- to help pupils to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and for others, acceptance of responsibility, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity;
- to enable pupils to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications, and risks, of certain types of behaviour and to accept that both sexes should behave responsibly in sexual matters;
- to support the personal development and social skills of the pupils including those children or young people with a disability or additional learning needs.
- to ensure that pupils have an understanding of their own and others' sexuality by recognising people's relationships, sexual diversity and showing respect for others regardless of their gender identity and expression or sexual orientation. It is also important that, in addition to fostering a positive and respectful attitude to diversity, schools should also ensure that learners who may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and Q (LGBTQ+) have access to RSE provision that is relevant, factual and supportive.
- to enjoy relationships based upon mutual respect and responsibility which are free from abuse and exploitation;
- to provide information and knowledge which will counteract prejudice and ignorance;
- to develop an understanding of risk and to promote strategies for personal safety;
- to enable pupils to be aware of the sources of help and to acquire the skills and confidence to use them. All learners should be given opportunities to access appropriate information and develop knowledge around when and how to seek advice and support.

### **Objectives:**

- To enable pupils to understand the biological aspects of reproduction;
- To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various methods of family planning in terms of personal preference and their social and moral implications;
- To recognise and be able to discuss sensitive and controversial issues such as conception, virginity, birth, child-rearing, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and technological developments which involve consideration of attitudes, values, beliefs and morality;

- To make pupils aware of the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society and recognise the importance of personal choice in managing relationships so that they do not present risks to health and personal safety; A protective and preventative RSE curriculum will enable pupils to build their knowledge and understanding of how to recognise discrimination, abusive relationships and violence and develop an understanding of issues regarding consent.
- To make pupils aware that feeling positive about sexuality and sexual activity is important in relationships and that people have the right not to be sexually active;
- To understand the changing nature of sexuality over time and its impact on lifestyles, e.g. the menopause;
- To recognise that parenthood is a matter of choice;
- To critically analyse moral values and explore those held by different cultures and groups;
- To understand the concept of stereotyping and to discuss issues such as sexual harassment in terms of their effects on individuals;
- To understand aspects of legislation relating to sexual behaviour, gender and equal opportunities and to make aware of the availability of statutory and voluntary organisations which offer support in human relationships.

### **Delivery**

Sex education at Islwyn High School is taught in a cross curricular way through Biology, Religious Studies and Personal and Social Education. The diverse staffing and the variety of experience contained within this teaching body, along with access to external agencies such as the Health Authority, is seen as a valuable resource for the delivery of sex education.

The provision of sex education is seen as progressive in terms of language, concepts and content which increases in depth and complexity as pupils progress through the school.

Throughout the course of teaching, a variety of sensitive issues will inevitably be explored. It is recognised that an individual's sexuality is a highly personal matter. The teaching of sex education at Islwyn High School will focus upon the need for understanding and awareness of a variety of sexual preferences across the spectrum of human sexuality.

It is intended that pupils will be given up-to-date information on a wide variety of contraceptive methods and whilst general statements about the efficacy of these methods will be given, specific advice and guidance to individuals will not be made without consultation with the parents.

### **Sex Education in the Curriculum**

**Introduction:** Islwyn High School is concerned that it offers an education for the whole person, body, mind and spirit. Part of the make-up of all humans is that they are sexual beings. It would be irresponsible of the school to ignore this. The sex education programme at Islwyn High School aims to be a sensitive and responsible one which is set in a moral and social framework. It also aims to meet the statutory provision which has been outlined in various Government documents.

**Context:** The prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents/carers. Schools must recognise that parents/carers are key figures in helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up and in preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities which sexual maturity brings. The teaching offered by schools should be seen as complementary and supportive to the role of parents. In an attempt to achieve this, the 1988 Education Reform Act (Section 1) states that all pupils should be offered the opportunity of receiving a comprehensive, well-planned programme of sex education during their school careers through a curriculum which:

- (a) "promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and of society; and
- (b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life."

It is recognised that sex education is a difficult issue which will place demands on schools and teachers. However, the purpose of sex education should be to provide knowledge about loving relationships, the nature of sexuality and the processes of human reproduction. At the same time it should lead to the acquisition of understanding and attitudes which prepare pupils to view their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

The sex education delivered should be tailored not only to the age, but also to the understanding of pupils. At Islwyn High School, we will aim to present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner. It will be set within a clear framework of values and an awareness of the law regarding sexual behaviour.

Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the value of a stable family life, marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood. Such matters will be treated with sensitivity and great care will be taken to encourage all children to feel a sense of worth. Particular care will be taken when issues such as marital breakdown and divorce are dealt with.

**Definition of Sex Education:** The law does not give a definitive statement as to what sex education is. At Islwyn High School, it is regarded as education about sexual matters within a values framework, focusing upon responsibility within caring, committed relationships. Among the things it will concentrate on are knowledge of the facts of human reproductive processes and behaviour, HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, contraception and abortion, and a consideration of the broader emotional and ethical dimensions of sexual attitudes.

The current RSE provision from Islwyn High School is outlined below:

Year 7	Changes / Puberty, Friendship and Respect
Year 8	Staying Safe Online
Year 9	Healthy Relationships
Year 10	Sex Drugs and Alcohol
Year 11	Cohesion

These topics the pupils study have been designed to meet the **What Matter Statements** from the new curriculum.

- **Our decision-making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others.**

This Area can help learners to understand how decisions and actions impact on themselves, on others and on wider society, both now and in the future. It can also help learners understand the factors that influence decision-making, thus placing them in a better position to make more informed and considered decisions.

Learning and experience in this Area can enable learners to develop the critical-thinking skills necessary to consider their decision-making in terms of possible implications, including risks, for themselves and

others. This can offer learners opportunities to engage in collective decision-making and to understand the importance of their contributions to this process.

A key decision that affects learners for life is around their career pathways.

- **How we engage with social influences shapes who we are and affects our health and well-being.**

This Area can help learners understand the important role of social influences on their lives. These influences are comprised of rules, social norms, attitudes and values that are created and reinforced by different social groups. It is through interaction with social groups that we experience these influences. They affect our identity, values, behaviours and health and well-being, and often do so without our being aware of it.

Learners will need to engage critically with these social influences within their own culture, as well as those of others, in order to understand how norms and values develop. This can enable them to understand how their own behaviours, relationships and experiences are shaped.

- **Healthy relationships are fundamental to our well-being.**

This Area can help learners understand and value how feelings of belonging and connection that come from healthy relationships have a powerful effect on health well-being.

Learners need to recognise when relationships are unhealthy and need to be aware of how to keep safe, and seek support for themselves and others.

Learners will be encouraged to understand that, throughout their lives, they will experience a range of relationships. They will also be encouraged to develop their abilities to form, nurture and maintain relationships.

As a result, they will see how healthy relationships are vital for a healthy body and mind, allowing us to thrive.

**The Parental Right to Withdraw their Son or Daughter from Sex Education Lessons:** Section 241 of the Education Act 1993 gives parents the right to withdraw their children from any or all parts of the school's programme of sex education, other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science Order. It is realised that, under exceptional circumstances, a very small number of parents may wish to exclude their children from this programme. In this case, such parents should write to the Headteacher, stating their objections.

The biological element of reproduction remains within the National Curriculum Science Order for Key Stages 3 and is covered in detail during Year 10 as part of the GCSE course. Other issues are dealt with in Religious, Personal and Social Education.

**Advice to Individual Pupils:** It is understood that it is important to distinguish between the school's function of providing education generally about sexual matters and the giving of advice to individual pupils on these issues. Good teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and well-being of their pupils. It is also understood that this function should never trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. It is understood that particular care must be exercised in relation to giving contraceptive advice to pupils under the age of sixteen, for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. It is the general rule that giving an individual pupil advice on such matters without parental knowledge or consent would be inappropriate.

Where the circumstances are such as to lead the teacher to believe that the pupil has embarked upon, or is contemplating, a course of conduct which is likely to place him or her at moral or physical risk or in breach of the law, the teacher has the general responsibility to ensure that the pupil is aware of the implications and is urged to seek advice.

RSE, while fostering positive attitudes and behaviours, may also give learners space to explore the features of unhealthy relationships. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence touches many lives. There will be pupils and staff within school who are currently experiencing or perpetrating violence against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence, or have done so in the past. School is responsible for making sure its learners and staff are safe and healthy. Where RSE is taught, there is the potential risk for the topics being discussed, such as consent, respect and domestic violence, to trigger a learner to make a disclosure of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. **Staff must follow the school's safeguarding processes to ensure its pupils and staff are safe and healthy.**