

WOLVERHAMPTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction

This RSE Policy should be read in conjunction with the 'Senior School Wellbeing Overview Policy' which details more detailed overall subject content and methods of teaching, along with processes for monitoring and evaluation. As part of a whole school approach, and based on mutual respect, equality in all its forms, and tolerance, Wellbeing (PSHE and RSE) in the Senior school at WGS aims to develop the qualities and attributes our students need to thrive as well-rounded individuals, family members and members of UK society, through a flexible and adaptive broad-based curriculum which encompasses fundamental British values and has due regard to the nine protected characteristics of the 2010 Equality Act*.¹

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is fully integrated into our Wellbeing curriculum: it is exceptionally important for our students' personal and social development. RSE focused modules help students navigate the physical, emotional, and social changes of puberty and later adolescence, in an atmosphere of trust. RSE also encourages the exploration of values, moral issues, sexuality and personal relationships and through it, we strive to help our students become respectful citizens with integrity and good judgement. To this end, RSE also includes the development of self-esteem, self-awareness, a sense of moral responsibility, and the knowledge and skills to avoid and resist unwanted sexual experience.

All young people have sexual knowledge of their own; but what they pick up from fake news, the media and their peer culture is often confusing, misunderstood or simply wrong. RSE at WGS provides accurate information and provides our students with a safe space within which to discuss any fears or misunderstandings, and to challenge and question the norms of their peer group. We also discuss and challenge attitudes and behaviours displayed in the adult world with regards to sexism, prejudice, and discrimination as part of our whole school programme.

The Department for Education introduced compulsory Relationships Education for primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for secondary pupils from September 2020. This policy and the Senior School Wellbeing overview policy are written with these guidelines in mind.² Independent schools (unlike others) do not have to include Health (and Wellbeing) within the RSE policy, but are bound to include these within PSHE which is compulsory and enables Independent schools to meet the Independent School Standards as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

In accordance with this statutory guidance, Secondary School RSE at Wolverhampton Grammar School aims to provide students with clear, impartial information about sex, while promoting its importance within a stable and loving relationship. We promote the equality of gender and sexuality, while acknowledging differences of opinion, in an atmosphere of tolerant discussion. Recognising the physical and emotional changes through puberty and adolescence we aim to show students how to foster and maintain good relationships, often in the face of pressure from the media, internet, and peer pressure, through critical decision-making. It is important that students understand that their actions have consequences and that emotions must be managed, as well as how to recognise abuse and exploitation. Students are encouraged to develop their own values and attitudes about sex, sexuality and relationships, but to

¹ *Protected characteristics are: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, and Sexual Orientation. At WGS we aim to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

²*https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf

respect and empathise with those of others. Furthermore, they should recognise that sexual intimacy involves strong emotional feelings and they should have regard not only for their own, but other people's feelings, decisions, rights and bodies. (*More details are included in Appendix i, and content is also outlined in the PSHE overview*).

We have dedicated Wellbeing lessons (of which RSE is a part) that are taught by the Wellbeing Department and are part of our timetable. The Head of Wellbeing, Maggie Keeley, leads the department and supporting activities, such as Guest Speakers who visit the school. Form tutors also enable issues to be picked up on and expanded as necessary during form time. Lessons are often discussion led, but all offer varying levels of challenge and differentiation for the students. We invite external speakers and theatre companies with expertise in sexual health, online safety, and relationships to work with our students in an age-appropriate manner

When joining WGS, parents receive information outlining the Wellbeing programme including the elements of RSE. They are asked if they would like more information directed to Firefly where a full overview and examples of resources can be found. Information regarding Wellbeing (PSHE and RSE) is regularly updated and published via Firefly and on the school website. (*Letter in Appendix ii*).

Parents have a legal right to view this policy, and to withdraw their child from Sex Education elements which fall outside those aspects covered in the National Curriculum Science, if they wish. In such cases WGS will seek and take account of parental views, and endeavour to adopt a partnership approach with parents by encouraging dialogue between parents and their son/daughter.

Should parents wish to suggest topics for the Wellbeing Curriculum they should contact the Head of Wellbeing directly or alternatively make their views known on the annual Parent Feedback Survey. All views are welcome.

Right to Withdraw

At WGS we define the element of Sex Education of which withdrawal is possible as '***The explanation of sex outside of biological terms, specifically contraceptive methods, avoiding unwanted pregnancy and STIs.***' As we approach the time for Sex Education lessons to be delivered parents and guardians will be informed so that they support their child at home.

If a Parent or Guardian wishes to withdraw their child from the Sex Education element of the course, they should inform the Head of Wellbeing in writing. They will be invited for a meeting to ensure that they are fully aware of the content and the way WGS teaches. It should be noted that Biology will still cover elements of reproduction, and that RSE is about the emotional, social, legal and safety aspects of this topic. Other lessons, including Tutor Time will cover topics around the theme of relationships, in which sex will be mentioned. This is not included in the lessons for withdrawal as the focus is on the relationship rather than sex.

We strongly believe that it is far better that any student is present in Wellbeing RSE lessons to receive impartial, informative information and to discuss this in a safe environment rather than just hearing their peers' version of what was discussed in class.

Please note that should parent wish to withdraw their child from the sex education element of RSE, that WGS follows the statutory requirements and students will be asked if they wish to re-join in with the sex education elements of Wellbeing three terms before their 16th birthday. Students will be allowed to do so even if the parents have withdrawn their child. WGS will document this whole process, ensure a record is kept and contact parents as part of the process.

Our Overarching Concepts at WGS (green indicates elements that primarily fall within RSE)

1. **Identity** (their personal qualities, attitudes, skills, attributes and achievements and what influences these)
2. **Relationships** (including different types and in different settings)
3. **A healthy** (including physically, emotionally and socially) **balanced lifestyle** (including within relationships, work-life, exercise and rest, spending and saving and diet)
4. **Risk** (identification, assessment and how to manage risk rather than simply the avoidance of risk for self and others) and **safety** (including behaviour and strategies to employ in different settings)
5. **Diversity and equality** (in all its forms)
6. **Rights** (including the notion of universal human rights), **responsibilities** (including fairness and justice) and **consent** (in different contexts)
7. **Change** (as something to be managed) and **resilience** (the skills, strategies and 'inner resources' we can draw on when faced with challenging change or circumstance)
8. **Power** (how it is used and encountered in a variety of contexts including persuasion, bullying, negotiation and 'win-win' outcomes)
9. **Career** (including enterprise, employability and economic understanding)

Impartiality

All information presented to our students is done so in a balanced manner. Opinions can be offered, but these will always be countered by the opposite side of an argument in a professional manner. Political views are no exception to this rule and our staff will offer unbiased and balanced views. All of our teaching aims to be as inclusive as possible with due regard to UK law, the Equality Act and the Protected Characteristics. WGS is a welcoming and safe place for all. When students disagree they are taught to do so respectfully with no place for discrimination. This in turn prepares our students for living as an adult and the world of work.

Assessment

Assessment is vital in order to monitor understanding of the subject matter and inform teaching. Formal assessments are completed once every half term, marked by teachers of Wellbeing and returned to students with time given for self-reflection and improvements.

However, assessment in Wellbeing goes beyond written assessments and must include the approach of the student to the subject and the attributes they display. This is reflected in Wellbeing by always using Approach Grades in marking and feedback. Assessments may also be creative or use skills such as public speaking.

Teachers of Wellbeing will continuously assess through verbal feedback and observations of engagement. Students will also take ownership through self and peer assessment.

Wellbeing is included in the short and long term reports. In the reports students receive grades for approach and attainment, using the grade system detailed below. Parents are also able to meet with Teachers at Parents' Evenings as in any other subject. Commendations or sanctions will be applied as in any other subject.

Please refer to the Wellbeing Policy for further details of grades awarded.

Homework

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject and the need for adult guidance throughout, no formal homework will be set.

Proactive Curriculum

The Head of Wellbeing will regularly meet with the Assistant Head (Pastoral)/DSL, School Counsellor, and wider Pastoral Team to identify areas for concern locally, nationally and internationally. The Wellbeing Curriculum will adapt accordingly to meet the need of the students it serves based on needs, news and trends.

SEND

It is vital that the content of Wellbeing is accessible to all students. Teachers of Wellbeing will work in the same way as any other subject to ensure students with SEND have appropriate differentiation and scaffolding. All Wellbeing lessons have three levels of challenge to meet the needs of all students.

Setting Ground Rules

The atmosphere in Wellbeing must be as relaxed as possible to discuss delicate and sensitive issues, while still remaining a workable, viable and productive learning environment.

Staff will set the following ground rules with students:

- Show others that you are listening to what they have to say
- Be kind to ourselves and others
- Tell the story, not the person
- Discussion stays in the room (Safeguarding requirements notwithstanding).
- No-one is to be forced to say anything but we must all do our best to engage
- Respect others' questions and answers

Curriculum:

- The curriculum mirrors DfE guidance and PSHE Association suggestions.

Teaching methods and Learning:

To facilitate students' learning in the RSE element of Wellbeing:

- The purpose of each lesson is made clear.
- Baseline learning assessment should be briefly done at the start of a lesson and time should be given for students to reflect, consolidate and apply their learning towards the end.
- Appropriate learning experiences are planned and meet the needs of all the students in the class.
- Learning experiences draw on students' own experiences or existing knowledge and provide a range of opportunities for students to learn, practise and demonstrate skills, attitudes and knowledge and understanding. Personal stories or examples should not however be shared.
- Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to evaluate their own progress in addition to formal assessments.
- Attention is given to developing a safe and secure classroom climate.
- Staff training needs are met through CPD courses and staff meetings.
- Regular assessment is completed to monitor understanding and inform further teaching.

Differentiation

Due to the nature of the topics covered, differentiation for any ability will often be organic and based on how the discussion in the lesson progresses. However, staff will have ideas on how to stretch the thinking of the more able students or support those who are struggling to understand concepts. Each lesson offers activities with varying levels of challenge to suit the needs of the student. Being able to put forward their own view both confidently and in a balanced manner is an area that all students should be striving to achieve. Staff will encourage and praise as appropriate and will use questioning skills to elicit more detailed answers where needed. While outcome will usually be the same, differentiation by task or method may take place.

CPD

Staff training needs are met through CPD courses and staff meetings.

Links with transition from the Junior School

The Wellbeing and PSHE coordinators from both the Junior and Secondary school regularly discuss the subject and share knowledge on new training that may have taken place. These meetings also aim to look at progression throughout the teaching of Wellbeing of which RSE is a main part.

Please also refer to the following policies:

Wellbeing Policy - Staff network and website	Curriculum Policy (Senior School) - website
Safeguarding Policy - website	Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy - website
Anti-Radicalisation Policy - Staff network	

Updated by MXK
Sept 2025

Next Update:
Sept 2026

Appendix I - The Aims of RSE at WGS

The aim of RSE at WGS is to give our students the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know, for example, what a healthy relationship looks like or what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It also covers contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting any pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It fosters discussion as to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships allowing students to understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing. It helps students identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

Effective RSE does **not** encourage early sexual experimentation. It should enable our students to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables them to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSE also aims to give our students the skills and knowledge to equip them for life after WGS: to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy relationships of any kind, and sexual relationships at the appropriate time.

Knowledge about safer sex and sexual health remains important to ensure that students are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This is delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way allowing scope for students to ask questions in a safe environment. (Many teachers use approaches such as distancing techniques, setting ground rules with the class to help manage sensitive discussion or use question boxes to allow students to raise issues anonymously).

RSE at WGS provides clear progression from what is taught in Relationships Education in the Junior School, taught at the appropriate time and extends teaching to include intimate relationships. Alongside being taught about intimate relationships, students are also taught about family relationships, friendships, and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult. Through this they should understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect. This knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, can then empower them to then identify when relationships are unhealthy. Students will understand that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on their mental wellbeing.

Secondary Relationships Education is underpinned by a wider, deliberate cultivation of individual resilience and character. This includes character traits such as belief in achieving goals and persevering with tasks, as well as personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice, underpinned by an understanding of the importance of self-respect and self-worth. There are many ways WGS facilitates opportunities for our students to undertake social action, such as Coast-to-Coast, DofE, Student Parliament, and through our many clubs and societies. We are in the process of contacting the National Citizenship Service as well for further possible input into the curriculum.

Students are taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. All students should feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Opportunity for the exploration of sexual orientation and gender identity is available at a timely point and when discussing these topics, it is recognised that students may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. There are equal opportunities to explore the features of stable and healthy same sex relationships within the RSE and PSHE programme.

It is recognised that there will be a range of opinions regarding RSE. The starting principle when teaching each of these must be that the applicable law should be taught in a factual way so that pupils are clear on their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Schools may explore faith, or other perspectives on some of these issues in other subjects such as Religious Education.

Students should be well informed about the full range of perspectives and, within the law, should be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs. Key aspects of the law relating to sex which to be taught include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy.

Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, are also addressed sensitively and clearly. WGS addresses the physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM) and signposts where to find support. We highlight that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM or to fail to protect a person for whom you are responsible from FGM.

As well as addressing these issues in the context of the law, students may also need support to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk. We are mindful that for students who are experiencing, or have experienced, unhealthy or unsafe relationships at home or socially, WGS may have a particularly important role in being a place of consistency and safety where these students can easily speak to trusted adults, report problems and find support. AS tracking is a tool that we use to help staff be aware of potential issues as well as our knowledge of our students through the Form tutor.

Internet safety is also addressed. Students are taught the rules and principles for keeping safe online. This includes how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues. Students should have a strong understanding of how data is generated, collected, shared and used online, for example, how personal data is captured on social media or understanding the way that businesses may exploit the data available to them. Some students are also exposed to harmful behaviours online, and via other forms of media, which may normalise violent sexual behaviours. A focus on healthy relationships and broader Relationships Education can help young people understand acceptable behaviours in relationships.

Specifically, by the end of their time at WGS students will discover more about:

Families

- different types of committed, stable relationships.
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- Marriage, including their legal status e.g. legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony and why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- how to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

Respectful relationships, including friendships

- characteristics of positive and healthy friendships and relationships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.

- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice).
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs.
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

Online and media

- rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
- the impact of viewing harmful content.
- that specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

Being safe

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.
- 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.
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause. (elements within Biology as well)
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage. (elements within Biology as well)

- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

The Law

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people, and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- domestic violence against women and girls (but also that men and boys can be affected)
- healthy and unhealthy relationships
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including ‘sexting’, youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- Sextortion
- violence and exploitation by gangs, extremism and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or ‘county lines’ drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)

Appendix ii - letter for Year 7 and any New Starters

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In September 2020 it became statutory for secondary schools to educate pupils in Relationships, Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. At WGS we deliver RSE through our Wellbeing Curriculum. The lessons, which form part of our timetable, are delivered by specialist teachers.

The topics we cover throughout Years 7 to Upper Sixth are taught under the umbrella of:

- **Health and Wellbeing**
- **Relationships**
- **Living in the wider world**

Sessions include:

Healthy, respectful relationships, including friendships and more intimate sexual relationships (including sexual health); consent and the law; families; growing and changing (including puberty and personal hygiene); changing feelings; resilience, self-esteem and confidence; keeping safe both online (including the impact of social media), and in the real world.

The RSE element of Wellbeing is delivered by the Wellbeing Department, although WGS does invite outside agencies into school to run, for example, theatre performances that assist with elements of the delivery of Relationships and Sex Education and professional speakers. We feel very fortunate to be able to draw on this expert help which the students seem to find a helpful way to learn about sensitive emotional and social aspects of topics such as pregnancy, STIs or abusive relationships.

We outline the Wellbeing topic by year group at our Pastoral Information Evenings and in our Wellbeing Policy at the start of each academic year. Examples of resources and full details of the Curriculum can also be found on Firefly-Departments- Wellbeing. If you would like to discuss any elements of the programme or make any suggestions for content that will be offered, please do email myself, Maggie Keeley, Head of Wellbeing via MXK@wgs-sch.net

If you wish to withdraw your child from the Sex Education element of the course, you should inform the Head of Wellbeing in writing. You will be invited for a meeting to ensure that you are fully aware of the content and delivery. It should be noted that Biology will still cover elements of reproduction, and that RSE is about the emotional, legal and safety aspects of this topic.

At WGS we define the element of Sex Education of which withdrawal is possible as '**The explanation of sex outside of biological terms, specifically contraceptive methods, avoiding unwanted pregnancy and STIs.**' The lessons which this falls upon are delivered in Year 8, Year 10 and Year 11 and are highlighted in the Wellbeing Policy Overviews.

We strongly believe that it is far better that any student is present in Wellbeing RSE lessons to receive impartial, informative information and to discuss this in a safe environment rather than just hearing their peers' version of what was discussed in class.

If you have any further questions about the RSE programme, please look at the school's policies and the following statutory guidelines. You are also welcome to arrange a meeting in school.

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Yours sincerely

Maggie Keeley - Head of Wellbeing

Appendix ii – Reminder letter for Year 8, 10 and 11

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