



# Queen Mary's Grammar School

## Relationships, sex and health education policy

Approved by the LGB, November 2023

### Principles

Queen Mary's Grammar School is committed to helping and supporting its pupils in their physical, social, emotional and moral development. Parents are informed about curriculum content and their right to withdraw their child(ren) on an annual basis through a parent information evening held at the school every September and are invited to ask questions, make comments and view lesson materials, but final decisions on curriculum rest with the school.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is a statutory requirement for secondary school pupils, and the mandatory curriculum can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

### Aims

Queen Mary's Grammar School aims to provide young people with:

- the means to safeguard themselves in their current and future sexual and non-sexual relationships
- relationship and personal skills that prepare them for the challenges of the teenage years and beyond
- opportunities to explore their own values and others' and develop their own moral framework
- opportunities to understand and support difference and diversity
- an understanding of their own and others' bodies, including how to maintain good physical and mental health
- the ability to know where to seek help and advice
- high self-esteem, self-awareness and emotional health
- an awareness of the right they have over their own body and others have over theirs
- the skills to be assertive and develop good communication skills in literacy and oracy
- the knowledge, skills and attributes to make fully informed choices
- the ability to respect the right of others to hold opinions that differ from their own as long as these views do not impact on the rights of others
- the ability to take responsibility for and accept the consequences of their own actions

When delivering these lessons, the religious background of all pupils will be taken into account so that the topics are handled appropriately, and faith perspectives on a number of topics such as relationships and families will be explored in Religion, Philosophy & Ethics (RPE) lessons. In PSHEE lessons, it is acknowledged that religion, culture and many other factors will influence the decisions people make about their lives, and pupils will only be directed against decisions that are illegal or harmful. When exploring issues relating to relationships and sex, a range of perspectives will be acknowledged, and pupils will be encouraged to make the decisions that are right for them once they have critically evaluated all of the factors that are influencing them and have been made aware of and considered alternative options.

### Withdrawal of Pupils

- The governmental guidelines state that parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships or health education
- Parents do have the right to withdraw their child from some aspects of sex education, but not what is taught as part of the National Curriculum for science (i.e. puberty, menstruation and reproduction). Parents are advised to consider that it may be preferable for their child to learn about sex from a trained professional in a controlled environment, however, rather than for them to be misinformed by unreliable

sources, such as their friends or unreliable or even harmful sources online.

- Any request for withdrawal from sex education should be done in writing to the school for the attention of Mrs McPhee, Head of PSHEE and Wellbeing Education, who will equally respond in writing. However, parents may only opt their child out of sex education up to their child's 15th birthday.
- A child may not opt out of sex education him/herself; however arrangements will be made during sex education lessons so that all pupils feel comfortable and safe, such as opting out of individual activities. On and after their 15th birthday, a child may opt out of sex education themselves. However, a member of staff will discuss this with them first to establish their reasons and ensure that they understand the potential drawbacks of withdrawal, plus suggest options for remaining in sex education lessons but making such lessons as comfortable and safe as possible. Single-sex lessons will not be offered in Years 12 and 13 however, as it is valuable for pupils to hear the views, thoughts and feelings from the opposite sex in order to break down sex-based barriers, misconceptions and prejudice.
- A supervised room will be provided for any pupils whose parents have opted them out of sex education, and alternative study will be provided

### **Safeguarding of Pupils**

- All pupils are required during RSHE lessons to adhere to a set of ground rules, in order to create a safe learning environment for all. These generally include listening to others, keeping anecdotes anonymous and being non-judgemental.
- All pupils are offered the opportunity of "time out" if they feel vulnerable during a lesson
- PSHEE teaching staff are made aware through weekly staff briefing notes of pupils who may feel vulnerable during lessons that cover sensitive topics, and will bear these pupils in mind when planning and delivering the lesson content
- Pupils are made aware of and reminded which particular members of staff are responsible for their welfare, in case a pupil needs to make a disclosure
- All staff are trained annually in the school's safeguarding procedures
- The PSHEE Department meets regularly with the safeguarding team to keep abreast of individual pupils' circumstances
- The 'three key lesson takeaways' are published on Teams to pupils in advance of each lesson, to give them time to speak to staff if they think they may feel vulnerable during that lesson. Such pupils have the option of viewing the lesson materials in advance.

### **Confidentiality:**

- Pupils will be encouraged to talk to a trusted adult if they have any concerns regarding their relationships. This may not necessarily be a parent or carer.
- As long as there are no safeguarding concerns, these conversations will be treated confidentially
- If, as a result of a conversation with a pupil, concerns are raised regarding a pupil's safety, the normal safeguarding procedures will be followed

### **Catering for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):**

- All staff have access to a database which lists SEND learners and are therefore aware of which learners in their classes have SEND
- All staff receive regular training from the SEND department regarding different types of special educational needs and disabilities and how to adapt teaching so that learners with SEND can make progress
- Some staff have completed additional training on supporting the mental health of SEND pupils
- Particularly vulnerable learners with SEND are monitored within lessons dealing with sensitive topics, and as with all learners, there is a "time-out" option
- Some lesson activities may be adapted for SEND learners to allow them to access the tasks
- In PSHEE, all pupils will have lessons on disability so that SEND learners feel understood and supported by their peers

### **Action is carried out by:**

- All PSHE lessons are delivered by specialists: Mrs McPhee, Ms Morgan and Mr Farnell

- Some aspects of RSHE are covered in science, biology, PE or RPE lessons
- Walsall School Nurses, who may be consulted regarding individual concerns or deliver workshops within school. They also run a text service for Walsall pupils, where children and young people can contact them with any concerns they may have on 07480 635363
- The pastoral and safeguarding teams, who liaise with the PSHEE team where necessary
- Mrs Young (Social, Emotional and Mental Health Mentor), Mr Farnell (Safeguarding and Welfare Officer), Mrs Mohan (Sixth Form Operations Manager, also responsible for girls' welfare) are also available to support individual pupils
- All members of staff are trained regularly in safeguarding procedures at QMGS and report concerns via the CPOMS reporting system
- Reputable external speakers during off-timetable events relating to RSHE
- Mrs Walker (Librarian) advises on recommended reading for RSHE topics

The PSHEE Scheme of Work for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 is available upon request by emailing the school.

Parents with concerns or questions about this policy can e-mail the school at the designated e-mail address: [rshe@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:rshe@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk).

**This policy is due for review November 2023 and will be revised annually.**