



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Approved by the LGB, December 2024

Next review LGB2, December 2025

Principles and Aim

“Empowered and informed”

Relationships and sex education is taught as part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) curriculum at Queen Mary's Grammar School, which takes a long-term view and aims to thoroughly equip our pupils for life in the modern world. We have designed a curriculum that allows our pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required to thrive in all aspects of their lives. Whether our pupils leave us at the end of Year 11 or Year 13, we hope to have helped produce a confident young person who feels **empowered** to make their own life decisions from an **informed** perspective.

The Case for Quality RSE (from The Family Planning Association)

The Family Planning Association set out the benefits of high-quality relationships and sex education [on their website](#). Based on over 80 separate research studies, it shows that young people who receive high-quality relationships and sex education 'wait longer before having sex for the first time. There is absolutely no evidence that sex education encourages young people to have sex earlier. In fact, sex education makes it more likely that first sex will happen later, when a young person feels ready. And – most importantly – first sex is more likely to be consensual, meaning it's wanted and agreed to.

And where young people *are* engaging in sexual activity then:

- Sex is less frequent
- They have fewer partners
- Safer sex with condoms is more likely
- There are fewer pregnancies
- There are fewer sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Young people are less likely to engage in risky behaviour, such as sex when using alcohol or drugs
- There is less “non-volitional” sex, meaning that sexual activity is less likely to be unwanted and non-consensual'

How is RSE planned and delivered?

At Queen Mary's Grammar School, pupils from year 7 – 13 have a timetabled lesson of PSHEE with a specialist teacher (either Ms Morgan or Mrs McPhee) once a fortnight. A wide range of reputable resources, as well as the department's own expertise, are used to assist in the planning and delivery of these lessons. The department are members of professional bodies including the PSHE Association, the Association for Citizenship Teaching and the Chartered College of Teaching.

Relationships and sex education lessons are evidence-based and informative in nature, whilst still encouraging questions and discussion from the pupils. Lessons are part of a spiralised curriculum, meaning that key concepts are returned to and explored in greater complexity year-on-year, ensuring that pupils receive the necessary education in a way that is age-appropriate and directly relevant to their stage of life.

Some elements of RSE are taught as part of the curriculum in Science, Biology and Religion, Philosophy and Ethics (RPE).

RSE as Safeguarding

High-quality RSE, such as pupils receive at Queen Mary's Grammar School, helps to safeguard your child. The evidence shows that sex education helps to reduce unwanted, non-consensual sex and a central part of RSE teaching is helping

children develop skills to stay safe, online and offline. Our aim, as set out in the department vision, is that our pupils feel empowered to make their own life decisions from an informed perspective. Making decisions that keep themselves physically and emotionally safe is an important part of this. Different avenues of support are signposted in lessons and include support available in school or at home as well as a range of charities, organisations and helplines that support young people. The department meets regularly with the safeguarding and welfare teams as well as the pastoral team to share information and support with issues where necessary.

Additional action is carried out by:

- 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 regularly.
- Ms Daniels (Social, Emotional and Mental Health Mentor), Mr Farnell (Safeguarding and Welfare Officer) and 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 deliver workshops, performances, talks and other events relating to RSE and the wider PSHEE curriculum.
- Mrs Walker (our school librarian) advises on recommended reading for RSE and PSHEE topics

Request to Withdraw

As parents/carers, you have the right to request that your child is withdrawn from sex education only. You may not request to withdraw your child from relationships or health education. You also may not request to withdraw your child from any topics taught as part of the science curriculum.

Pupils are not able to request to withdraw but may choose to opt back in to sex education from three terms before they turn sixteen. For example, if a pupil turns sixteen during the Autumn Term, the pupil can opt back into sex education at any time after the start of the previous Autumn Term.

Before any request to withdraw your child from sex education can be granted, you must arrange and attend a meeting with Ms Morgan as Head of Department and/or Mr Collins as Assistant Headteacher, at which we will discuss your reasons for wanting to withdraw your child from this aspect of their education.

How is RSE inclusive?

We are guided by the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

RSE is taught with reference to and respect for all of the protected characteristics, acknowledging and celebrating our pupils' different backgrounds, beliefs, experiences and cultures.

From a special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) point of view, we also plan and teach to ensure everyone in the lesson can access and engage with the content. 'Ground rules' for PSHEE/RSE are set out at the start of the year and revisited regularly to ensure pupils feel comfortable to participate in lessons.

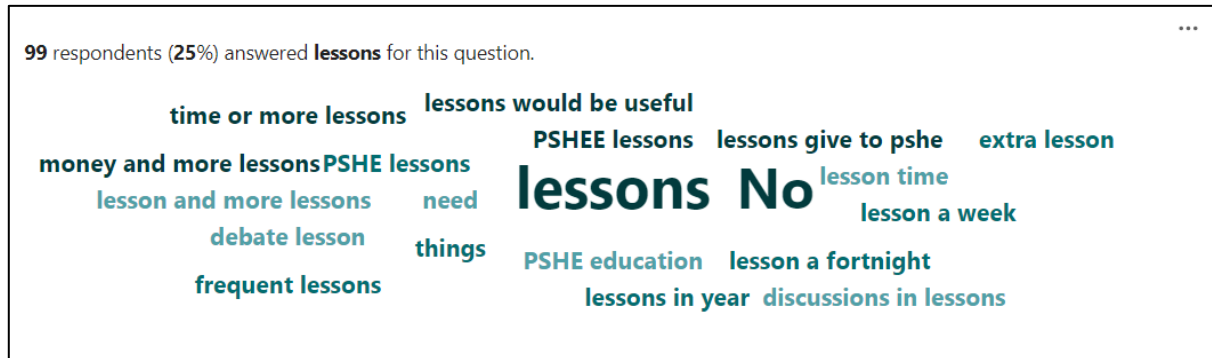
What do our pupils think of PSHEE?

When asked 'what's the best thing about PSHEE at QMGS?' our pupils from Y7-13 had the following to say:

- [It's] inclusive, explains pressing issues and allows us to express opinions, embraces individuality and allows us to be informed about the decisions we make.
- It's a safe space where we can have group discussions, and sometimes members of the class can provide new perspectives on a topic which we didn't see before.
- Unbiased information is given, acknowledging all different sides and not excluding anyone.
- We are able to discuss and ask questions freely without feeling uncomfortable.

- Learning a variety of different things for our age group which are suitable. Not being forced to share things about ourselves unless we want to. Being able to learn about others.
- Probably having a nice teacher who lets us share our views.
- The mature way in which the lessons are conducted. Both in subjects and the student voice and opinion. What we cover is also good, haven't covered actual relationships and topics such as breakups before, I actually found it quite helpful.
- The comfortable atmosphere produced where people can express their feelings without being judged.
- How engaging and interactive the lessons are, and how advice and guidance is given on a wide range of topical issues.

When asked 'what would improve PSHEE at QMGS?' the overwhelming response was 'more lessons', particularly from our pupils in Y7-11.



Our pupils want and need more opportunities to discuss their lives, their relationships, and the world around them. Please feel empowered to continue the conversation at home and reach out to the department if you would like any help or advice on how to do this.

Further information and support

E-mail Ms Morgan (head of department): k.morgan@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk

[Parents' Guide to RSE in Schools from the Family Planning Association](#)

[Sex Ed: What Parents and Carers Need to Know from Brook](#)

[Relationships, sex and health education guides for parents from gov.uk – available in multiple languages](#)

[QMGS Quality of Education Policy](#)