

# OAKMONT Education

## Policy

### Relationships and Sexuality Education

Ratification	
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## Introduction

Oakmont School has designed its school curriculum based on the framework of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021. This act sets out in legislation requirements that ensure all pupils aged 3-16 cover the same core learning in a context that is appropriate to them. The Act includes guidance on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

As RSE is a mandatory requirement of the Curriculum, and we have rolled out the Curriculum for Wales across the school, parents and carers can no longer apply to withdraw their child from any aspect of RSE. This means all of our learners will receive this education.

This policy aims to provide all members of our school community, pupils, staff, parents, carers and external agencies, with clear information and an understanding of how RSE will be planned for and delivered to, learners at Oakmont School.

## Principles and Values

In a world that is evolving and changing rapidly, we need to empower our learners to develop their sense of self, an understanding of what they value and their own reflective and critical thinking skills. These will help them navigate the range of often contradictory messages that they receive, on all aspects of life from relationships and sexuality to health. High quality RSE provision will support learners to critically engage with what they are learning and experiencing. When they formulate and understand their own values and beliefs, they become healthy confident individuals and ethically informed citizens who can advocate for respect and understanding of others.

High quality, holistic and inclusive RSE has been shown to have a range of positive and protective outcomes for all learners and therefore their communities. These outcomes include helping learners understand the differences and distinguish between healthy, safe relationships and abusive, unhealthy relationships. It helps learners make informed decisions about sexual intimacy and reproductive health. It helps reduce bullying, increases awareness, knowledge and understanding of gender-based and sexual violence and promotes equality and equity.

Oakmont school is an inclusive community. We take a whole school approach to delivering our curriculum and meeting the needs of all learners. We want everyone to feel heard and included. To this end all interested parties will be consulted on this policy and learner voice will influence RSE curriculum content as it does across the Areas of Learning and Experience.

Oakmont School recognises the importance of diversity and difference in society. Our RSE Curriculum will include learning that develops awareness and understanding of different identities, views and values. We will take a pluralistic approach to exploring the diversity that exists in relationships, sex, gender and sexuality including LGBTQ+ lives. A pluralistic approach means that a *range* of factual information and a *range* of views on a given subject will be provided without bias. We will explore how diversity is a source of strength and is foundational to a cohesive, fair and equitable society. Our curriculum should be a reflection of the different beliefs and values we find in society today. This helps ensure that all learners can see themselves, their families, their communities and each other reflected across the curriculum.

All topics will be explored sensitively and through a rights-based approach. Pupils at Oakmont School understand they have rights as protected by United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Understanding their own rights is a gateway to understanding that others have rights that need to be respected too and is the foundation of developing healthy relationships.

It must be noted that this RSE policy is complemented by other school policies such as but not limited to, Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, E-Safety, Equal Opportunities and Community Values.

## Curriculum Design and Content

The new RSE Code has three broad and interlinking learning strands which are:

- Relationships and identity
- Sexual health and well-being
- Empowerment, safety and respect

Within each strand there are three Phases of learning.

- Phase 1 has content deemed suitable for learners from age 3.
- Phase 2 has content deemed suitable for learners from age 7.
- Phase 3 has content deemed suitable for learners from age 11.

As outlined earlier, RSE must be delivered at the appropriate *developmental* level of the learner, not their chronological or actual age. This means that when planning delivery of the curriculum, we must take account of a range of factors including the learner's age, knowledge and maturity, any additional learning needs and we should anticipate their physiological and emotional or social development. Learners of a similar age may have needs that vary greatly and this will inform the Phase of learning that they engage with.

Each Phase develops and builds upon the work covered in the previous phase. Learners will consolidate and strengthen the knowledge, skills and dispositions covered and apply them in new and relevant contexts. Learning will be deepened and broadened as the learners progress through the school.

### **Relationships and Identity**

This strand focuses on:

- The range of relationships that human beings have throughout their lives
- How identity can be shaped by our relationships and sexuality
- The importance of human rights in securing healthy, safe and fulfilling relationships in an inclusive society

### **Sexual health and well-being**

This strand focuses on:

- Learning about how living things grow, reproduce and have a lifecycle
- Developing an understanding of the human body, including people's feelings about their bodies and how these can be represented
- The health issues related to relationships and sexuality
- An understanding of how sexuality and sexual health affects our well-being

### **Empowerment, safety and respect**

This strand focuses on:

- Learners' rights to safety and protection, freedom from harm and discrimination
- How and where to seek information, help and support
- How to support and advocate for the rights, fair treatment and respect for all

The complete content guidance for each strand can be found in Appendix 1.

## **Curriculum Delivery**

The RSE Code has content that aligns very closely with our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum, but while complimentary and overlapping it is a more complex, broad interdisciplinary subject. RSE will therefore be embedded across the whole school curriculum, moving beyond PSHE into areas such as Science, Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) and Humanities.

Whilst the school has a designated RSE lead teacher, it is everyone's responsibility to deliver RSE. High quality professional development for all staff will support an effective whole school approach to delivering RSE. Staff skills and knowledge in RSE will be regularly audited and from this continuous professional development will be facilitated. All staff will be supported in developing their confidence, knowledge and skills in RSE.

The values and concepts delivered through the curriculum will be reinforced by the culture of the school, both through our work on children's rights, our modelling of respectful communication and our intrinsic school values. Everyone is welcome in our community, everyone is valued and has a contribution to make, diversity is a strength.

Positive, protective and preventative RSE requires lessons to be both opportunities for acquiring knowledge and exploring ideas and asking questions. We will create a safe learning environment for this by establishing clear ground rules which will be developed within each class and revisited frequently and amended as necessary.

Ground rules help to minimise inappropriate and unintended disclosures and comments of a negative nature made towards other pupils; whether intentional or not. They are also paramount to effectively managing discussions that might elicit strong opinions from pupils, especially when there is high profile media coverage of abuse, harassment or other sensitive topics. Examples of ground rules might include:

- We will be open and honest, but not discuss directly our own or others' personal/private lives.
- We will discuss examples but will not use names or descriptions which could identify anyone.
- We feel safe discussing issues and we know that our teacher will not repeat what is said in the classroom unless they are concerned we are at risk, in which case they will follow the school's safeguarding policy.
- It is okay for us to disagree with another person's point of view but we will not judge, make fun of, or put anybody down. We will 'challenge the opinion, not the person'.

#### Dealing with Sensitive Questions

All classes will have a questions box available, within which pupils can anonymously place questions they would like answered. Teachers will do their best to provide factual developmentally appropriate answers to all valid questions while maintaining professional boundaries. Staff will not disclose personal information.

If questions are asked that are of a sensitive nature, there may be times that it is not appropriate to answer in a classroom situation. The teacher may advise that the pupils ask another adult, for example their parent or carer.

Where the child is known and is willing, the teacher will inform the parent or carer in advance that this question has arisen so that it can be followed up at home. A teacher may check in with the child at a later date, to inquire whether the issue has been dealt with.

If a teacher does not know the answer to a question they can reassure the class that they will find out and return to it later when they have.

Sometimes an individual learner may ask an explicit or inappropriate question. If this situation arises, the learner will be reminded of the class ground rules. The teacher will always encourage pupils to use the correct biological terminology. If a question feels inappropriate for a learner, or for the whole class or raises concerns, the teacher will acknowledge the question and reassure the learner that they will attend to it after the lesson on an individual basis. In this way, the learner will feel they have been treated with respect, but inappropriate information will not be shared with the rest of the class.

#### The Role of Parents

At Oakmont School we pride ourselves on building positive relationships with parents and carers and communicating effectively across all areas concerning their child. This includes the curriculum. We are aware that RSE by its nature can be a sensitive area. We respect that parents and carers are the first teachers and key people in teaching their children about sex and relationships and maintaining the culture and ethos of the family. As a result, we see RSE as a shared responsibility between home and school. We endeavour to keep parents and carers informed about this RSE Policy, the RSE Curriculum, and any resources we may use. The resources we choose will be relevant, reputable, developmentally appropriate, inclusive and sensitive to our learner's needs. Class teachers will also inform parents and carers if their child has shown particular interest in or concern about any aspects of the RSE curriculum so that topics can be explored and discussion continued at home.

At the start of each half term, our learners take home a Curriculum Overview. This outlines the Areas of Learning and Experience, and cross-curricular themes and skills themes that learners will cover. We encourage parents and carers to contact the class teacher if they have any questions or concerns about the content or how it might be covered in class. We welcome and provide opportunities for parents and carers to explore the resources we plan to use in school and to offer feedback on the curriculum and its impact on their child. In situations where parents and carers have spoken with the class teacher and remain unhappy with elements of the RSE Curriculum that are to be covered, they should contact the Head Teacher, or follow the Complaints Policy for Oakmont School

#### Visiting Speakers

It can enhance the delivery of the curriculum and be very enjoyable for learners to invite guest speakers or external agencies into school. These visitors will always be authorised by the Head Teacher or Director of Education. Any visitors will be made aware of the developmental age of the class and any additional learning needs that might be present before meeting learners to ensure that the content and its mode of delivery is appropriate for the intended class. They will be made aware of the policies of the school and the teaching staff will always be present throughout any visit. Pupils will always be appropriately informed and prepared in advance of any visitors to the school.

## Inclusion and Equality in RSE

This RSE Policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against learners on the basis of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the *protected characteristics*). Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage.

RSE is not only classroom based. It will be embodied in the culture of the school community. We are an inclusive school where everyone is valued and we foster respectful communication between each member.

Our RSE curriculum supports learners to be able to build their knowledge and understanding of how to recognise harmful sexual behaviours, discrimination, abusive relationships, and violence and develop an understanding of consent. This empowers them both to look after themselves and maintain boundaries and should discourage acts of intolerance or harm against their peers.

Any incidents of bullying are taken seriously and staff will work with all parties including parents and carers to deal with any incidents.

Any incidents of peer-on-peer sexual harassment are taken very seriously. This includes providing learners with assurance that school staff will take every incidence of peer-on-peer sexual harassment seriously and work in partnership with the learners, parents/carers, and external agencies where appropriate to deal with any incidents.

E-safety and cyber bullying incidents, whether in or out of school hours are taken very seriously and we will work with all parties including parents and carers to deal with any incidents.

The whole school approach to RSE ensures that a preventative and proactive approach is adopted to tackle such issues. We will signpost learners and families to outside support agencies where required.

Our school fully supports the Welsh Government Period Dignity Strategy Action Plan, which aims to end the stigma and shame associated with periods. We support the plan in a number of ways. We provide free period products including those that are environmentally friendly, that learners can access and we send out regular reminders to families about this. We ensure that learners have a safe suitable environment for changing products, and that sanitary bins are available in order to dispose of sanitary products safely. We ensure robust coverage of the menstrual cycle and periods as part of our RSE, PSHE and Science curricula.

## Safeguarding

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Learners may disclose information to school staff that cannot remain confidential. All Oakmont School staff are trained and confident in Safeguarding procedures and these are clearly outlined in the Schools Safeguarding Policy. The policy complies with The Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019 and Keeping Learners Safe 2022.

If any staff member is concerned regarding a disclosure from a learner, they will always inform the learner that they are going to pass the information on. They will then follow school policy by speaking with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If the DSL is not available they will inform the Deputy DSL.

## Links with other policies

Safeguarding

RVE

Community values

Anti bullying

Curriculum

Equality, diversity and inclusion

## Monitoring

The RSE policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the PSHE coordinator and Senior Leadership Team to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in meeting the needs of pupils. This will involve:

Pupil feedback will be gathered through regular surveys, focus groups, and discussions in RSE lessons. This feedback will be used to identify areas where improvements can be made to the RSE curriculum or delivery.

Staff feedback will be gathered through regular meetings, training sessions, and performance reviews. This feedback will be used to identify areas where improvements can be made to staff training, resources, or support.

Any incidents related to RSE, such as safeguarding concerns or incidents of bullying, will be recorded and reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This information will be used to identify any gaps or weaknesses in the RSE policy or delivery.

