



# WILDS LODGE SCHOOL

## **Sex and Relationship Education Policy**

**Date of issue: September 2023**

**Review Cycle: Annual**

**Next Review Date: September 2024**

Wilds Lodge School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Wilds Lodge School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

The school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not

- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR
- Peninsula BusinessSafe (Health and Safety)
- Atlantic Data (DBS)
- Educare (online CPD)

Wilds Lodge School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Wilds Lodge School.

The policy documents of Wilds Lodge School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

## **Introduction**

Given the increasing concerns around child sexual abuse and exploitation and the growing risks associated with growing up in a digital world, there is a need to act in relation to pupil safety. The Government has developed a comprehensive strategy to change this situation and RSE for pupils in all key stages is seen, alongside other initiatives, as a key element, with a view to this becoming compulsory in secondary schools by September 2020. Research has shown that young people who feel good about themselves, and are knowledgeable and confident about relationships and sex, are more likely to be discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviours and to have more fulfilling personal relationships.

Wilds Lodge approach to RSE is in line with the Government's present strategy and guidance. It is acknowledged that *'effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives.'* However, the school cannot provide RSE in isolation. It is necessary to work in partnership with the Sex Education Forum, external agencies, and parents and carers in order to deliver an effective programme. Wilds Lodge school was registered as an 'Early adopter' in 2019 and will be a positive voice for the reforms and beginning the journey to full implementation of the new legislation and guidance in 2020.

Many of the students at Wilds Lodge have had difficult and traumatic experiences. Therefore it is essential that the school provide a safe and secure environment in which children and young people can learn about what is appropriate and acceptable in their personal lives and behaviour.

According to DFE advice, the aim of RSE is:

*'to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It ensures that pupils are taught the knowledge and life skills they will need to stay safe and develop healthy and supportive relationships, particularly dealing with the challenges of growing up in an online world.'*

### **Responsibilities**

Wild's Lodge approach to RSE actively involves the whole school community.

- **School Leadership Team**

The SLT will aim to support the provision and development of RSE in line with this policy by providing leadership and adequate resources.

- **PSHE/RSE Coordinator**

The designated PSHE/RSE co-ordinator will maintain an overview of the PSHE/RSE provision and have overall responsibility for its development. This will include keeping up to date with developments and good practice, developing the provision to meet the needs of pupils, providing support and resources for staff, arranging staff training, liaison with outside agencies and monitoring and evaluation.

- **Teaching Staff**

All teachers are involved in the school's RSE provision. It is taught through the PHSE programme and some through science and other curriculum areas. All teachers have an important pastoral role by offering support to students. They will be consulted about the school's approach to RSE and aided in their work by provision of resources, background information, support and advice from experienced members of staff and access to appropriate training.

- **Non-Teaching Staff**

Non-teaching staff may be involved in a supportive role in some RSE lessons and will also play an important, informal pastoral support role with students. They will have access to information about the RSE programme and supported in their pastoral role.

- **Therapists and school nurse**

The therapy staff and school nurse play a key role in supporting the teaching of RSE in terms of advice for all staff, input into lessons, provision of pastoral support for pupils and resources.

- **Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers have a legal right to view this policy and to have information about the school's RSE provision. They also have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated sex education lessons if they wish. The school will seek to take into account the views of parents and carers and will seek to work closely with them.

- **Students**

Students have an entitlement to age and circumstance RSE and to pastoral support. They will be actively consulted about their RSE needs and their views will be central to developing the provision.

### **The Aims of the RSE Provision**

The aims of RSE are to develop knowledge and understanding, attitudes and values, and personal and social skills.

### **Knowledge and understanding**

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.

- o Understanding human sexuality, sexual health, emotions, and relationships.

### **Attitudes and Values**

- o Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.
- o Learning the value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- o Learning the value of respect, love, and care.
- o Exploring, considering, and understanding moral dilemmas.
- o Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.
- o Developing the necessary knowledge and skills to live in a diverse society.

### **Personal and Social Skills**

- o Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- o Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- o Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.
- o Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- o Managing conflict.
- o Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.
- o Learning to navigate the online environment safely and effectively, with the knowledge of where to get support if necessary.

### **The RSE Framework**

The approach we have determined at Wilds Lodge has been shaped after much discussion. The current programme of study draws on materials produced by the PSHE association including the supplementary advice 'sex and relationships education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century'.

RSE will be conducted within a clear morals and values framework based on the following principles:

- The value of stable and loving relationships.
- The respect, understanding and empathy towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, sexuality, genders, feelings and views.
- The development of relationships, including sexual relationships, based on mutual consent, rather than coercion.

- The right not to be abused or be taken advantage of by other people.
- The right of people to follow their own sexuality, within legal parameters.
- The potential danger of online content and the laws surrounding this.

The relationship and sex education programme acknowledges that pupils mature at their own speed. We therefore aim to ensure that RSE is not only age appropriate but also stage appropriate. Individual plans will be developed, delivered and monitored following their individual developmental and physical stages to build their knowledge and life skills over time. Relationship and sex education is cross-curricular and it will therefore form part of the wider curriculum, including personal health and wellbeing, which aims to influence the development of self-awareness, gender and sexuality throughout the school life.

The topic areas covered in RSE are carefully designed to safeguard and support our pupils. RSE inevitably involves the consideration of a number of sensitive issues about which different people may hold strong and varying opinions. As adults working with often vulnerable children, we aim to give a balanced view, and take account of, and be sensitive to different perspectives. We try to inform rather than indoctrinate and some of the ways in which we do this include:

- The taught National Curriculum *Science* Programme of study
- RSE modules within each Key Stage delivered within a planned PHSE programme
- Pastoral and therapy support for students who experience difficulties
- Provision of appropriate information through leaflets, books, and the display of posters.

### **The right to withdraw**

Starting in September 2020 parents will not be able to withdraw their child from any aspect of Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents will be able to withdraw their child (following discussion with the school) from *any or all aspects of Sex Education*, other than those which are part of the science curriculum, *up to and until three terms before the age of 16*. After that point, the guidance states that *'if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.'*

Wilds Lodge staff will work in active partnership with parents and carers, value their views, and keep them informed about our RSE provision. If a parent or carer has any concerns, every effort will be made to address the issues as quickly as possible.

## **Inclusion**

*'Mainstream schools and special schools have a duty to ensure that children with special educational needs and learning difficulties are properly included in sex and relationship education. Sex and relationship education should help all students understand their physical and emotional development and enable them to make positive decisions in their lives.'*

DfEE RSE Guidance (2000)

Young people have varying needs regarding RSE depending on their circumstances and background. At Wilds Lodge, we aim to give all our students access to RSE that is relevant to their particular needs. In order to do this we aim to take into account the following:

- **Gender**

Sex and relationships education takes place within mixed sex and gender classes. We recognise that where topics are of a more sensitive nature, it may be deemed necessary to separate genders or deliver the content individually. Pupil's views will always be sought before delivering an RSE lesson to ensure that they feel safe and supported. We aim to foster healthy and respectful peer- to-peer communication and behaviour between genders, and provide an environment, which challenges perceived limits on children based on their gender or any other characteristic, including through these subjects and as part of a whole-school approach.

- **Ethnic and cultural diversity**

Different ethnic and cultural groups may have varying attitudes to RSE. The school pays close attention to the advice of parents and carers about the needs of their children to ensure that RSE is appropriate, while still being consistent with the requirements of the Equality Act.

- **Varying home backgrounds**

The staff at Wilds Lodge recognise that students come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. Special care is taken to ensure that no child or young person is adversely treated because of their home circumstances.

- **LGBT**

For every young person to be prepared for life in modern Britain, it's vital that their curriculum reflects the full diversity of the world they live in. On average,

about 5% of Wilds Lodge students will go on to define themselves as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender. The 2017 *School Report* published by Stonewall found that pupils who are taught positively about LGBT issues are much more likely to feel welcome, included and able to be themselves at school than those who aren't. Students may also have parents and carers, or other family members and friends who define themselves in this way. Delivering an LGBT-inclusive curriculum ensures that those pupils with same-sex parents, or with LGBT family or friends, see the people they know and love included in what they learn at school. Our approach must be an honest and balanced consideration of LGBT. We must actively tackle any homophobic or transphobic bullying (please see Wilds Lodge anti-bullying policy for further detail).

- **Special Educational Needs**

Some of our pupils have learning or emotional difficulties that result in particular RSE needs.

- **The teaching programme for Sex and Relationship Education.**

Wilds Lodge intends that all students receive a programme of RSE at a level that is appropriate for their age, and emotional and cognitive development. RSE is appropriately differentiated to allow all pupils access depending on their individual needs. Where necessary, advice is sought from specialists within the school (SALT, OT, EP) to support learning.

There are some pupils at Wilds Lodge who may have experienced trauma or incidents of abuse. Staff delivering RSE should be aware that some of the topics discussed could trigger traumatic memories. Safeguards will be in place so that pupils will have access to key people in school including therapists to ensure they can discuss any issues that may arise and receive appropriate emotional support.

In addition, teachers need to be aware that effective relationship and sex education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. Child protection procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made.

- **Contraceptive advice to older students**

Older students will be taught, in the context of sexual intimacy and safer sex, that intercourse should always involve using a condom. Questions about different forms of contraception will be answered accurately and honestly within the student's ability to understand. If further personal advice about contraceptive use is needed, counseling and support will be sought from appropriate agencies and personnel.



Our school also offers the C Card scheme, in association with Leicestershire Sexual Health Services, for students aged 14 and above.

### **The Taught RSE Programme**

The RSE program will be delivered as part of the school's approach to PSHE.

The overall aims of the RSE programme are:

- o To provide accurate information about, and understanding of, RSE issues.
- o To dispel myths
- o To explore a range of attitudes towards RSE issues and to help students to reach their own informed views and choices for a healthier lifestyle.
- o To develop respect and care for others.
- o To increase students' self-esteem.
- o To develop skills relevant to effective management of relationships and sexual situations. Examples include communication with and empathy towards others, risk assessment, assertiveness, consent, conflict management, decision making, seeking help and helping others.
- o To contribute to a reduction in local and national pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection and abortion rates.

The main RSE programme will be taught through PSHE lessons. In addition, certain biological aspects will be delivered through Science lessons and other aspects of RSE arise across the curriculum through our values based education. The intention of the curriculum is to explore issues in greater depth as students mature so that they are able to form their own informed opinions but also respect that others may have different viewpoints.

### **Methodology and Resources**

Active learning methods which involve the students' full participation will be used. This includes use of quizzes, case studies, research, role play, video, small group discussion and use of appropriate guest speakers.

PSHE takes place through a combined curriculum with Drama in KS3 to enable learners to tackle sensitive subjects in an innovative and diverse way.

RSE takes place with consistent and familiar teachers in a safe learning environment. Teaching resources are selected on the basis of their appropriateness to students.

As a residential school, there is always information available about such things as national children's helplines and peer support schemes. We ensure that all of our pupils are aware of external support they can receive including the independent listener.

### **Ground rules and distancing techniques.**

Professional staff are careful to ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes do not influence the teaching of relationships and sex education. There are clear parameters as to what will be taught in whole class settings and what will be taught on an individual basis.

- o No one (staff or student) should be expected to answer a personal question.
- o No one will be made to take part in a discussion.
- o Only the correct names for body parts will be used.
- o The meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way.

### **Answering difficult questions**

Sometimes an individual student will ask an explicit or difficult question in either the house or the class setting. Questions do not have to be answered and can be addressed later. Staff must use their skill and discretion in these situations.

### **Dealing with questions**

Teachers and care staff are expected to establish clear boundaries about what is appropriate and what is inappropriate in a class or house context.

For example:

- o Staff should set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensuring that students discuss issues in a way that does not encourage giggling and silliness.
- o Students should be encouraged to write down questions and give them in anonymously. The member of staff can then prepare a response, and will choose not to respond to any questions that are inappropriate.
- o If a verbal question is too personal, the student should be reminded of the ground rules.
- o If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a student, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher

should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis.

- o Staff should not be drawn into providing more information than is appropriate to the age of the student.
- o Students must not be given the impression that teenagers inevitably have sex, the view that sex should be between two people who are mature enough to make informed decisions should be emphasised.
- o If a member of staff is concerned that a student is at risk of sexual abuse, the Principal should be informed and the school's Safeguarding procedures followed.

### **Pastoral and Therapy Support**

The school takes its role in the promotion of student welfare extremely seriously. Experience has shown that they will talk about their concerns and problems to people they feel that they can trust and they feel comfortable with. It is essential that all staff at Wilds Lodge know how to respond sensitively to a child or young person's concerns, who to approach for advice about them, and the importance of not guaranteeing complete confidentiality.

Staff will endeavour to make themselves approachable and to provide caring and sensitive support for students in a number of ways. Staff may be approached for help on an individual basis. They will offer a listening ear and, where appropriate, information and advice. All staff must be familiar with the guidance contained within the school's Safeguarding policy.

Our therapists also offer an important support service, and where necessary, students can be referred to them.

### **Confidentiality and informing parents and carers.**

We are aware that some parents find it hard to cope with their child's sexual development and are happy for the school to take the initiative. We have a responsibility to inform and involve them by:

- Making Wilds Lodges' commitment clear in the school prospectus.
- Inviting parents and carers to discuss RSE when their child enters school.
- Discussing consistent approaches for students to be used at home and school.

- Inviting parents and carers to see the resources and to have an explanation of their use.

The staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a student for help. This has to be made explicit to students and Safeguarding procedures must be followed when any disclosures about abuse are made.

Where it is clear that a student would benefit from the involvement of a third party, the consent of the young person should be sought. If appropriate, the member of staff might inform the third party together with the student. Unless clearly inappropriate, students will always be encouraged to talk to their parent or carer.

### **Dealing with Bullying**

Bullying often includes inappropriate and hurtful comments and behaviours concerning sexism, homophobia, transphobia, appearance and other relationship and sex issues. The school takes the issue very seriously as set out in the Anti-Bullying policy. Staff will challenge and deal sensitively with any evidence of bullying. Students will be encouraged to report incidents, which will be investigated as soon as possible.

The RSE and PHSE programmes will consider bullying and aim to discourage bullying based on sexism, homophobia, appearance and other sex/relationship issues. A curriculum that acknowledges and celebrates diversity of all kinds will make it easier for pupils to understand why discriminating against someone because of who they are is unacceptable. It will also help address any misconceptions or stereotypes that pupils have about LGBT people. It is important that any form of harassment or hurtful comments of a sexual nature are seen in the context of the school's anti-bullying policy.