

## **Secondary: Relationships, Sex and Health Education (overview)**

### **Information for parents**

At Oakhill, Relationships and Sex Education forms part of our wider PSHE programme. It builds upon the knowledge and skills pupils have developed during primary school and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and challenges of adolescence and adult life.

Teaching is age-appropriate, factual and carefully sequenced. It reflects Oakhill's Catholic ethos while ensuring pupils understand the law, respect different people and beliefs, and are equipped to make safe, informed and ethical decisions.

### **Families and relationships**

By the end of secondary school, pupils will have learned about:

- Different types of committed and stable relationships.
- Marriage, civil partnerships and the legal rights and responsibilities attached to them.
- The qualities of positive relationships, including trust, honesty, kindness, respect, loyalty and appropriate boundaries.
- Self-esteem, independence and developing a positive relationship with oneself.
- Communicating respectfully, managing conflict and ending relationships kindly.
- Recognising unhealthy, controlling, coercive or abusive relationships.
- The importance of consent and the fact that ethical behaviour also involves kindness, care and consideration for others.
- How inequalities of power and stereotypes can affect relationships.
- Equality, protected characteristics and treating others with dignity and respect.

### **Online relationships and safety**

Pupils learn about:

- Rights, responsibilities and appropriate behaviour online.
- Protecting personal information and using privacy and location settings.
- Fake accounts, misleading information and AI-generated material.
- The risks of sharing personal or intimate images.
- The law relating to sexual images, including AI-generated images and deepfakes.
- Grooming, sextortion, scams and other forms of online exploitation.
- Online bullying, harassment, stalking and controlling behaviour.
- The effects of pornography on attitudes, expectations and behaviour.
- How algorithms, influencers and online groups can promote harmful or prejudiced ideas.
- How to report concerns and seek help without fear of being blamed.

## **Being safe**

Teaching covers:

- Recognising, communicating and respecting consent and personal boundaries.
- Resisting pressure and avoiding putting pressure on others.
- Sexual harassment, sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour.
- Domestic abuse, controlling and coercive behaviour, stalking and exploitation.
- Forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other illegal and harmful practices.
- Personal safety in public places and increasingly independent situations.
- Grooming, criminal exploitation, violence and knife crime.
- How and where to report concerns and access appropriate support.

Pupils are taught clearly that abuse or harassment is never the fault of the person experiencing it.

## **Intimate and sexual relationships**

Age-appropriate teaching includes:

- The law relating to the age of consent.
- The right to give, withhold or withdraw consent.
- The fact that people can have fulfilling romantic relationships without sexual activity.
- The emotional and physical consequences of decisions about sex and relationships.
- Contraceptive choices and their effectiveness.
- Sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and how risks can be reduced.
- Pregnancy and legally available choices, presented in a medically accurate and impartial way.
- The effect of alcohol and drugs on decision-making and risk.
- Accessing reliable and confidential advice and health services.
- Recognising misinformation and finding medically accurate information.

## **Health and wellbeing**

Through PSHE and the wider curriculum, pupils learn about:

- Recognising and talking about emotions and mental health.
- Anxiety, depression, loneliness and knowing when to seek support.
- Coping strategies and overcoming barriers to enjoyable and rewarding activities.
- The links between physical activity, sleep, relationships and mental wellbeing.
- Body image, online comparison and the effects of social media.
- Healthy eating, physical fitness and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

- Alcohol, illegal drugs, smoking, vaping and nicotine products.
- Gambling and its possible financial and mental health consequences.
- Personal hygiene, infection, vaccination and antimicrobial resistance.
- Accessing GPs, pharmacists, emergency care and other health services.
- Medical consent and Gillick competence.
- Puberty, adolescent brain development, menstruation, reproductive health, fertility and menopause.
- Basic first aid, CPR and the use of defibrillators.

Specialist subjects such as self-harm, eating disorders and suicide prevention will only be approached in a safe, sensitive and age-appropriate way, supported by suitable professional advice and staff training.

### **Parents' right to request withdrawal**

Parents may request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of RSE.

Before reaching a decision, the Principal will meet with the parent to discuss:

- The nature and purpose of the teaching.
- The parent's reasons for making the request.
- The educational, social or emotional effects of withdrawal.
- The alternative education that would be provided.

Requests will normally be granted, although they may be refused in exceptional circumstances, including where there are safeguarding concerns or particular vulnerabilities.

From three terms before a pupil turns 16, the pupil may choose to receive sex education even if a parent has previously requested withdrawal.

There is no right to withdraw a pupil from:

- Relationships Education;
- health and wellbeing or wider PSHE teaching; or
- content taught through the science curriculum.

### **Working with parents**

We believe that openness and cooperation with parents are essential. Parents will be made aware of sensitive sex education content in advance and may ask to see the teaching materials used within the RSE programme.

Materials will be made available subject to appropriate copyright arrangements. Parents are warmly encouraged to contact the school if they would like further information or wish to discuss any aspect of the programme.