



WELSHPOOL HIGH SCHOOL

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

DATE REVIEWED: March 2023

DATE FOR REVIEW: March 2024

SIGNED _____
Chair of Governing Body

15/06/2023
Date: _____

SIGNED _____
Headteacher

15/06/2023
Date: _____

This Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy has been written in line with Welsh Government (WG) Statutory Guidance, the RSE Code and Legislative Summary.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this RSE Policy is to provide all stakeholders (pupils, staff, parents/carers, governors, and external organisations) at Welshpool High School with information about our Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) provision.

High quality RSE allows for all pupils to grow and develop in a safe environment to understand how to become healthy adults who are able to be critical thinkers, whilst developing positive and healthy relationships with others. It is important that pupils are able to explore, develop and nurture positive attitudes towards equality, gender diversity and respectful relationships, and this RSE Policy supports wider approaches to preventing violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence ([VAWDASV](#)), harmful sexual behaviours, and [peer-on-peer harassment](#) and abuse.

As the world around us evolves at a rapid and significant rate, we will uphold pupils rights under the [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) to education (Article 28) which prepares them to understand others (Article 29) through an inclusive, holistic, evidence-based and participative RSE Curriculum.

Welshpool High School fully complies with the legal statutory duty stated in the RSE Code from Welsh Government, and the [Equalities Act 2010](#).

2. Legislation on RSE and the Equalities Act (2010)

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the new Curriculum for Wales framework and is mandatory for all pupils.

The [RSE Code](#) is issued in legislation under Section 8 of the Curriculum and Assessments (Wales) Act 2021, and clearly states the legal mandatory requirements for RSE which schools and education provisions have to deliver. Key points are:

- RSE is mandatory for all pupils from ages 3 to 16 in Wales.
- Parents/carers are no longer allowed to withdraw their child/young person from RSE.
- Schools will design their own RSE Curriculum, but the content has to be set within the context of these broad and interlinked learning strands:
 - Relationships and identity
 - Sexual health and well-being
 - Empowerment, safety and respect
- The RSE Curriculum must be developmentally appropriate for pupils. This means schools and settings must take account of a range of factors including the pupil's age; knowledge and maturity; any additional learning needs and anticipating their physiological and emotional development. Learning within the RSE Curriculum is to be linked to the following phases:
 - **Phase 1:** from age 3
 - **Phase 2:** from age 7
 - **Phase 3:** from age 11

This [link](#) outlines the learning expected in each phase.

- The RSE Curriculum must include learning that develops pupils' awareness and understanding of different identities, views and values and a diversity of relationships, gender and sexuality, including LGBTQ+ lives.

The [RSE Statutory Guidance](#) (2022) is published under Section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and is designed to assist those responsible, as stated in the RSE Code, to design the RSE Curriculum for their school/education provision.

This RSE Policy aligns with the [Equality Act 2010](#). Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils 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/education provision must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage.

Welshpool High School recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within our community and between pupils, parents, staff, governors and partners.

3. Related Policies

Those with responsibility for RSE at Welshpool High School are aware and adhere to relevant school policies which complement RSE. These include:

- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding
- Anti-bullying (including procedures for dealing with homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying)
- Substance Misuse
- Equality
- Acceptable Use

4. Responsibility for RSE

In line with a Whole-School Approach, RSE is everyone's responsibility at Welshpool High School. However, the Governing Body, Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, and Pastoral Team have specific roles to ensure the successful implementation of RSE and a safe environment for all pupils.

5. Monitoring and Evaluating RSE

RSE Policy implementation will be monitored by the Headteacher and Governing Body, and should be reviewed and up-dated annually in line with the local authority safeguarding audit.

When the RSE Policy is reviewed, all stakeholders should be consulted to ensure it is effective and meeting statutory requirements.

The RSE Curriculum will be monitored and evaluated annually to ensure that it remains relevant, up to date and is meeting the needs of all pupils.

6. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

The RSE curriculum at Welshpool High School supports pupils to be able to develop their knowledge, awareness and understanding on how to recognise discriminatory behaviours, harmful sexual behaviours, unhealthy and abusive/violent relationships, whilst ensuring that all pupils develop an understanding of what consent is.

It is important that all school staff receive the appropriate Safeguarding Training and understand that they have a duty to follow the Safeguarding policy at Welshpool High School which will follow Powys LEA protocol if there is suspicion that a pupil may have suffered or be at risk of suffering significant harm.

Good quality RSE delivered in an inclusive and safe environment could lead to an increase in disclosures from pupils. It is important that pupils are sensitively informed that school staff cannot guarantee confidentiality if they disclose anything to them, as staff have a duty to care for them and to report anything which causes concern. It is important that pupils are supported adequately by an appropriate member of staff.

If a Safeguarding concern is suspected or identified, staff must ensure that they immediately notify the School's Designated Safeguarding Person, or the Deputy DSP in their absence, whom will be responsible for taking the appropriate action. It is never the responsibility of staff to disclose pupils' sexual orientation or gender identity to others without their permission. Where appropriate, safeguarding leads or pastoral staff may liaise with a range of agencies as part of this safeguarding process, or signpost pupils accordingly.

It is recognised by Estyn that [peer-on-peer sexual harassment](#) is highly prevalent in the lives of young pupils and the whole school approach to RSE at Welshpool High School ensures that a preventative and proactive approach is adopted to tackle the issue.

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

In order to create an inclusive and safe learning environment for pupils throughout their RSE Curriculum, school staff will receive regular, high quality professional learning opportunities. This will ensure that staff feel prepared and able to support pupils on topics like relationships, consent, sexuality, the law, diversity, gender transitioning, and harmful sexual behaviours.

7. What does Good Quality RSE look like?

Good quality RSE is protective, preventative and underpinned by a needs led, rights based approach which takes a positive view of human sexuality and relationships.

Good quality RSE should also:

- Provide developmentally appropriate, accurate facts.
- Use correct biological terminology during RSE lessons.
- Promote a safe, positive, open and honest learning culture free from stigma, shame, fear and guilt which is positively inclusive, respectful and safe for all pupils.
- Promote a critical awareness of the different attitudes and values in relation to RSE.
- Empower pupils to make responsible, well-informed decisions and to be able to understand themselves and others.
- Challenge harmful stereotypes and perceptions, including gender norms.

- Provide access to developmentally appropriate, objective, supportive and inclusive information about growing up, body changes, healthy relationships, reproductive and sexual health.
- Provide developmentally appropriate information on where pupils can access help and support services in relation to RSE.
- Be coproduced by the school community, including input from relevant stakeholders who support its delivery.
- Be developmentally appropriate. [RSE Code Phases](#).

The RSE Curriculum at Welshpool High School assists pupils in forming and maintaining a range of relationships, all based on mutual trust and respect. This is the foundation of RSE at our school/education provision.

8. The RSE Curriculum and how it will be Implemented

Welshpool High School seeks to provide a high quality RSE Curriculum which is inclusive, factually correct, and encourages pupils to critically engage with the material taught to them. The RSE Curriculum will be taught using cross-cutting themes within the [Areas of Learning Experience \(AoLE\)](#) inside and outside of lessons, using teaching strategies and techniques according to the pupils needs. This means that RSE will not only be delivered through Health and Wellbeing but through all AoLE's.

As the school introduces the new Curriculum for Wales, RSE will also be taught through Personal and Social Education (PSE), Tutor time activities, assemblies, external speakers, visits, etc.

The RSE Curriculum should be based on three strands outlined in the RSE Code:

- **Relationships and identity:** helping pupils develop the skills they need to develop healthy, safe, and fulfilling relationships with others and helping them to make sense of their thoughts and feelings.
- **Sexual health and well-being:** helping pupils to draw on factual sources regarding their sexual and reproductive health and well-being, allowing them to make informed decisions throughout their lives.
- **Empowerment, safety and respect:** helping to protect pupils from all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect and enabling them to recognise unsafe or harmful relationships and situations, supporting them to recognise when, how and where to seek support and advice.

If staff are asked questions by pupils during RSE lessons (which may be of a sensitive nature) they should never disclose their personal experiences, and they are to use their professional judgement in providing answers which are age and stage appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupil or of other pupils who may be listening.

9. RSE for Pupils with Additional Learning Needs

The RSE Curriculum must be provided for all pupils, including those with additional learning needs. Staff at Welshpool High School must consider how best to meet the needs of individual pupils whose additional needs mean that their understanding of sexual health and well-being may not match their chronological age. Pupils with more severe needs can be very vulnerable so teachers have a responsibility to include elements of the RSE curriculum within the provision from a very young age in order to ensure that they have an understanding of 'stranger danger' and 'private and public touch' by the time they reach puberty.

All staff must be aware of the school's approach to RSE when working with pupils with additional learning needs.

10. RSE for Disadvantaged Pupils

The RSE Curriculum must demonstrate equitable practice and be available to all pupils, regardless of personal or social circumstances. Equitable schools and provisions will recognise and understand that advantages and barriers exist in education, acknowledge each pupil experiences education differently, and will work hard to correct any educational imbalance.

To that end, it is essential schools ensure each pupil has equal opportunity to engage with the RSE curriculum. At times, it may be beneficial to repeat sessions or offer opportunities for further discussion. Teachers and school staff, in this situation, may need to offer ongoing support. In more complex cases, schools should consider whether the young person is entitled to more bespoke, person-centred access to this part of the curriculum.

11. Pupil Voice in RSE

As stated in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), children and young people have the right to be consulted on decisions being made about their lives ([Article 12](#)). To ensure the RSE Curriculum meets pupils' needs and addresses emerging trends, Welshpool High School will consult pupils and involve them in the curriculum content for RSE and retain flexibility to address the issues pupils identify.

12. Working with Parents and Carers

The RSE Code has withdrawn parent and carers right to withdraw their child from RSE – it is mandatory for all pupils aged 3-16. However, Welshpool High School acknowledges that parents/carers have an important influence and role to play in terms of delivering messages about sex and relationships. Parents/carers are the 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 and seek to keep parents and carers informed about this RSE Policy, the RSE Curriculum, and resources, where possible.

13. Working with External Agencies

Whilst Welshpool High School is responsible for the delivery of the RSE Curriculum, we recognise the value of involving appropriate external agencies/visiting speakers to complement the RSE Curriculum. This input is not to substitute or replace the school's delivery of RSE, but to supplement it.