The Deanery Church of England Academy

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**Head of School**: Kelly Osbourne-James

20th October 2023

**Re:** relationships, sex and health education (RSHE)

Dear parent/guardian,

We believe that promoting the health and wellbeing of our pupils is an important part of their overall education. We do this through our personal, social, health and emotional (ViP) curriculum. PSHE (ViP) covers many topics including all kinds of relationships, physical/emotional health and the skills needed to live in the wider world. The aim of our PSHE curriculum is to help pupils make safe and informed decisions during their school years and beyond.

Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) is the statutory element of our PSHE curriculum and all schools in England are required to teach RSHE (relationships, sex and health education) in secondary schools. We will be teaching lessons about RSHE/RHE as part of our ViP curriculum which will include topics such as: families; online safety; puberty; relationships and communication skills; pregnancy; contraceptives; prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; prevention of sexual abuse; FGM; body image; sexting and social media; pornography; consent. During these lessons, pupils will be able to ask questions, which will be answered factually in an age-appropriate manner. Each pupil's privacy will be respected, and no one will be asked to reveal personal information.

RHE/RSHE is a statutory subject and although parents can withdraw their child from the sex education element, we want to assure parents that our curriculum is taught in an age-appropriate manner and provides pupils with the time to ask questions in a safe environment and ultimately receive factual information, rather than hearing content second hand or via online platforms. In the 21st century pupils are exposed to so many of the incorrect messages about their bodies, relationships and expectations. The prevalence of sexual images in social and other media make it important that all young people have a place to discuss pressures, check facts, dispel myths and ultimately feel safe.

At The Deanery CE Academy ViP is a carefully planned curriculum and is there to ensure our pupils can navigate the world around them safely. An un-informed child is often a child left vulnerable and we want to empower our pupils here at The Deanery. At The Deanery Church of England Academy, everyone will be treated with dignity as all people who are made in the image of God and are loved equally by God.

All pupils have a right to an education which enables them to flourish and is set in a learning community where differences of lifestyle and opinion (within that which is permissible under UK law) are treated with dignity and respect; where bullying of all kinds is eliminated; and where they are free to be themselves and fulfil their potential without fear.

Our school seeks to ensure that the RSHE curriculum protects, informs and nurtures all pupils. It clearly differentiates between factual teaching (biology, medicine, the law, marriage, different types of families and the composition of society) and moral teaching about relationships and values, recognising that the distinction can be easily blurred and that there needs to be discernment about the manner in which this is taught. We teach RSHE within a moral (but not moralistic) framework. Our school’s approach to Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) follows that of the Church of England Education Office in that it seeks to be faith-sensitive and inclusive. It is underpinned by two key Biblical passages:

*“So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them”* (Genesis 2:7)

*“I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness”* (John 10:10)

Parents and carers are the most important educators of children and young people in personal issues and many welcome the support that school can offer to supplement their home teaching. You may find that your child starts asking questions about the topic at home, or you might want to take the opportunity to talk to your child about issues before the work is covered in school. If you have any queries about the content of the programme or resources used, please do not hesitate in contacting me at school. Transparency is extremely important to us all and so we are working on a way in which parents can have access to the materials taught in our lessons online. In the meantime, all materials used are available for you to browse through should you so wish.

**Year 11 will be receiving a session during term 3 around reproduction and safe sex. These will be carefully planned and resourced, and will be delivered in gender groups by trained staff. This is an important part of growing up and we would highly recommend that no student is withdrawn from this part of the curriculum. However, should you with to exercise the right to withdraw you child (and they are under the age of 16), please send an email to the address below. If your child is already 16, then they are able to (by law) choose for themselves if they wish to withdraw from these sessions.**

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [sarah.gallagher@dcea.org.uk](mailto:sarah.gallagher@dcea.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,

***Sarah Gallagher***

Associate Assistant Head teacher – *Humanities & SIAMS*

**Our ViP (PSHE) curriculum at The Deanery CE Academy:**

*(RSE units are highlighted)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Term 1** | **Term 2** | **Term 3** | **Term 4** | **Term 5** | **Term 6** |
| **Year 7** | Transition and safety | Developing skills and aspirations | Diversity | Health and puberty | Building relationships | Financial decision making |
| **Year 8** | Drugs and alcohol | Community and careers | Discrimination | Emotional wellbeing | Identity and relationships | Digital literacy |
| **Year 9** | Peer influence, substance abuse and gangs | Setting goals | Respectful relationships | Healthy lifestyle | Intimate relationships | Employability skills |
| **Year 10** | Mental health | Financial decision making | Healthy relationships | Exploring influence | Addressing extremism and radicalisation | Work experience |
| **Year 11** | Building for the future | Next steps | Sexual relationships & contraception | Independence | Families | Revision |

**Frequently asked questions**

***What are the aims of RHE/RSHE in our school?***

Depending on the age of the children and the lessons in their particular year group, we want RHE/ RSHE to:

* develop the confidence to talk, listen and think about feelings and relationships
* develop friendship/relationship skills
* develop positive attitudes, values and self-esteem
* provide knowledge and understanding about puberty and the changes that will take place
* provide knowledge and understanding about reproduction and sexuality
* address concerns and correct misunderstanding that children may have gained from the media and peers
* develop skills to help children protect themselves against unwanted sexual experience
* empower pupils to understand their bodies are amazing and they have a right to talk about keeping safe and consent in a manner of situations not just those linked to sexual intimacy
* know where and how to seek help
* to empower children with the confidence to talk about their bodies and their feelings.

***What are the different topics in the RHE/RSHE curriculum at secondary school?***

* Families and people who care for me
* Respectful relationships, including friendships
* Online and media
* Being safe
* Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
* Internet safety and harms
* Mental well-being
* Physical health and fitness
* Healthy eating
* Drugs, alcohol, tobacco
* Health and prevention
* Basic first aid
* Changing adolescent body

For further information on each strand of the topics visit ‘Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education’ at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education)

***Can you explain the school’s RHE/RSHE morals and values framework?***

RHE/RSHE follows the school’s agreed aims, values and moral framework which is sensitive to the needs and beliefs of pupils, parents, carers and other members of the school community. RHE/RSHE will be delivered within the school's agreed policy and in line with the Equality Act 2010; our teaching will be inclusive.

RHE/RSHE will support the importance of marriage or stable relationships for family life and bringing up children. Care is taken to ensure children are not stigmatized according to their different home circumstances and all families will be discussed as part of a diverse community.

Families sometimes look different from a child’s own family; children need to understand that they should respect those differences and know that other children’s families are also characterised by love and care.

Pupils will be encouraged to understand that thinking about morals and values also includes:

* respect for ourselves and others
* commitment, trust and love within relationships
* an understanding of diversity in relation to religion, culture and sexual orientation
* an honesty with ourselves and others
* self-awareness
* exploration of our rights, duties and responsibilities.

***Misunderstandings about RHE/ RSHE***

Schools have an important role to play in RHE/RSHE.

There is sometimes concern that RSE in school might promote sexual activity or cause confusion about an individual’s sexuality. The research on quality RSE points to a more positive outlook: 87 programmes from many countries were examined by UNESCO in 2009. This led to the conclusion that if RSE has an effect it is a positive one: ‘sexuality education can lead to later and more responsible sexual behaviour or may have no discernible impact on sexual behaviour’.

There has recently been a lot of press surrounding some schools who have been using age-inappropriate resources and exposing young people to content which is not impartial or appropriate. May I take this opportunity to reassure you that our young people are at the forefront of our plans, and no student will be exposed to anything that is deemed to be inappropriate or explicit within the classroom or school environment. All of the resources used within school are from reputable and recommended sources, such as (but not limited to):

* PSHE Association: *Thematic model*
* Goodness and mercy - <https://goodnessandmercy.co.uk/>
* *Living in Love and Faith*
* Barclays LifeSkills
* Anti-Bullying Alliance
* NSPCC Learning
* Childline
* BBC.co.uk/teach
* The Diana Award
* NHS
* Natwest – My Money sense
* Career Pilot
* The Ben Kinsella Trust
* British Red Cross