



The National
**Mathematics
and Science**
College

Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) Policy

RSE takes account of the Guidance published by the DfE: *Relationship and Sex Education Guidance (July 2020)*.

The aim of RSE is to provide our students with age-appropriate information, explore attitudes and values and develop skills in order to empower them to make positive decisions about their health-related behaviour.

This will take place with consideration of the qualities of relationships within families.

- To provide the knowledge and information to which all students are entitled;
- To raise students' self-esteem and confidence, especially in their relationships with others;
- To develop students' skills to ensure a healthy, safe lifestyle;
- To develop students' communication skills and assertiveness skills to cope with the influences of their peers, the media and online;
- To help students learn to respect and care for their bodies;
- To prepare students for adulthood;
- To help students learn how to gain access to information and support.

It is recognised that RSE is a cross-curricular area, which impinges on all aspects of students' personal and social education and development.

Objective discussion of the diversity of personal, social and sexual preference in relationships will take place in RSE and prejudiced views will be directly challenged, in order to affirm the College's commitment to equality and to encourage tolerance.

Any bullying or harassment around sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation, arising from prejudice, will be dealt with as a serious disciplinary matter.

The College is especially aware of the potential for sexual harassment and sexual violence within the boarding environment and staff maintain both zero tolerance for harassment and violence and are vigilance on this front.

As part of relationship and sex education, students will be taught about the nature and importance of marriage (as understood following the legalization of same-sex marriage in 2013) for family life and bringing up children. In addition, there will be recognition of the strong, mutually supportive relationships that can exist outside the institution of marriage, so students will learn about the significance of both marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society. Care will be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of any student based on their home circumstances.

At The National Mathematics and Science College we have a responsibility to provide sex and relationships education (RSE), including education about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. This education is

available to all registered students. A whole College approach to RSE is adopted. This incorporates aspects of the College ethos and organisation and enables effective pastoral support.

The National Mathematics and Science College is committed to the teaching of Sex Education to provide an understanding and lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It ought to provide knowledge about the processes of reproduction and the nature of sexuality and relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

What Is Sex and Relationship Education?

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes. Effective sex and relationship education does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. It builds up knowledge and skills which are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on young people.

Principles and Values

In addition, NatMatSci believes that RSE should:

- be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- be an entitlement for all young people.
- encourage each student to contribute to our community and aim to support each other as they grow and learn.
- set within the wider NatMatSci context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness.
- encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. The important values are love, respect and care for each other.
- generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents and students, consulting them about the way these topics are delivered at NatMatSci recognise that the wider community has much to offer and aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

Sex and Relationship Education at NatMatSci has three main elements:

Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices
- learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships and marriage
- learning about the nurture of children
- learning the value of respect, love and care
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making

- challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour

Personal and Social Skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- developing self-respect and empathy for others
- learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- managing conflict

Knowledge and Understanding

- learning and understanding, at appropriate stages, physical development
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay

Aims and Objectives

The aim of RSE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSE programme delivered in a number of ways, aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour;
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others;
- have respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly regarding sexual and pastoral relationships;
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected relationships;
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues;
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality;
- challenge sexism and prejudice and promote equality and diversity;
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity;
- understand the reasons for having protected sex;
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV;
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary;
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships.

Content

Students learn how good relationships can promote mental well-being, how to manage their feelings positively and how to manage changing relationships. Materials used reflect ongoing consultation with parents and professional advisers.

Age and cultural backgrounds of the students are always regarded in relation to images used.

Organisation

RSE is delivered by staff who have the experience and skills to deliver sensitive material to mixed ability, co-educational groups of students as part of our PSHE lessons which take place each week.

Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside NatMatSci may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE in NatMatSci.

A set of ground rules will help teachers create a safe environment, in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from students. All staff involved in the teaching of RSE will receive training on the importance of ground rules and how to set them. NatMatSci believes in the importance of training for staff delivering RSE. Staff are encouraged to identify appropriate training and support to help them deliver effective RSE.

The following are protocols for discussion-based lessons with students:

- students must be made aware that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality;
- no one (teacher or student) will have to answer a personal question;
- no one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
- meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way;
- when answering a specific question which involves information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time;
- where a member of staff is concerned that a child protection issue is arising, it is their responsibility to follow the college's Child Protection policy.

Procedures for Sex and Relationships Education

A coherent programme of RSE is provided. The programme is focused around a preventative approach. The Vice Principal (Pastoral and Boarding) organises the key elements in lessons liaising with specialist agencies including health professionals where appropriate. Facts are presented and issues considered within a clear moral framework, allowing students to recognise the importance of dignity and respect for themselves and others, the values of family life and acceptance of responsibility.

Within the context described above, such topics as contraception, abortion, homosexuality and HIV/AIDS are discussed since avoiding sensitive or controversial issues can leave students and young people confused and at risk.

A range of methodologies and resources are used, regularly reviewed and updated to ensure accuracy of information and relevancy. Issues of a particularly sensitive nature require explicit delivery. They are presented in a broad and balanced way, free from sensationalism and personal bias and sensitively geared to the level of students, needs and experience.

The use of "ground rules" helps in the creation of a supportive climate for discussion. Within any particular group there is an emphasis on trust, respect for privacy, care and compassion and the necessity of listening to others' opinions in a respectful, reflective manner. Sensitivity to religious beliefs is regarded as an important dimension.

The College seeks to develop The National Mathematics and Science College students' self-esteem and a sense of responsibility by counteracting prejudice and victimisation. Key elements of RSE, or those which are especially sensitive, are delivered by specialists.

However, the National Mathematics and Science College will ensure that:

- teachers are aware of their legal responsibilities;
- the concerns of teachers never trespass on parental rights;
- students are taught how to gain information on a wide range of health-related issues to include information on the provision of specific and individual advice;
- should a teacher believe that a student to be in danger or distressed or should questions from students cause such concerns, the Vice Principal (Pastoral and Boarding) should be consulted so that the best course of action can be identified;
- teachers are guided by DfE circular 5/94 which states that "Particular care must be exercised in relation to contraceptive advice to students under 16, for whom intercourse is unlawful. The general rule must be that giving an individual advice on such matters would be an inappropriate exercise of a teacher's responsibilities."

Specific Issues within RSE

Child Protection

The NatMatSci has a separate Safeguarding Child Protection Policy. Effective Sex and Relationship Education may bring about disclosures of child protection issues and staff should be aware of the procedures for reporting their concerns by informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Disclosures

If a member of staff learns that an under 16-year-old is sexually active or contemplating sexual activity, then NatMatSci will ensure that:

- the young person is persuaded to talk to their parent/carer;
- our Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed;
- the young person receives adequate counselling and information.

Controversial and Sensitive Issues

Members of staff are aware that views around RSE related issues are varied. However, whilst personal views are respected, all RSE issues are taught without bias. Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that students are able to form their own informed opinions but also respect others that may have a different opinion.

Dealing with Questions

Both formal and informal RSE arising from students' questions are answered according to the age and maturity of the student concerned. Questions do not have to be answered directly and can be addressed individually later. NatMatSci believes that individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in this area and refer to the DSL if they are concerned.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

NatMatSci believes that Sex and Relationship Education should meet the needs of all students regardless of their developing sexuality and be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Homophobic bullying is dealt with strongly yet sensitively.

Equal Opportunities and inclusion in Sex and Relationship Education

The Sex and Relationship Education curriculum has been developed to take into account the diversity of the collegiate population and to meet the needs of the students. The teaching materials we use are regularly reviewed to ensure their suitability. All Sex and Relationship Education will be inclusive and meet the needs of all young people, recognising that issues such as sexuality, disability, ethnicity and faith affect attitudes towards sex and relationships. We will address explicit and implicit homophobia in NatMatSci, and issues of related bullying.

Visitors contributing to Sex and Relationship Education

The wider community has much to offer, and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals and other mentors or advisors. The College provides a counselling service and access to an independent listener. These services are advertised throughout NatMatSci. From time to time, as part of a planned module of work, the nurse and/or local experts will be invited to speak on issues relating to Sex and Relationship Education. All college associate health and other professional and visitors will be asked to conform to the following:

- visitors contributing to Sex and Relationship Education will do so at the invitation of NatMatSci and will be qualified to make an appropriate contribution;
- visitors must agree with the aims of the NatMatSci in delivering its policy on Sex and Relationship Education;
- when in class, visitors will be supervised by a teacher, who will be present at all times;
- although bound by their own code of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, visitors will follow the NatMatSci safeguarding procedures if a disclosure occurs within the classroom setting;
- visitors will know and understand where their contribution fits into NatMatSci's programme for Sex and Relationship Education and Personal Development.

Involvement of Parents/Carers

The College continues to encourage an active partnership with parents in this as in other aspects of its work, so that parents can feel confident in the RSE programme offered to their students. Parents have the right to withdraw their student from aspects of the RSE programme. The College will provide a supervised, quiet working area for any students who are withdrawn.

If necessary, alternative work will be provided. Those parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited meet with the Vice Principal (Pastoral and Boarding) to explore any concerns and discuss the impact that withdrawal may have on the student. Once a student has been withdrawn, they cannot take part in the RSE programme until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

Parental Rights

Section 241 of the Education Act 1993 gives parents the right to withdraw their students from parts of the College's programme of sex education. It is realised that, under exceptional circumstances, a very small number of parents may wish to exclude their students from this programme. In this case, such parents should write to the Principal, stating their objections.

The National Mathematics and Science College believes that all students should be offered the opportunity of receiving an appropriate, comprehensive and well-planned programme of Sex and Relationships Education in accordance with the law and government policy.

Sex and Relationships education is taught in PSHE lessons. The College aims to teach in a way which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of the students at the College and prepares them for the changes of puberty and adult life. When teaching any aspect of Sex and Relationships Education, it is important that certain ground rules are formulated and discussed with the students first. These include:

- that the work will be done in a way which does not involve anyone, staff or students, having to answer personal questions or revealing private or family situations which could lead to embarrassment and subsequently be 'used' inappropriately;
- that any teasing on sexual matters will not be tolerated and will be treated as harassment or bullying. Students are being trusted to use the information gained in lessons in a responsible and mature way.

It is important that all staff and outside visitors taking part in this programme are aware of these ground rules and that a classroom is not the same as a counselling session or clinic. In any one class, there are students from different backgrounds, at varying levels of physical and emotional maturity. Teachers need to be sensitive to the needs of all their students and work in a way which protects their sensibilities.

Confidentiality: Teachers conduct Sex and Relationships Education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a student makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a safeguarding matter. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a student indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. In these circumstances, the teacher will talk to the student as a matter of urgency. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw their concerns to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. (See also Safeguarding Policy.)

Charlie Turner

Vice Principal (Pastoral & Boarding)

Date of Review: February 2024

Date of Next Review: February 2026