

## EASTCOURT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

*This policy which applies to the whole school is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.*

### Legal Status:

- Complies with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations currently in force.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 (DfE: July 2019)
- Relationships Education (DfE 2021)
- Sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (HM Govt. 2017)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE: September 2024)
- The Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE: January 2015)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 (HM Government 2003)
- Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE: December 2017)

**Monitoring and review:** This policy is subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher. The Advisory Board will undertake a full annual review of this policy and procedures, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. The Headteacher recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns. We also involve parents in developing this policy to ensure it meets the needs of pupils and parents and reflects the community the school serves.

This policy was last reviewed by the Headteacher of the School in September 2024 and will next be reviewed no later than September 2025 or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed *E.Redgrave*  
Miss Emma Redgrave  
Headteacher

Date Reviewed: September 2024  
Date of next Review: September 2025

**Rationale:** It is recognised that RSE is a cross-curricular area, which impinges on all aspects of students' personal and social education and development. At Eastcourt Independent School we have a responsibility to provide education on relationships and health and wellbeing education. This education is available to all registered students. A whole School approach to RSE is adopted. This incorporates aspects of the School ethos and organisation and enables effective pastoral support.

Eastcourt Independent School is committed to teaching relationship education to provide an understanding and lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development in a responsible and healthy manner. Due to the nature of the subject, this policy should be read and implemented in conjunction with other existing, related policies, including PSHE, Teaching and Learning and Equal Opportunities.

**What is Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)?** 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 Relationship Education teaches young people to understand and respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem. It builds up knowledge and skills which are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on our people.

**Relationships Education (EYFS, KS1-2) – Definition:** Relationships Education is the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other peers and adults. This starts with pupils being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. From the beginning of primary school, building on early education, children should be taught how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy.

**Health (Physical and Mental wellbeing) Education (See our PSHEE Policy) – Definition:** The aim of teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing is to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, recognise issues in themselves and others and, when issues arise, seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

### **Principles and Values**

In addition, Eastcourt Independent School believes that RSE should be:

- an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life.
- an entitlement for all young people
- encouraging each pupil to contribute to our community and aiming to support each other as they grow and learn
- set within the wider Eastcourt Independent School context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness
- encouraging students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. The important values are love, respect and care for each other.
- generating an atmosphere where questions and discussion can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- recognising that parents are the key people in teaching their children principles and values. We aim to work in partnership with parents and students, consulting them about the way these topics are delivered. Eastcourt Independent School recognises that the wider community has much to offer and aims to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

### **Relationship and Sex Education at Eastcourt Independent School 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 nature 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 relationships

### **Aims and Objectives:**

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 relationships
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted situations
- challenge prejudice and promote equality and diversity

**Content and Delivery – linking the wider curriculum subjects:** Students learn at the appropriate level how good relationships can promote mental well-being, how to manage their feelings positively and how to manage changing relationships. Age and cultural backgrounds of the students are always regarded in relation to images used.

We look for opportunities to integrate teaching where appropriate from across wider curriculum subjects such as citizenship, science, computing and PE so as to promote a whole school approach to wellbeing and health.

The school aims to teach in a way which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of the children at the school and prepares them for changes as they grow into adults. When teaching any aspect of Relationships and Sex Education, it is important that certain ground rules are formulated and discussed with the children first. These include:

- that the work will be done in a way which does not involve anyone, staff or children, 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 personal matters will not be tolerated and will be treated as harassment or bullying. Children 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 children from different backgrounds, at varying levels of physical and emotional maturity. Teachers need to be sensitive to the needs of all their children and work in a way which protects their sensibilities.

**Working with external agencies:** Working with external organisations can enhance the delivery of these subjects, bringing specialist knowledge and different ways of delivering content to our pupils. As with any visitor, we will ensure they undergo safeguarding checks and carry out due diligence on them, ensuring their proposed teaching is in line with our planned programme of study and this policy. When in class, visitors will be supervised by a teacher, who will be present at all times. Their teaching must also be age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils whom they intend to teach. We will request their materials and lesson plans in advance so that we can ensure it is appropriate for all of our pupils. The school will ensure that external agencies who visit understand their responsibilities regarding safeguarding of our pupils and know how to deal with both confidentiality within the school and also any safeguarding concerns including how to report these concerns. We recognise that visitors are an enhancement to support our staff rather than as a replacement.

**Senior Leadership and whole school approach:** To ensure effective practice across the school, we have established curriculum leaders for our Relationship Education and Health Education. They are supportive in reviewing planning and resources across the school and promoting these subjects across the school.

Our senior leadership team will ensure these subjects are set in the context of a wider whole-school approach to supporting pupils to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school. Our curriculum on relationships is supported by, the school's wider policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, bullying and safeguarding. The subjects sit within the context of a school's broader ethos and approach to developing pupils

*Eastcourt Independent School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all students fulfil their potential.*

socially, morally, spiritually and culturally; and its pastoral care system. This is also the case for our teaching about mental health within health education. The curriculum on health education similarly complements, and is supported by, the school's wider education on healthy lifestyles through physical education, science, sport, extra-curricular activity and school food.

The school will consider how its teaching can help support the development of important attributes in pupils, such as honesty, kindness, tolerance, courtesy, resilience and self-efficacy, as well as how those attributes are also developed by other aspects of the school's provision. Issues are proactively addressed in a timely way in line with current evidence, in line with pupil need, information by pupil voice and participation in curriculum development.

### **Specific issues within RSE**

**Child Protection, reporting and confidentiality:** Eastcourt Independent School has a separate Safeguarding Child Protection Policy. Effective PSHEE may bring about disclosures of child protection issues and staff are aware of the procedures for reporting their concerns by informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff ensure that children are made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report, and how any report will be handled. This includes if they have a concern about a friend or peer.

**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 may have a different opinion.

**Dealing with difficult questions:** We recognise that pupils (especially primary-aged) will often ask staff questions which go beyond what is set out for our Relationships Education. We recognise that children of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to different types of questions or behaviours. As such, our teaching methods take account of these differences – including when they are due to specific special educational needs or disabilities – and consider the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in smaller groups. Both formal and informal RSE arising from students' questions are answered according to the age and maturity of the student concerned, considering each question and on as a case-by-case basis. Staff do not have to answer questions directly and these can be addressed individually later. Staff will consider with their students what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting. Individual teachers must refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are concerned by a pupil's questions, parents are informed and they can seek support as necessary.

**Equal Opportunities and Inclusion (Including SEND) in Relationship and Sex Education:** The Relationship curriculum has been developed to take into account the diversity of the school's population and to meet the needs of the students. We are aware of our requirements to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and we review our teaching materials to ensure suitability for our pupils. All Relationship Education will be inclusive and meet the needs of all young people, recognising issues such as disability, ethnicity and faith affect attitudes towards relationships. We will address issues of any type of bullying at Eastcourt Independent School.

At Eastcourt Independent School we believe Relationship Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all pupils. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised is our starting point to ensure accessibility. The school is also mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes, as set out in the SEND code of practice, when preparing these subjects for those with SEND. Eastcourt Independent School recognises that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education can also be a particular priority for some pupils, for example some with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors will be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects.

Eastcourt Independent School is alert to stereotyping and prejudices and takes positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated; occurrences are identified and tackled. Staff have an important role to play in modelling positive behaviours and our School pastoral and behaviour policies aim to support all pupils.

The school refers to as part of our Safeguarding – Child Protection Policy, the Department of Education’s Advice on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children. We recognise the importance of making clear that any form of violence and harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up. Any report will be taken seriously. An understanding for all pupils of healthy relationships, acceptable behaviour and the right of everyone to equal treatment will help ensure that our pupils treat each other well and go on to be respectful and kind adults.

**Involvement of Parents/Carers:** We recognise the vital role parents play in the development of their children’s understanding about relationships. As such, we encourage an active partnership with all parents in the development and the delivery of the curriculum so that parents can feel confident in the programme offered to their children.

The school works in partnership with parents to ensure it meets the needs of pupils and parents and reflects the community the school serves. At appropriate times, parents are given the opportunity to attend a Zoom/personal meetings on the approaches used in the school in all subjects. This allows parents the opportunity to view examples of the resources the school plans to use as part of lessons and learn about the methods we use. We encourage parents to discuss what will be taught, look to address any concerns and help support parents in managing conversations with their children. This can be an important opportunity to talk about pupil wellbeing and keeping children safe.

The school website contains additional information about our Relationship programme, its contents and organisation;

Eastcourt Independent School believes that all children should be offered the opportunity of receiving an appropriate, comprehensive and well-planned programme of Relationships Education in accordance with the law and government policy. Eastcourt **does not** teach Sex Education, which is the section of the curriculum parents can elect to withdraw children from. (This is an optional strand of the curriculum at primary level).

**Assessment:** Eastcourt Independent School maintains the same high expectations of the quality of pupils’ work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas. A strong curriculum will build on knowledge pupils have previously acquired, including in other subjects, with regular feedback provided on pupil progress. Lessons are planned to ensure that pupils of differing abilities, including the most able, are suitably challenged. Pupil learning is assessed, and assessments used to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention. Whilst there is no formal assessment for these subjects in the sense of an examination, we use a range of methods, for example, written assignments or self-evaluations, to capture progress.

**Advisory Board:** As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the Advisory Board will also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes;
- the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned;
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content;
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

**Confidentiality:** Teachers conduct Relationships Education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to anything which raises child protection concerns, the teacher will talk to the child 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 Child Protection Policy.)

**Additional links:** This policy has been developed using the following documents, which provide additional information:

- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>
- Mental Health and Behaviour in schools  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/755135/Mental\\_health\\_and\\_behaviour\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755135/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools.pdf)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying –  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/623895/Preventing\\_and\\_tackling\\_bullying\\_advice.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)
- Promoting British Values –  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/380595/SMSC\\_Guidance\\_Maintained\\_Schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf)

### **Appendix A – RSE Resources**

There are many excellent resources available, free of charge, which the school uses to draw on when delivering these subjects. Resources are assessed carefully to ensure they are appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils and sensitive to their needs. The school works with parents, we provide examples of the resources, as this can be reassuring for parents, and enables them to continue the conversations started in class at home. This is for illustrative purposes and is not an exhaustive list.

### **SEAL resources**

PSHE association resources