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**LEEDS JEWISH FREE SCHOOL**

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**Relationships and Sex Education Policy and  
Health Policy**

Adopted	October 2021
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Review	October 2023
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Leeds Jewish Free School, is a Jewish faith school and our Jewish ethos is core to ensuring our students' success. We expect all our students to not only know our values but to live our values, whether it be in the relation of teachers to students, students to teachers, students to one another, as well as towards the outside world.

- Tzedek: Integrity & respect for one another and our different beliefs
- Chessed: Kindness, especially to the sensitive and the vulnerable
- Mishpat: Deep respect towards the rules and laws of the school and society
- Rachamim: Compassion & Forgiveness

They are students of a learning community taught to love and cherish their religion and culture, to explore its rich depths and to be enriched by them; and that recognise that living an ethical life is a privilege rather than a burden. They are also taught to respect people of other faiths (or no faith), those who come from different cultures and those who choose to lead different lifestyles. The area of the curriculum pertaining to sex education and relationships is handled in a very sensitive manner in the context of the school ethos which reflects the Orthodox Jewish point of view based on the Torah and Talmud.

Leeds Jewish Free School is committed to the provision of a relevant, effective and responsible relationships and sex education, in addition to Health education and life skills (RHSE) to all its students as part of the school's relationship, health and sex education curriculum. The school wants parents/carers and students to feel assured that sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both the age and development of students, and safe to voice opinions and concerns relating to the sex education provision.

This policy has been drafted in consultation with the Executive Headteacher, School chaplain, teaching staff, governors, parents and students. The policy is reviewed and approved by the governing body annually.



## **1. Policy aims**

Relationships, Health and Sex Education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It is learning about the physical, social, emotional and legal aspects of human relationships including within peer groups and friendships, as well as within intimate and committed relationships. It should equip young people with the information, skills and positive values to have happy, healthy and safe relationships, to enjoy their impending adulthood and to take responsibility for their personal health and well-being, both now and in the future.

It is also teaching what it means to be in a caring, stable and mutually supportive relationship with another person, and how to control and understand feelings that come with being in a relationship.

Leeds Jewish Free School teaches the importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children as being central to the Orthodox Jewish Ethos of the school. In addition, the school seeks to stress the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society whilst ensuring that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances nor of other members of society who chose to enter into other types of relationships that are acceptable under UK law.

The school would like to emphasise that by providing comprehensive RHSE we are not encouraging students to become sexually active at a young age. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the right provision is in place so that students may have all the background knowledge they need to make informed decisions and responsible choices as they grow up.

Through the provision outlined in this policy we also aim to raise students' self-esteem and confidence, trying to develop communication and assertiveness skills that can help them stay true to their values if challenged by others, their peers or what they see in the media. We hope to teach students to be accepting of the different beliefs, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities, backgrounds and values of those around them. We want our students to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle, teach them to care for and respect their bodies and provide them with all the right tools that will enable them to seek information or support, should they need it, both during their school years and after. Leeds Jewish free School recognise the increasing demands on



mental as well as physical health and want to increase both awareness of the importance of good mental health and how to seek support for this. Students are encouraged to discuss and address mental health concerns through open and honest communication.

At the core of our subject is collaboration across the school, but especially with the Jewish Studies department to establish clear Halachic guidance and to ensure that this provision is delivered within the ethos of the school community and support facilities are clearly signposted and available to all our students.

All the statutory requirements of RHSE are included in our programme of study and will be delivered in accordance with the school ethos. This approach is based on government guidelines

"All schools may teach about faith perspectives. In particular, schools with a religious character may teach the distinctive faith perspective on relationships, and balanced debate may take place about issues that are seen as contentious. For example, the school may wish to reflect on faith teachings about certain topics as well as how their faith institutions may support people in matters of relationships and sex" (section 21)

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RHSE) and Health Education, June 2019

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

### **School staff**

RHSE lessons will be delivered by the pastoral team as well as by members of the Jewish Studies department. All of these will be trained. It is important that staff feel comfortable to take RSHE classes and answer questions from students. If the teacher does not feel confident leading

RHSE discussions then that is likely to be reflected by the students, and their learning will be compromised. The school provides regular professional development training in how to deliver sex education; this includes sessions on confidentiality, setting ground rules, handling controversial issues, responding to awkward questions and an introduction to the rationale of why teaching RHSE is so important. The School Chaplain, Governors and Senior Leadership Team at the school will provide oversight and guidance about what is delivered in the sessions.



### **Governors and senior leaders will:**

- Develop this school policy and review and approve it every two years.
- Ensure that relevant staff are given regular and ongoing training on issues relating to RHSE and how to deliver lessons on such issues.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with policy changes, and familiar with school policy and guidance relating to sex education.
- Ensure that sex education is age-relevant and appropriate across all year groups; this means ensuring that the curriculum develops as our students do and meets their needs.
- Ensure that the knowledge and information regarding RHSE to which all students are entitled is provided in a comprehensive way.
- Support parental involvement in the development of the RHSE curriculum.
- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing a balanced RHSE in school.
- Communicate with staff, parents and the governing body to ensure that everyone understands the school policy and curriculum for sex education, and that any concerns or opinions regarding the provision at the school are listened to, taken into account and acted on as appropriate. The provision of sex education at home should be complementary to the provision the school provides, and this should be clearly communicated to parents and additional support given where necessary or requested.

### **All staff will:**

- Take it upon themselves to ensure that they are up to date with school policy and curriculum requirements regarding sex education.
- Attend and engage in professional development training around sex education provision.
- Encourage students to communicate concerns regarding their social, personal and emotional development in confidence, listen to their needs and support them seriously. If a pupil comes to a member of staff with an issue that that member of staff feels they are not able to deal with alone, they should take this concern to the pastoral lead. No one else should be informed at this stage, and a breach of confidentiality may fall under staff misconduct and disciplinary procedures.



- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent them from providing balanced RHSE in school.

## **Students**

Students are expected to attend RHSE classes that are in their school timetable and take them seriously. Although they are not assessed through examination, these classes are still a very important part of the curriculum and a tool to aid personal development and the school expects students to recognise this.

Students should support one another with issues that arise through RHSE. Listening in class, being considerate of other people's feelings and beliefs, and complying with confidentiality rules that are set in class are key to effective provision. Students who regularly fail to follow these standards of behaviour will be dealt with under the school behaviour policy.

We also hope that students will feel comfortable to talk to a member of staff, in confidence, regarding any concerns they have in school related to sex education or otherwise. Conversations of this nature between staff and students will be held in confidence; however, staff will take concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if there is a child protection concern or they feel ill-equipped to deal with the issue at hand.

We ask students for feedback on the school's RHSE provision yearly and expect them to take this responsibility seriously. Opinions on provision and comments will be reviewed by the Senior Leaders and taken into consideration when the curriculum is prepared for the following year's students. In this way, the school hopes to provide students with the education they need on topics they want to learn about.

## **Parents/carers**

The school expects parents to share the responsibility of relationships and sex education and support their children's personal, social and emotional development. We encourage parents to create an open home environment where students can engage, discuss and continue to learn about matters that have been raised through school RHSE. Parents are also encouraged to seek additional support in this from the school where they feel it is needed.



### **3. Implementation and curriculum**

In many cases, the RHSE content relates to the Science curriculum. The National Curriculum sets out the sex education topics which must be taught to all students. These topics are taught by the Biology Department after an introduction to the subject of procreation which is given by an experienced member of the Jewish Studies department. This sets the religious, moral and family contexts for the teaching of the Biology Department which follows.

#### **Statutory Science Curriculum**

##### Key Stage 3 (age 11-14)

Students should be taught about:

Reproduction

- reproduction in humans (as an example of a mammal), including the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycle (without details of hormones), gametes, fertilisation, gestation and birth, to include the effect of maternal lifestyle on the foetus through the placenta

##### Key Stage 4 (age 14-16 years)

Students should be taught about:

Health, disease and the development of medicines

- the relationship between health and disease
- communicable diseases including sexually transmitted infections in humans (including HIV/AIDs); non-communicable diseases; the impact of lifestyle factors on the incidence of non-communicable diseases.

Coordination and control

- principles of hormonal coordination and control in humans, hormones in human reproduction, hormonal and non-hormonal methods of contraception
- Evolution, inheritance and variation
- sex determination in humans



## **Relationships and Sex Education**

Effective RHSE Education is predominantly preventative which means that children and young people are given the information they need to make an informed choice at a relevant time in their school life. Encouraging students to think about this subject from the age of 11 is managed with care using the best practice already established within the community. All students have a right to develop an age appropriate understanding of these topics but there will be close collaboration with the Jewish Studies department on the presentation of any sensitive material. Teaching this area of study will combine a facts-focused approach and clear ethos-based guidance, particularly around the areas of intimate relationships and contraception.

In Key Stage 4, students will develop an understanding of the implications of their own beliefs in areas such as intimacy and contraception. They will learn that the law and society permits a wide range of different behaviours and that everyone is entitled to be treated with respect.

Throughout their schooling, all students will have the opportunity to learn from a range of external organisations in keeping with our ethos, such as Jewish Women's Aid, who will offer their expertise in specialist areas such as relationships, fertility and parenthood.

In **RHSE** lessons the following topics will be covered in an age-appropriate way:

- Families
- Respectful Relationships, including Friendships
- Online and Media
- Being Safe
- Intimate and Sexual Relationships, including Sexual Health Education

## **Health Education**

- Mental Wellbeing
- Internet Safety and Harms
- Physical Health and Fitness
- Healthy Eating





- Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco
- Health and Prevention
- Basic First Aid
- The Changing Adolescent Body (Puberty)

### **Dealing with difficult questions**

Staff training will include sessions on how to deal with difficult questions. There may still be times when staff are faced with a difficult question in class that they feel uncomfortable or ill equipped to answer. In this case, they may wish to put the question to one side and seek advice from the Executive Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Ground rules in class are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter. Some strategies staff may use to support this might be:

- an anonymous question box; this will enable students to feel more comfortable to ask questions without being identified
- making the classroom a zone of silence; this means that whatever is discussed in the classroom stays in the classroom and should not be brought up at any other time. We hope this will give students the sense that they are in a safe zone to speak freely about sex and relationships.

### **Students with special educational needs**

The school works hard to ensure that all aspects of the school curriculum are inclusive and support the needs of students of all ranges of abilities. Staff should differentiate lessons to ensure that all members of the class can access the information fully, and this is no different when it comes to RHSE.

### **Withdrawal from RHSE**

The school aims to keep parents/carers informed about all aspects of the RHSE curriculum and urges parents to read this policy. Parents/carers can request access to resources and information being used in class, and the school will do everything it can to ensure that parents/carers are comfortable with the education provided to their children in school. It is, however, a statutory right of parents/carers to withdraw the children in



their care from the sex education element of RHSE up until three terms before their child turns 16 at which point the child can decide for themselves if they wish to receive sex education. This right of withdrawal does not apply to the elements on human growth and reproduction which fall under the Science National Curriculum. Parents/carers also do not have the right to withdraw their children from lessons on relationships or health education.

Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from RHSE should contact the Deputy Headteacher (Sam Lawson) who will arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns. RHSE is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports child development and we strongly urge parents to carefully consider their decision before withdrawing their child from this aspect of school life. However, it is acknowledged that the final decision on the issue is for the parent to take. If a parent does wish to exercise this right, a request for withdrawal should be put in writing to Mrs Hardacre, Executive Headteacher.

### **Complaints**

Parents or carers who have complaints or concerns regarding the RHSE curriculum should contact the school and follow the school's complaints policy.

### **Equal opportunities**

The Trust complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. RHSE lessons provide a good background for talking openly and freely about the diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences. Prejudiced views will be challenged, and equality promoted. Any bullying that relates to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be dealt with swiftly and seriously. This is the case for bullying of any kind and the procedures regarding this are outlined in the school's anti-bullying policy.

### **Safeguarding and confidentiality**

We hope to provide a safe and supportive school community where students feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at school or at home. Training around confidentiality will be provided to all teachers.



It may be the case that discussion around what is acceptable and not acceptable in relationships may lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. If this is the case, the school's child protection and safeguarding procedure should be followed.

Personal information about students who have approached a teacher for discussion should not be shared with any other person. If there is a child protection concern, the information must only be shared in accordance with the school's child protection and safeguarding procedure. Staff members that breach the right to a child's privacy by disclosing or sharing confidential information with no reason to do so will be dealt with under the school's staff discipline, conduct and grievance procedures.

#### **4. Monitoring, review and evaluation**

The educational and personal needs of our students develop in line with varying societal pressures and economic change. Our aim is to provide RHSE that is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our students, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason, we review the RHSE curriculum every 2 years, and will inform parents/carers of any revisions to the school policy or sex education curriculum.

We aim to monitor the effectiveness of our sex education provision through:

- yearly feedback from students
- yearly feedback from parents/carers
- feedback from staff
- classroom observations.

The school will review this policy annually, evaluating its effectiveness by taking into account feedback from students, staff and parents, as well as what has come to light through classroom observations and information we receive from national reports and curriculum reviews.

#### **5. Support**



We hope that students will feel safe in the school environment to talk to any member of staff in confidence about any areas of concern regarding their personal, social and emotional development, including matters raised by or relating to sex education. We promote the school ethos as one of inclusion and acceptance throughout all areas of school activity and hope that students respond to this by feeling comfortable to ask questions and continue their learning both in and outside of the classroom. However, in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy, staff may not advise students on personal matters but must refer a student to the school counsellors.