



## **Relationships and Sex Education Policy**

Policy owner	Chairs of TM EYTM	March 2022
Endorsed by	Trustees	
Reviewed		September 2024

## **Relationships and Sex Education Policy**

St Paul's Steiner School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because 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 must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects. Everyone is unique and everyone is equal.

This policy sets out how St Paul's Steiner school supports the children's physical, emotional and moral development through its Relationship and Sex Education.

We have consulted staff through the Kindergarten and Teachers Meeting, parents through the SPCG, and students through the school council.

### **Introduction**

Positive relationships and respect for differences are at the core of Steiner-Waldorf education. From the beginning, each lesson and activity have a relationship aspect, which is consciously fostered by the teachers. The key is healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online.

The delivery of RSE is holistic and inter-related. Our school spans the age range from 3 to 14 years, so we adapt our practice to ensure that it is age appropriate and meets the developmental stage of the children. Every day is an opportunity to work on social aspects, to navigate relationships is an integral part of the school experience. Positive relationships are also supported through the Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

In Kindergarten to Class V the focus is on Relationship Education, and the curriculum fosters a reverence for a common humanity with appreciation of differences as part of humanity and the natural world.

The aim of our Relationship and Sex Education from Class VI and onwards, is to continue to instil a strong sense of self and respect for others, to have a clear sense of what constitutes good relationships, to carry a reverence for sexual reproduction, alongside an understanding that some children are conceived in other, equally valid ways. We aim for our students to leave school confident to navigate the future challenges around not only wellbeing, relationships and choices about sex but keeping safe from unhealthy relationships, unwanted pregnancies and STI's, to be well trained in online safety, consent (Sex and the Law) and know how to access sexual health and wellbeing provision, in short, to prepare the students to be able to make informed decisions about their adult lives.

'Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.' (Rudolf Steiner)

### **Aims**

A growing ability to form strong and positive relationships with others depends on the deliberate cultivation of character traits and positive personal attributes. The RSE aspect of the education can be presented in three spheres:

## **Ethics, values and attitudes**

- developing an understanding of right and wrong and feeling for individual conscience
- developing love, care and respect for self, other people and for the natural world
- developing and nurturing stable relationships, which include friendships, marriage, civil partnership, and families of different forms, including sole parents, as vital for the nurture of children
- exploring moral dilemmas with compassion
- develop willing, feeling and thinking to inform moral decisions
- resilience: the ability to stick to a task will enable the child to achieve goals and recover from setbacks and challenging periods in their lives

## **Personal skills**

- practicing empathy
- self-respect and self-worth
- respect for others' feelings and boundaries
- managing emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- developing confidence in talking, listening, and thinking about sex and healthy relationships
- communicating effectively using correct language
- appreciating that choices have consequences for oneself and others
- managing conflict
- learning how to recognise exploitation and abuse
- distinguishing between different types of online content and making well-founded decisions

## **Knowledge of**

- what constitutes a healthy relationship
- physical development, including changes in puberty
- human sexuality, reproduction, and sexual health
- differences in sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, as part of human diversity
- how the law applies to sexual relationships
- consent
- the effects of early, unplanned pregnancy
- contraception and abortion
- how to access relevant advice and support services

The Kindergarten and Class teachers will keep an open dialogue with their class and will strive to answer children's questions honestly, but always in an age-appropriate manner. From Kindergarten through to Class VIII there are conversations between students and teachers about positive and healthy relationships with family, friends, and the wider community. Through this, the aim is for children to be able to understand relationships that bring happiness and security and are also able to recognise those that do not and how to seek help.

## **Resources**

Age-appropriate books and resources are available for the children in Kindergarten and school which reflects the diverse British society we live in and the wider world. We want to give all children a sense of belonging, for each child to recognise themselves and their families in the provision. We celebrate diversity and much thought is given to have all the protected characteristics represented as part of the Kindergarten and school library. Families include step-families, children living across two houses with co-parents/separated parents, adoptive and foster parents, single parent families, and same sex parents, those living with grandparents or guardians. The books also depict an inclusive picture of ourselves and others, with people's chosen gender expression being embraced and accepted. Our books present both traditional and non-stereotypical gender roles through diverse representation. The preferred pronouns of children, parents and staff will be respected, including pronouns and gender expression that are fluid. It is acknowledged even from this early age, that people need an environment where they can develop their own sense of identity, express themselves freely and have their choices respected and validated.

Books about puberty is available for children in Class V onwards to Class VIII and books about sex education is available for children in Class VII and Class VIII to compliment the biology curriculum.

## **Online safety**

The principles of positive relationships also apply online. We teach children about online safety from Kindergarten onwards in an age-appropriate way and about behaviour online in a way that is relevant to pupils' lives, being a school that recommends limited screen use. The children are taught about how information and data is shared and used in all contexts, and how many websites are businesses that use information provided by users in ways they might not expect. Emphasis is put on the sharing of pictures and the legal implications of this.

## **Relationships education for Kindergarten aged children 3-6 years**

The seasonal curriculum fosters a relationship with nature, through activities, stories, song and verse. There is an emphasis on the beauty of the interconnected natural world and this picture of interconnectedness and harmony is extended to the fostering of healthy relationships between people. The golden rule that 'everyone is welcome' is implicit in all activities and through imitation of the teacher. The mixed age group of 3 to 6-year-olds, creates opportunities for dynamic relationships, the younger look up to the example of the older child and the older nurture the younger. Through stories, imitation of the teachers' example and golden rules such as 'gentle hands', 'kind words' and 'everyone is welcome,' expectations for positive relationships are made clear. From Kindergarten, respect for others is taught in an age-appropriate way, in terms of understanding one's own and others' boundaries in play, in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources and so on.

Social issues are dealt with through pedagogical and healing stories. The teachers have expectations of the children to learn to make good choices and make amends if someone is hurt as per behaviour policy. Children are supported to develop their skills in negotiating any disagreements between themselves and finding their own resolutions. Children are supported to develop their own voice in terms of expressing consent in physical and verbal interactions and in the play. Turn taking, treating others with kindness, consideration and respect with honesty and truthfulness are at the heart of our values that we foster in the children. We teach children how to establish personal space and boundaries, show respect and understand the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical contact with consent at the centre of what we do right from the beginning in kindergarten.

## **Staying safe**

In Kindergarten, the message is reinforced that certain body parts are private and that everyone has the right to privacy. Children can choose to use toilet facilities without others

present and close the door to give themselves privacy. Young children can be unselfconscious about their body, and care is taken to avoid shaming self-exposure or nudity, while reinforcing the expectation that in a shared space such as kindergarten, we remain clothed, except when changing clothes or using the toilet. We reference the NSPCC 'underwear rule' that defines private parts as those covered by a swimsuit or underwear. Parents evenings include advice for parents and online resources such as NSPCC guidance are shared with parents. (The NSPCC advises parents to explain to children about what it calls "the underwear rule", using the acronym PANTS, which is that: **P**rivates are private. **A**lways remember your body belongs to you. **N**o means no. **T**alk about secrets that upset you.

### **Relationship education in the Lower School Primary school aged children 6 - 11 years**

The foundations laid in Kindergarten continues in school. The school environment, resources, the festival year and the curriculum celebrate differences and similarities.

**Class I and II** – the forming of the habits of the class and learning how to relate to each other is at the forefront of the curriculum. The golden rules are further developed into classroom rules and to negotiate conflicts with I-sentences are practiced solving conflicts. All stories have a moral element. The teacher might use pedagogical stories to bring out the best qualities in the children.

**Class III** – special care is given in the curriculum to support the child going through the 9-year-old change by teaching self-sufficiency. The year of the farm block is an example of the inter-connected world. A residential trip to the farm is a threshold experience of confidence building teamwork; everyone's contribution to the functioning of the farm is valued. The building main lesson fosters self-esteem and teamwork and the shelter from around the world is also a picture of how humans can live in and off their environment. The different traditional professions presented give the child a sense of confidence in their future. The stories from Hebrew mythology provide the moral teaching of the year. The 10 commandments are often used to make "class commandments". Clear expectations of what makes a good friend are taught.

### **Staying safe I-III**

Empathy/pedagogical stories are used as a tool to understand each other's boundaries. Painting stories describe character traits and negotiating space and relationships in a pictorial way.

St Paul's Steiner School discourages young children being online, nevertheless, children are taught about staying safe online and who to talk to if something and someone makes you upset.

**Class IV** – the Human being and Animal main lesson comparing the human being to different aspects of the animal kingdom. Similarities are the life processes, nutrition, growth and reproduction. It lends itself to follow the life cycles of an animal more closely and make comparisons with humans. Local History and Geography lends itself to establish a sense of place. The class comes together on the residential craft trip.

**Class V** – pollination and plant reproduction are studied as part of the botany main lesson and it gives an opportunity to draw parallels with human beings; a year-long exploration of the Ancient cultures fosters an appreciation for different religions and traditions; the Olympic Games residential trip, together with up to 400 other class V students is a threshold experience to build both self-esteem and co-operation skills.

Though some children might not go through puberty until after they have left St Paul's the class teacher will endeavour to have an open communication with the parents as individual children might start puberty early. They will be supported sensitively, individually or in a group, and the teacher will make practical arrangements to support the child who starts their period. Knowing the group of children, the class teacher can adjust the Man and Animal (IV) or

Botany (V) curriculum to inform the children about changes in puberty in an age-appropriate and holistic way. The class teacher facilitates group work with the girls exploring the physical changes in a supportive and appreciative workshop.

Care will be taken to support children who are exploring or questioning their gender expression, gender identity or sexual orientation. The school creates a safe environment for children to express themselves by including LGBTQ+ role models in our curriculum, celebrating LGBT History Month in February, and Pride Month in June. Teachers are trained in LGBTQ+ awareness and access online resources to support their understanding in this area.

**By the end of primary school:**

<p><b>Families and people who care for me</b></p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability.</li> <li>• the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other’s lives.</li> <li>• that others’ families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children’s families are also characterised by love and care. that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children’s security as they grow up.</li> <li>• that marriage<sup>1</sup> represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.</li> <li>• how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Caring friendships</b></p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.</li> <li>• the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.</li> <li>• that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.</li> <li>• that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right.</li> <li>• how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Marriage in England and Wales is available to both opposite sex and same sex couples. The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 extended marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. The ceremony through which a couple get married may be civil or religious.

<b>Respectful relationships</b>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.</li> <li>practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.</li> <li>the conventions of courtesy and manners.</li> <li>the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.</li> <li>that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help.</li> <li>what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive.</li> <li>the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.</li> </ul>
<b>Online relationships</b>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not.</li> <li>that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous.</li> <li>the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them.</li> <li>how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met.</li> <li>how information and data is shared and used online.</li> </ul>
<b>Being safe</b>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context).</li> <li>about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.</li> <li>that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.</li> <li>how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know.</li> <li>how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult.</li> <li>how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep</li> </ul>

	<p>trying until they are heard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.</li> <li>• where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.</li> </ul>
--	--

**Relationships and Sex Education for Secondary school aged children aged 12 -14 years)**

**Class VI** – a new capacity to see cause and effect of actions is built upon in the curriculum; life cycle main lesson with examples from both plant and animal kingdom lend itself to talk about physical and emotional changes in adolescence, including menstruation. Class teacher plan an appropriate way of celebrating changes the children are about to go through, for example in an outdoor experience. They embark on a Roman History, exploring the making of laws, society and the speech between Brutus and Mark Anthony sparks debating skills. Class VI pupils often attend an assertiveness workshop run by Kidscape this year, in support of the anti-bullying curriculum.

We work with the sex education through various workshops, including a boy’s workshop in class VI to help with their potentially challenging transition to young adult.

**Class VII** – an outwards bound class trip to strengthen the group and individual confidence is held; Creative writing main lesson block, Wish, Wonder and Surprise supports self-expression and reflection; Physiology main lesson on health and hygiene with detailed presentation of the physical and emotional aspects of changes in puberty, sexual reproduction, pregnancy, childbirth and nurturing of infants, paralleled by wellbeing and relationship aspects.

**Class VIII** – physical changes continued to be explored during the anatomy main lesson. Self-esteem, compassion and positive relationships are continually being fostered with examples from history and literature. A challenge is their individual Project they present for the whole school community and the Class VIII play, which strengthen their individual self-belief and ability to work with others.

Sex and relationships education is integral to our PSHE and SMSC curriculum in the middle school. The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships.

In addition to the ongoing work in all lessons, as part of middle school assemblies more explicit work on self-esteem, self-compassion, positive relationships, anti-bullying and online safety, at times with outside providers. Topics covered are healthy relationships, online safety, for the older students (VII and VIII) sex and the law, contraception, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and access of sexual health and wellbeing services (See Brook.org.uk). Resilience as a barrier to addiction is explored in a special workshop with Amy Winehouse Foundation. Personal safety and First Aid are taught in stages during the last three years at St Paul’s.

At St Paul’s we foster positive relationships between the different genders of students and have high expectations of all the students regardless of gender.

A session on LGBTQIA+ awareness is also shared with class VIII covering sex, sexual orientation, respect for people's gender identity and expression and their chosen pronouns. This includes awareness of cisgender and transgender and about how to be an ally to LGBTQIA+ people, how to support those coming out and the history of the fight for equality. We do not tolerate homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments or bullying - see anti-bullying policy. If a Q & A session is held, as a whole class or in groups, whatever their developing sexuality, every student will be given sex and relationship education that is relevant for them. We will ensure that our sex and relationship education is LGBTQ+ inclusive throughout.

In the middle school, sex and relationships education is informed by this awareness, to ensure that issues relating to LGBTQ+ young people are addressed. Discussions around conception

are inclusive of IVF, assisted conception and donor conception so that all families are represented.

**By the end of secondary school:**

**Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:**

<p><b>Families</b></p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.</li> <li>• how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.</li> <li>• what marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.</li> <li>• why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.</li> <li>• the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.</li> <li>• the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.</li> <li>• how to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others’ relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.</li> </ul>
------------------------	--

<p><b>Respectful relationships, including friendships</b></p>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship. practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.</li> <li>• how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice).</li> <li>• that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people’s beliefs.</li> <li>• about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.</li> <li>• that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.</li> <li>• what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.</li> </ul>
---	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.</li> </ul>
<b>Online and media</b>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.</li> <li>about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.</li> <li>not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.</li> <li>what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.</li> <li>the impact of viewing harmful content.</li> <li>that specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.</li> <li>that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.</li> <li>how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.</li> </ul>
<b>Being safe</b>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.</li> <li>how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).</li> </ul>
<b>Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health</b>	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.</li> <li>that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.</li> <li>the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.</li> <li>that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.</li> <li>that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without</li> </ul>

	<p>sex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.</li> <li>• the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.</li> <li>• that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).</li> <li>• how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.</li> <li>• about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.</li> <li>• how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.</li> <li>• how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.</li> </ul>
--	--

### **Who teaches relationship and sex education at St Pauls?**

- The provision is mainly delivered by the KG teacher (RE) and class teacher (RSE).
- At times other teachers with relevant skills and experience might be involved in delivering certain aspects of the RSE curriculum.
- Puberty workshops for Boys and girls are often held by external providers. At times we use Sexual Health organisations such as Brook.org.uk.
- At St Paul's we check visitor's credentials along with ensuring their planned programme fits with the school's ethos.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Trustee Board

The Trustee Board will approve the RSE policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The Headteacher

- The headteacher sets out the Relationships and Sexual Education policy and through the T&L responsibilities the support is given to the teachers who are responsible for implementation. Each teacher shares their work in Early Years meeting, Teachers Meeting and College. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is involved when a disclosure is made as per Safeguarding policy.
- The head teacher is monitoring the work of the teacher through learning walks, mentoring, book looks and in meetings.
- The Headteacher is managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE

Teachers are responsible for:

- Delivering RE/RSE in a sensitive way

- Modelling positive attitudes to RE/RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE
- Teachers do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Teacher who has concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher.

## **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

## **Working in partnership with parents**

- At St Paul's Steiner School, we see parents as playing a key part in an effective relationship and sex education. Parents are the child's first teacher.
- Parents are seen as vital support to the growing child while bringing the culture and ethos of the family and we endeavour to work in partnership. We encourage the parents to have healthy conversations at home about this subject.
- The school will ensure that we comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief is one of the "protected characteristics", alongside age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex, and sexual orientation.
- Parents are informed before conversations about this subject occur in classes VII and VIII. Parents have the right to remove their children from some of the more explicit sex education lessons, assemblies and workshops held in class VII and VIII, but not from the biology main lesson on the reproductive system in class VII. It is school policy not to use "shocking" material in any part of the school, but to create an atmosphere of trust and security and teach from beautiful blackboard drawings, in keeping with the sense of reverence from previous years.
- When a parent would like to withdraw their child from this part of the curriculum the request should be in writing and a meeting needs to be held between teacher, Headteacher and parent to discuss the content and purpose of the curriculum before it will be respected. The schools will document this process to ensure a record is kept.
- The Headteacher will discuss with individual parents if they are concerned or would prefer their child not to participate. The Headteacher will reiterate the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. These could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded as well as receiving misinformation from other children. We strive for all the students to hear the same thing rather than versions that their peers might report to them if a child is not present for certain talks.
- If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education from kindergarten through to class 8.
- The Relationship and sex education policy is reviewed annually after a consultation process with the teaching and parent body and the policy is available on the school website.

## **Confidentiality and Advice**

- We appreciate that younger children will ask their teachers or other adults questions pertaining to sex or sexuality which go beyond what is set out in the Sex and Relationships curriculum. The teacher is trusted here to give an honest but age-appropriate response that is in line with the curriculum. We want to strike a balance between honesty and ensuring the child does not seek out answers from inappropriate sources such as the internet or older children.
- At St Paul's we acknowledge that children of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to differing types of questions or behaviours. Our teaching, as ever, considers these differences and will allow for the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. We recognise the significance of other factors, such as any special educational needs or disabilities of our pupils. We ensure that our teaching and materials are appropriate having regard to the age and religious backgrounds of our pupils – this can include giving faith perspectives while also ensuring that young people are aware of their legal rights and responsibilities.
- If information is sought in a casual way the relevant teacher may offer advice but anything more specific would be referred to health professionals, which might include the school doctor. Confidentiality will only be broken if the welfare of the student is at risk, and the student would be informed beforehand about the duty to share child protection concerns with the DSL.

## **Child Protection**

- There might be a rare case where a teacher receives information that an under 16 year-old is having, or are contemplating having, sexual intercourse. Steps to be taken are:
  - If the child under 12 years old, it is always a child protection issue, and Designated Safeguarding Lead needs to be informed so that sensitive arrangements can be made for parents to be informed and family can receive support.
  - The child from 12 years old and up, will be, wherever possible, persuaded to talk to parents. Only in exceptional circumstances can the teacher handle such information without parent's knowledge and DSL, Head Teacher and trustees should monitor frequency.
  - Any child protection issues are addressed. The child needs to be aware of the law. The child is accurately informed about contraception and how to protect themselves against STD's, and precisely informed where to access contraception and advice services.
  - The school has Designated Safeguarding Lead is to deal with events that might endanger the physical, emotional and/or sexual well-being of any student. The DSL will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority regarding individual cases of disclosures.