

# Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Statutory)

## Secretary of State Foreword

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. This is why we have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools, as well as making Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools

## Does sex and relationships education sexualise children?

No. SRE is part of the solution to concerns about sexualisation. The evidence shows that comprehensive SRE delays sexual activity for young people, and increases the likelihood of using contraception. The National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (NATSAL, 2013) showed a link between school-based SRE and reductions in teenage pregnancy.

## Context

To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, students need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Students can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support

Children are naturally curious about growing up, how their bodies work and how humans reproduce. Their questions need to be answered honestly, using correct language and explanations appropriate for their age and maturity, thus avoiding unnecessary mystery, confusion, embarrassment and shame.

Sex and relationships education addresses the questions and concerns raised by the biological facts – for example, exploring the feelings a new baby can bring, or the effect of puberty on friendships. It provides balance to sometimes distorted messages about sex and gender roles in the media, and helps protect children by explaining boundaries and safety, and developing the language and understanding needed to recognise abusive behaviour and seek help. It also helps students to develop respectful and consensual attitudes and behaviours.

Sex education provides an understanding that positive, caring environments are essential for the development of a good self-image and that individuals are in charge of and responsible for their own bodies. It ought to provide knowledge about the processes of reproduction and the nature of sexuality and relationships. It should encourage the acquisition of skills and attitudes which allow students to manage their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

Schools should be aware that for many young people the distinction between the online world and other aspects of life is less marked than for some adults. Young people often operate very freely in the online world and by secondary school age some are likely to be spending a substantial amount of time online. Where topics and issues outlined in this guidance are likely to be encountered by students online, schools

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**This policy will be kept under regular review in light of legal developments and best practice.**

Next Review Date – October 2021

SLT Responsibility – Vice Principals

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019.

# **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Statutory)**

should take this into account when planning how to support them in distinguishing between different types of online content and making well-founded decisions. More broadly, the internet and social media have other important characteristics which young people should be aware of in order to help them use them discriminately. For example, social media users are sometimes prepared to say things in more extreme, unkind or exaggerated ways than they might in face to face situations, and some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online. Some platforms attract large numbers of users with similar, sometimes extreme, views, who do not welcome dissent or debate. Young people should be aware that certain websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (i.e. to enable targeted advertising). In addition, criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. Schools should take these factors into account when planning teaching of these subjects and consider the overlap with their wider curriculum to ensure students know how to keep themselves and their personal information safe.

## **Objectives:**

- **To promote a positive ethos and environment for learning.**
- **To safeguard students, in line with statutory guidance, promoting their emotional wellbeing, and improving their ability to achieve in school.**
- **To promote equality in relationships, recognise and challenge gender inequality and reflect girls' and boys' different experiences and needs.**
- **To teach overtly that the Internet has developed from being an academic tool to a consumer novelty to an integral part of life, socialisation and business.**
- **To further understanding of diversity and inclusion, to see a reduction in gender-based and homophobic prejudice, bullying and violence and an understanding of the difference between consenting and exploitative relationships.**
- **To help students keep themselves safe from harm, both on and offline, enjoy their relationships and build confidence in accessing services if they need help and advice.**
- **To help students understand the benefits of healthy relationships, empower them to identify unhealthy relationships and how relationships have a lasting effect on positive and negative mental health.**
- **To reduce early sexual activity, teenage conceptions, sexually transmitted infections, sexual exploitation and abuse, domestic violence and bullying.**
- **To enable students to understand the biological aspects of reproduction.**
- **To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various methods of family planning in terms of personal preference and their social and moral implications.**
- **To recognise and be able to discuss sensitive and controversial issues such as conception, virginity, birth, child-rearing, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and technological**

# Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Statutory)

developments which involve consideration of attitudes, FGM, transgender, LGBT values, beliefs and morality. Help students understand a range of views and beliefs about relationships and sex in society including some of the mixed messages about gender, sex and sexuality from different sources including the media.

- To understand aspects of legislation relating to sexual behaviour, gender and equal opportunities and to make aware the availability of statutory and voluntary organisations which offer support in human relationships.
- To ensure children and young people's views are actively sought to influence lesson planning and teaching and that local issues and needs are responded to as necessary.
- To teach students about the law and their rights to confidentiality even if they are under 16. This provision is linked to school-based and community health services and organisations.

## Delivery

The lead teacher will need to work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education programmes complement, and do not duplicate, content covered in national curriculum subjects such as citizenship, science, computing and PE.

The Trust is free to determine how to deliver the content set out in the guidance ([Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#)), in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. Effective teaching in these subjects will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to students, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme or lessons. Teaching will include sufficient well-chosen opportunities and contexts for students to embed new knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real life situations.

The Trust is choosing to deliver relationships or sex education as part of a timetabled PSHE programme, with good outcomes. Where the provision meets the requirements of this high level framework of core content they are free to continue with this model. Other schools may choose different curricular models for delivery.

Sex education at The Trust is taught in a cross curricular way through Biology, Religious Education and LIFE. The diverse staffing and the variety of experience contained within this teaching body is seen as a valuable resource for the delivery of sex education. The provision of sex education is seen as progressive in terms of language, concepts and content which increases in depth and complexity as students progress through each Academy.

Throughout the course of teaching a variety of sensitive issues will inevitably be explored. It is recognised that an individual's sexuality is a highly personal matter. The teaching of sex education within The Trust's Academies will emphasise the need for understanding and awareness of a variety of sexual preferences across the spectrum of human sexuality.

Delivery will be sympathetic to the age, stage and individual needs of a student.

# Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Statutory)

## Year 7-13 Core Themes

Across the Trust SRE will be delivered within a PHSE structure. This will be individual to each Academy in line with the structure of their curriculum model. For example within Nunthorpe Academy this would be through discrete lessons and in Rye Hills through drop down days. All Trust Academies will use outside providers such as 'Evaluate' and 'Brook' to add depth to their offer.

### **These themes are covered by trained staff for Year 7 to 11:**

- Year 7 Healthy relationships, bullying, diversity and puberty.
- Year 8 Diversity of relationships including LGBT+ and risk taking behaviours.
- Year 9;
  - Contraception/STI.
  - Domestic abuse.
  - Peer on peer abuse.
  - Up skirting.
  - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
  - Honour Based Violence (HBV).
  - Transgender.
  - LGBT.
- Year 10 Sex education and healthy relationships.
- Year 12/13;
  - Sex education.
  - Relationships, drugs and alcohol.
  - Healthy relationships.
  - LGBT+.
  - Sexual health drop-ins.

This list is not exhaustive and will reflect pastoral needs within the Trust.

# Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Statutory)

## Sex Education in the Curriculum

### Context

The prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents. The Trust's Academies must recognise that parents are key figures in helping their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up and in preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities which sexual maturity brings. The teaching offered by The Trust should be seen as complementary and supportive to the role of parents. In an attempt to achieve this, the 1988 Education Reform Act (Section 1) states that all students should be offered the opportunity of receiving a comprehensive, well-planned programme of sex education during their academy careers through a curriculum which:

- (a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at Academy and of society; and
  - (b) Prepares such students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life;
  - (c) Is accessible to all students;
  - (d) Is sympathetic to all in terms of equality and respect.

It is recognised that sex education is a difficult issue which will place demands on Academies and teachers. However, the purpose of sex education should be to provide knowledge about loving relationships, the nature of sexuality and the processes of human reproduction. At the same time it should lead to the acquisition of understanding and attitudes which prepare students to view their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

The sex education delivered should be tailored not only to the age, but also to the understanding of students. The Trust will aim to present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner. It will be set within a clear framework of values and an awareness of the law regarding sexual behaviour. Such matters will be treated with sensitivity and great care will be taken to encourage all children to feel a sense of worth. Particular care will be taken when issues such as marital breakdown and divorce are dealt with.

### The Parental Right to Withdraw their Son or Daughter from Sex Education Lessons:

Section 241 of the Education Act 1993 gives parents the right to withdraw their children from any or all parts of the Academy's programme of **sex education**, other than those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science Order. It is realised that, under exceptional circumstances, a very small number of parents may wish to exclude their children from this programme. In this case, parents should write to the Head of School of the respective Academy, stating their objections. The Head of School will then assess the importance of the education delivered and any detrimental effects that withdrawal may have on the child. This could involve any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the class rather than the fact delivered by the staff member. The responsibility of providing appropriate and purposeful education will fall on the respective Academy. The biological element of reproduction remains within the National Curriculum in Science for Key Stage 3.

# Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Statutory)

## Advice to Individual Students:

It is understood that it is important to distinguish between the Academy's function of providing education generally about sexual matters and the giving of advice to individual students on these issues. Good teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and well-being of their students. It is also understood that this function should never trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. It is understood that particular care must be exercised in relation to giving contraceptive advice to students under the age of sixteen, for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. It is the general rule that giving an individual student advice on such matters without parental knowledge or consent would be inappropriate. Students will be given up-to-date information on a wide variety of contraceptive methods and whilst general statements about the efficacy of these methods will be given, specific advice and guidance to individuals will not be made without consultation with the parents.

The Trust has a confidential drop in service that is led by a school nurse. This is bespoke to each Academy.

Where the circumstances lead the teacher to believe that a student has embarked upon, or is contemplating, a course of conduct which is likely to place him or her at moral or physical risk or in breach of the law, the teacher has the responsibility to ensure that the student is aware of the implications and must seek advice. The member of staff will also seek advice from the Safeguarding Team.

## Aims

In the attempt to enable students to acquire knowledge, skills, responsible attitudes and behaviour with regard to sex education, The Trust aims to:

Provide a worthwhile educational experience for all its students which will present opportunities:

- to help students to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and for others, acceptance of responsibility, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity;
- to enable students to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications, and risks of certain types of behaviour and to accept that both sexes should behave responsibly in sexual matters;
- to support the personal development and social skills of the students;
- to ensure that students have an understanding of their own and others' sexuality;
- to enjoy relationships based upon mutual respect and responsibility which are free from abuse and exploitation;
- to provide information and knowledge which will counteract prejudice and ignorance;
- to develop an understanding of risk and to promote strategies for personal safety;
- to enable students to be aware of the sources of help and to acquire the skills and confidence to use them.

# Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Statutory)

## How will it be monitored and evaluated?

1. Each respective Academy lead teacher will be responsible for the self-evaluation of the provision and the material delivered. Including consultation with each Academy's SEND Lead.
2. Senior Leaders of each Academy will monitor and evaluate the provision through the line management structure.
3. Review will also form part of Trust wide and Academy specific Quality Assurance processes.
4. External visitors and providers will be checked to ensure appropriate content is delivered and that the visitor/s meet the Trust's safeguarding requirements.

## Support available regarding sexual matters

We provide support to students regarding concerns of a sexual nature through the following means:

- School nursing service weekly drop-in.
- Trust wide and Academy specific pastoral systems- see each individual academy structure which is available on Academy websites.
- The LIFE/PHSE faculty teachers
- The Safeguarding Team

## Some useful resources for students, parents, governors and staff are also included below:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/underwear-rule-schools-teaching-resources/>

<https://sexwise.fpa.org.uk/>

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/disrespect-nobody-teaching-resources-preventing>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/get-involved/education/different-families-same-love>

[https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/rise-above/overview?WT.mc\\_id=RiseAboveforSchools\\_PSHEA\\_EdComs\\_Resource\\_listing\\_Sep17](https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/rise-above/overview?WT.mc_id=RiseAboveforSchools_PSHEA_EdComs_Resource_listing_Sep17)

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis>

# Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Statutory)

<http://www.educateagainsthate.com/>

**This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

- NMAT Equalities policy
- NMAT safeguarding policy
- Cross-curricular links – Science, RE, E-safety, drugs, alcohol and tobacco policies (these may be incorporated within Academy behaviour policies).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance 2019)
- Equality Act 2010
- NMAT SEND policy
- Individual Academy alternative provision policy
- Individual Academy SMSC and FBV policies

This policy is produced by an NMAT senior leader with consultation with internal and external stakeholders.