



## **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) POLICY**

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## **POLICY NAME**

### **1 Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Ascent Academies' Trust fulfils its statutory and moral duty with regards to the teaching of 'Relationships and Sex Education'.

This policy is written in accordance with the DfE Guidance on Sex and Relationship Education, July 2000.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust policies and with individual academy procedures as appropriate.

- PSHE policy
- Science policy
- Child Protection policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Equality policy
- Special Educational Needs policy
- SMSC policy
- Confidentiality policy

This policy will be regularly reviewed and amendments can only be made following the approval of the responsible officer.

This policy applies to the Trust and to all individual academies. This policy should be read by all staff.

Instances of non-compliance with this policy will be reviewed by the Assistant Head within the academy with responsibility for RSE and may be reported to the head of academy.

### **Legal obligations**

Under current arrangements there are a number of requirements on schools in respect of RSE. These are set out in legislation and are as follows:

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places schools under a duty to promote the well-being of their pupils.
- The Education Act, 1996, as amended by the Learning and Skills Act 2000, requires head teachers and governing bodies to have regard to this guidance; to ensure that pupils learn of the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children, and that they are protected from unsuitable teaching and materials (see section 3. 1 and 3.6).
- All secondary schools are required to provide SRE which includes (as a minimum) information about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted

infections (STIs) (Education Act 2002).

- Schools must teach the statutory requirements of RSE within the National Curriculum Science Order for all phases. This includes the biological aspects of naming body parts, puberty, reproduction and infection avoidance (see sections 2.3 and 3.6).
- All primary and secondary schools are required by section 404 of the Education Act 1996 to have an up-to-date policy for SRE. This includes special schools and pupil referral units / alternative provision. It is the responsibility of the school governors to ensure that the SRE policy is up-to-date and fit for purpose. Pupils and parents must be consulted in developing the SRE policy and the policy must be available for pupils and parents to see (see section 3.2).
- Section 405 of the Education Act 1996 provides the right of parental withdrawal from all or part of SRE provided at school except for those parts included in the National Curriculum (see sections 3.6 and 3.10).

## **2 Definition of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)**

SRE “is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching.” (DfE Guidance on Sex and Relationship Education, July 2000.)

The term Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is used in this policy deliberately and aims to highlight our deeply held notion that learning and provision must go beyond a simple presentation of biological information. We believe in the development of attitudes and values, positive self-esteem and the acquisition of implicit, necessary skills to enable young people to develop and manage positive relationships: sex is just one element of a positive relationship and not the focal point without which all else would falter.

## **3 Rationale**

Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives (Sex and Relationships Education Guidance 2000).

We believe it is important to teach RSE to enable children and young people to acquire accurate information, develop skills and positive values which will guide their decision making, judgements, relationships and behaviour throughout their life.

The Trust recognises that it has a sensitive role to play with regards to Relationships and Sex Education. Pupils with learning difficulties and special educational needs generally need more help in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up, they may need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable and they may need to be

warned and prepared against unacceptable behaviour by adults. It is important that our pupils understand their right to say 'No' as they are vulnerable to abuse.

#### **4 Parents/carers**

Parents and carers have a legal right to view this policy and to have information about the Trust's RSE provision. The Trust will seek and take account of parent/carer views and endeavour to adopt a partnership approach with parents/carers. This will periodically include information/education workshops for parents/carers. The academies' approach to RSE will encourage dialogue between parents/carers and their children.

Parents right to withdraw from RSE lessons

Some parts of sex and relationship education are compulsory - these are part of the national curriculum for Science. Parents can withdraw their children from all other parts of sex and relationship education if they want.

(<https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/other-compulsory-subjects>)

Any parent wanting further information on the RSE curriculum and their right to withdraw their child from certain lessons, should contact the Head of Academy.

#### **5 Involvement of parents, pupils and staff**

A draft of this policy was provided for all staff across the Trust and their input has been used to make appropriate amendments.

Once adopted, this policy will be published on the Trust website and parents/carers, pupils and staff will be encouraged to provide feedback.

Feedback on RSE policy and practice will be gathered informally during the variety of staff meetings, pupil meetings, discussions with parents and training opportunities provided.

#### **6 Aims of RSE**

Within Ascent Trust, the main aim of Relationships and Sex Education is to help and support pupils through their physical, emotional and moral development. It promotes pupils respect for themselves and others and supports the transition from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood.

The overarching aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) are

- to help pupils to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives.
- to help and support pupils through their physical, emotional and moral development
- to enable pupils to develop the skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy and independent lives

- to develop understanding of the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children.
- to give accurate information and help pupils to develop skills to enable them to understand difference and respect themselves and others and for the purpose also of preventing and removing prejudice

Primary pupils should learn:

- About changes in the body related to puberty
- When these changes are likely to happen and what issues may cause young people anxiety and how they can deal with these;
  - How a baby is conceived and born

Secondary pupils should learn

- To build on skills from primary
  - To understand human sexuality, about relationships, love and care, and the responsibilities of parenthood
  - The reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay
  - About types of contraception, safe sex sexual health, and sources of advice and treatment
  - How the law applies to sexual relationships and the appropriateness of sexualised behaviours.

**The dangers of female genital mutilation (FGM) and that it is an illegal practise.**

It is recognised that the prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents and carers, and that they are key figures in helping their child to cope with the emotional and physical aspects of moving into adolescence and adulthood. In addition, the Trust recognises the important role played by a wide range of professionals involved with the child/young person. Teaching across the Trust therefore aims to be complementary and supportive to the role of parents, carers and professionals.

## **7 RSE Provision**

### How RSE is taught/implemented across the Trust

- Through the taught (modified) National Curriculum Science and PSHE Programmes of Study appropriate to the age and stage of development.
- Through discreet lessons or through personal care, social stories, sensory stories and social activities.
- Through pastoral support for students who experience difficulties.
- Through age and circumstance appropriate RSE.

- Through provision of appropriate information through adapted resources such as symbol supported or use of models/dolls.
- With additional support from our multi-disciplinary team and other professionals

### Our approach to RSE

RSE will be conducted within a clear morals and values framework based on the following principles:

- The value of stable and loving relationships
- Respect, understanding and empathy towards others who may have different backgrounds cultures, sexuality, feelings and views
- The development of relationships, including sexual relationships, based on mutual consent, rather than coercion
- The right not to be abused by other people or be taken advantage of
- The right of people to follow their own sexuality, within legal parameters.

We will aim

- To provide a secure, supportive, well organised and happy environment, where children and young people are able to flourish and develop emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually.
- To work in close partnership with parents, carers and other professionals in order to promote each pupils well-being and to maximise their potential.
- To provide access to help from trusted adults and helping services.

RSE involves consideration of a number of sensitive issues about which different people may hold strong and varying views. The Trust's approach to RSE will be balanced and take account of, and be sensitive to, different viewpoints but will not be based on any single personal perspective.

### An inclusive approach to RSE

'Mainstream schools and special schools have a duty to ensure that children with special educational needs and learning difficulties are properly included in sex and relationships education. Sex and relationship education should help all pupils understand their physical and emotional development and enable them to make positive decisions in their lives'. DfEE RSE Guidance July 2000

Young people may have varying needs regarding RSE depending on their circumstances and background. Ascent Academies' Trust strongly believes that all students should have access to RSE that is relevant to their particular needs. (See appendix 2 for further guidance)

### RSE curriculum

The 'Head of Academy' for each academy is responsible for defining and

producing a modified RSE curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils, in line with this policy. (See appendix 1 for further guidance on RSE curriculum expectations. Individual academies publish their PHSE curriculum on their individual websites).

### Links to other initiatives and subject areas

Promoting and delivering a successful RSE policy and programme of work is most effective when linked to other, relevant subject areas and national initiatives. These include:

- PSHE
- Science
- English Speaking and Listening
- Communication
- **Be healthy** (Every Child Matters - ECM)
  - Physically healthy
  - Mentally and emotionally healthy
  - Sexually healthy
  - Healthy lifestyles Choose not to take illegal drugs
  - Parents, carers and families promote healthy choices
- Healthy Schools

## **8 Roles and Responsibilities**

- Trustees – to adopt the policy and ensure that it is reviewed regularly in line with the policy review programme
- Executive Heads – to ensure that the policy is implemented in each of their academies. To ensure that parents have been consulted on the policy and know they have the right to withdraw their child from RSE lessons
- Head of Academy – to monitor the quality of RSE provision and teaching across the academy
- Parents and carers – are able to view this policy, request further information and withdraw their child from some aspects of the teaching of RSE
- RSE academy Lead – to maintain an overview of RSE provision and have overall responsibility for its development. This will include keeping up to date with developments and good practice, developing the provision to meet students' needs, providing support and resources for staff, arranging staff training, liaison with outside agencies and monitoring and evaluation.
- RSE teachers – to plan, prepare, teach and evaluate RSE lessons in line with this policy and guidance produced by the RSE Lead. To ensure high outcomes for pupils

- Pastoral teachers, teaching assistants and other colleagues – to ensure the principles of this policy permeate school life. To know how to provide the additional support needed by pupils.

NB: There is no specific right for teachers to refuse to teach SRE. The Trust notes that some teachers/teaching assistance may find this a difficult subject to teach for personal reasons. They should discuss this first with the Head of Academy and if it cannot be resolved it may be referred to the Executive Head or The Chief Executive.

(Appendix 3 gives further guidance on roles and responsibilities).

## **9 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Pupil achievements in RSE will be monitored annually by the Head of Academy. Information will be provided to the Chief Executive and Trustees as part of the annual report in order that they can review Trust wide progress in RSE.

The quality of teaching and learning in RSE will be monitored at least annually through each academy's monitoring and review programme. Information will be provided to the Standards committee where it will be monitored by Trustees.

Feedback from the evaluation of the monitoring information will be provided in a timely manner in order that academy improvement plans can be adapted according to targets set.

Trustees will monitor and evaluate the impact of this policy in **March 2019**.

### RSE Curriculum

The guidance suggests (DfEE guidance 'Sex and Relationship Education Guidance' (2000).) that RSE should have three main elements as follows:

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding human sexuality, sexual health, emotions and relationships.
- Learning about contraception and a range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services.
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, the benefits to be gained from such delay.
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy and STIs.

#### **Attitudes and values**

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations.
- Learning the value of family life, marriage (including same sex relationships) and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision making.

#### **Personal and social skills**

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Managing conflict.
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

RSE can take place in a variety of settings and contexts, within groups or on a one to one basis. RSE is taught gradually, so that learning can be built up year-by-year in a way that is appropriate to the age, ability and maturity of each child; responds to the needs they have, and enables them to successfully manage the challenges they face as they grow up.

## Developing values and attitudes

Because of the personal and social nature of the topics covered in RSE, **values and attitudes** are a central part of learning and moral development. There are clear values that underpin RSE including:

- mutual respect
- the value of family life, marriage and of loving and stable relationships in bringing up children
- rights and responsibilities, for self and others
- commitment to safety and wellbeing
- gender equality
- acceptance of diversity
- that violence and coercion in relationships are unacceptable

Children and young people should be supported to identify and develop these values as they progress through their school years. For example;

- the importance of fairness, equity and caring for one another is introduced in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- friendships is a central thread of primary RSE
- the importance of respect and consent in intimate relationships is developed at secondary level

The values in RSE are consistent with the values underpinning the National Curriculum, which aims to enable all children and young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives, and
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society, and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of learners.

### Each Academy's approach to RSE consists of:

- The taught (modified) National Curriculum Science Programme of Study.
- RSE modules within each Key Stage delivered within a planned PSHE programme either through discreet lessons or through personal care and social activities. Hope Wood Academy's yearly planned PSHE curriculum is based on the approach advocated by the PSHE Association and follows the following themes, into which our RSE curriculum is woven:
  - Self-Awareness (Autumn 1)
  - Self-Care, Support and Safety (Autumn 2)
  - Changing and Growing (Spring 1)
  - Managing Feelings (Spring 2)
  - Healthy Lifestyles (Summer 1)

- **The World I Live In (Summer 2)**
  - Pastoral support for students who experience difficulties.
  - Provision of appropriate information through adapted resources such as symbol supported or use of models/dolls.

Each academy's long term plan for every key stage is published on their website.

## Appendix 2

### Inclusion and RSE

Our approach to RSE will take account of:

#### **The needs of boys as well as girls**

We will consider the particular needs of boys, as well as girls, and approaches that will actively engage them.

#### **Ethnic and cultural diversity**

Different ethnic and cultural groups may have different attitudes to RSE. The school will consult students and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for, and understanding of, the views of different ethnic and cultural groups.

#### **Varying home backgrounds**

We recognise that our students may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. They may not see positive relationships or may only have a single view of relationships.

#### **Sexuality**

Our approach to RSE will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. Our pastoral support will take account of the needs of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and questioning students (LGBTQ). We shall also actively tackle homophobic bullying.

#### **Special educational needs**

We shall take account of the fact that our students may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities that result in particular RSE needs.

#### **The teaching programme for Relationship and Sex Education**

We intend that all pupils, at a level which is appropriate for their age, physical development and cognitive ability, will experience a programme of sex and relationships education. For some pupils this might take the form of simple body awareness work.

#### **Pupils who use alternative methods of communication**

Some pupils have physical, visual or hearing impairments or are unable to use speech and may use signing, symbols and/or communication switches and aids. The staff will adapt their teaching of RSE to ensure that these pupils have equal access. (For example, Writing with Symbols computer programme

includes 'private' body parts).

### **Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties**

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not excluded from the programme. Using appropriate methods, they will experience most of the basic content; self-awareness, gender awareness, body recognition, privacy.

### **Contraceptive advice to older pupils**

Pupils will be taught, in the context of sexual intimacy and safer sex, that intercourse should initially always involve using a condom. Questions about forms of contraception will be answered accurately and honestly within the student's ability to understand. If pupils need further personal advice about contraceptive use, counselling and support will be sought from appropriate agencies and personnel (Family Planning Association)

### **Adapting programmes and delivery for our learners**

All young people are entitled to good quality RSE. There are some suggested additional reasons to consider for young people with Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND) which include:

- Understanding the barriers they may face around relationships and sex as they grow up (Physical, emotional, social etc).
- Having time a space to explore issues specific to them such as prejudices around having children.
- Ensuring that they are clear on what is consensual and what is not and how to communicate this effectively.
- To understand public and private behaviours.
- To manage their own emotions and to recognise emotions in others.

Appendix 3

## **Roles and responsibilities**

**Teaching staff** All teachers are involved, to some degree, in the academy's RSE provision. Some teach RSE through the PSHE programme and some through science and other curriculum areas. All teachers play an important pastoral role by offering support to students. Any teacher can be approached by a student who experiences a difficulty regarding sex or relationships issues. Teachers will be consulted about the school's approach to RSE and aided in their work by provision of resources, background information, support and advice from experienced members of staff and access to appropriate training.

**Non-teaching staff** will be involved in a supportive role in some RSE lessons. They may play an important, informal role with pupils during personal care routines where many aspects of RSE such as body awareness and personal hygiene may be addressed. They may be involved in discussions about relationships throughout the day. Non-teaching staff will have access to

information about the RSE programme and supported in their pastoral role.

**Trustees** have responsibilities for school policies. They will be consulted about the RSE provision and policy and have regular reports at Trustee meetings.

**Parents/carers** Parents and carers have a legal right to view this policy and to have information about the school's RSE provision. They also have a legal right to withdraw their children from dedicated sex education lessons if they wish. The school will seek and take account of parent/carer views and endeavour to adopt a partnership approach with parents/carers. This will periodically include information/education workshops for parents/carers. The school's approach to RSE will encourage dialogue between parents/carers and their children.

**The school nurse** The school nurse can play a key role in supporting the teacher in RSE both in terms of advice, input into lessons, provision of pastoral support for students and resources. The school will work in ongoing consultation and partnership with the school nurse.

**Outside agencies and speakers** Outside agencies and speakers may be involved in inputting to RSE lessons and as points of referral as support services for students. The Trust will only work with agencies and speakers who are appropriate to student needs. We shall work in partnership with them and jointly plan their work within the school. The Trust will also promote relevant 'helping' agencies that students can access.

**Pupils** have an entitlement to age and circumstance appropriate RSE and to pastoral support. They will be actively consulted where appropriate about their RSE needs and their views will be central to developing the provision.

Appendix 4

### **Future DFE Intentions**

The Government has set out its intention to legislate to make PSHE education a statutory subject within the National Curriculum in key stages 1-4. It is intended that this provision will be included within the Children, Schools & Families (CSF) Bill when it is published.

As well as making PSHE education a statutory subject, the provisions in the CSF Bill will also introduce a number of further changes:

- PSHE education will become a foundation subject in Key Stages 3 and 4, with the existing non-statutory programmes of study for personal and economic well-being forming the basis for the statutory entitlement that all pupils should receive;

*(All secondary Academies currently deliver PHSE as part of their curriculum and will begin to ensure that the new guidance is introduced appropriately through the next academic year in collaboration with*

*parents and students.)*

- at primary level the proposed new programme of learning, “Understanding Physical Development, Health and Wellbeing” will be the basis of the statutory entitlement that all pupils should receive;

*(In academies with a primary department a working group will be established with parents and carers to look at the new guidance and incorporate it in to learning programmes)*

- governing bodies would retain the right to determine their school’s approach to Sex and Relationships Education (SRE), to ensure that SRE is delivered in line with the context, values and ethos of the school, but there would be no ‘opt-out’ from the statutory content;
- governing bodies would retain the duty to maintain an up-to-date SRE policy, with the expectation that they should involve parents and young people (in secondary education) in developing their SRE policy to ensure that it meets the needs of their pupils and reflects parents’ wishes and the culture of the communities they serve;
- there would continue to be a right for parents to withdraw their children from SRE, but that right would no longer apply when a child attains the age of 15 (currently the parents’ right of withdrawal applies to all school pupils up to the age of 19);

Appendix 5

### Relevant Websites

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sex-and-relationship-education>  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/381754/SECONDARY\\_national\\_curriculum.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/381754/SECONDARY_national_curriculum.pdf)  
<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/programme-study-pshe-education-key-stages-1%E2%80%935>