



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) POLICY

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Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

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 and Health Education'. (RSHE)

This policy is written in accordance with the statutory DfE Guidance "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education" September 2021.

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 within it. 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 Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and health Education (England) Regulations 2019 are made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and provide that pupil receiving primary education must be taught Relationships Education, pupils receiving secondary education must be taught RSE and that all primary and secondary pupils must be taught Health Education
- 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 and the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, 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 RSE 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 RSE. This includes special schools and pupil referral units / alternative provision. It is the responsibility of the school governors to ensure that the RSE policy is up-to-date and fit for purpose. Pupils and parents must be consulted in developing the RSE policy and the policy must be available for pupils and parents to see (see section 3.2).
- The relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, sets out both the rights of parents/carers to withdraw pupils from sex education (but not Relationships or Health Education) and the process that head teachers should follow in considering a request from a parent. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. (see sections 3.6 and 3.10).

2 Definition of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Relationships Education teaches “the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and adults.” (DfE guidance on relationships Education 2019)

This starts with pupils being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them.

From the beginning of primary school, building on early education, pupils should be taught how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy. Establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact – these are the forerunners of teaching about consent, which takes place at secondary.

Respect for others should be 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.

Definition of Sex and Relationships Education

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. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful committed relationship.

It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

For some pupils, where appropriate, RSE will include sex education. These sessions focus on the physical aspects of growing up and learning about human sexuality and sexual health.

Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem. Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

Relationships and Sex Education topics include:

Families

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Online and media

Being safe

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

Health education builds students' knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes about health. Health education teaches about physical, mental, emotional and social health. It motivates students to improve and maintain their health, prevent disease, and reduce risky behaviours.

Health education topics include:

Changing adolescent body

Puberty

Menstrual wellbeing

Menstrual cycle.

Sexual health and hygiene

3 Rationale

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.

Teaching should equip children and young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

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.

As of September 2020, parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Parents who have concerns about RSE are encouraged to talk to staff in the Trust to discuss the programme in detail.

In the event of such a request being made, we will discuss this request with parents and, where appropriate, with the child. This is to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

Pupils have the right to choose to opt into sex education, at any time from three terms before their 16th birthday.

Parents do not have the right to request their child be withdrawn from Relationships Education lessons, or from Health Education lessons. These parts of the curriculum are covered by the statutory national curriculum in science and RSE. Parents who have concerns about RSE are encouraged to talk to the class teacher to discuss the programme in detail

5 Involvement of parents, pupils and staff

Parents and carers have an especially important role to play in RSE; they need to feel confident that our programme complements and supports their role. To enable this an information session for parents is available to discuss the RSE programme. Teaching resources will be shown and opportunities will be given for discussion and questions.

Pupils are encouraged to communicate their concerns and problems with parents/carers where appropriate.

It is the responsibility of Heads of Academy to ensure that both the staff and parents are informed about our RSE policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also their responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can deliver the RSE programme effectively, and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity. Training is provided for teachers through Academy based and centrally provided INSET, through team-teaching and peer observation. The Head of Academy monitors the policy and reports to Trustees, when requested on the effectiveness of the policy

A draft of this policy was provided for all parents and 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, we aim to empower our pupils with dignity and self-reliance. We emphasise the value of behaviour that promotes self-respect, respect for others and ensures a happy and safe learning environment. We strive to develop an ethos in which each person is respected and values whatever their gender, class, race, disability or sexual identity. We aim to reflect this in the RSE policy, while respecting the religious and cultural beliefs across our academies.

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.

However, because our young people develop at such different and diverse rates, it is important that we work with parents and carers to ensure that we manage this curriculum delivery appropriately and sensitively reflecting individual needs. 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 a curriculum that is personalised to age, development and context
- 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 pupil's 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

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)

The curriculum within the Trust Academies has been developed to take into account the diversity of the Academies' population and to meet the individual needs of the pupils within the Trust. This policy has also been written with the Equalities Act 2010 in mind, and consideration on the nine protected characteristics. We have consulted with parents and carers to maximise their opportunity for influence over the content and delivery. The teaching materials we use are regularly reviewed to ensure their suitability. The pupils are taught in mixed sex groupings for most Relationships Education lessons, although teachers can use single sex settings when this is thought to be more appropriate for RSE and some Health Education content.

RSE curriculum

The Head of 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 and more in-depth curriculum information 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

- Head of Academy – 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. 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 RSE. 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 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 2024

RSE Curriculum

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.

Portland Academy 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: Coverage is based around, 'The Whole Picture' which is a resource created by a partnership of professionals from across Sunderland.

Secondary KS3:

- Living in the Wider World (CEIAG) Autumn. *To introduce students into mini enterprise seasonal projects*
- Health & Wellbeing (Spring)
- RSE (Summer)

Secondary KS4:

- Health & Wellbeing (Autumn)
- Living in the Wider World (CEIAG). *To take part in National Careers Week, the Moving On Event and FE taster visits*
- RSE (Summer)

Sixth Form:

- A weekly-timetabled PSHE lesson and additional RSE session as required to cover areas according to student needs. Any student who requires information or advice has the right to choose the adult whom they wish to approach for assistance.

Ash Trees Academy. All members of staff are aware of the importance of promoting a child's personal, social and emotional development by utilising a 'holistic' approach to the curriculum and the teaching and learning in all aspects of PSHE.

RSE is part of the PSHE curriculum. Through it we give consideration to pupils' needs and ability to understand, and aim to

- Develop moral understanding
- Encourage pupils to feel positive about themselves, develop confidence and self esteem
- Develop respect for others and themselves
- Encourage pupils to make positive choices
- Help pupils to develop healthy relationships
- Help pupils understand how relationships are formed, maintained and sometimes ended
- Prepare pupils for change, physically and emotionally
- Develop an increasing vocabulary linked to aspects of RSE
- Name and describe feelings and how these may present
- Teach pupils about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Encourage assertiveness
- Help pupils stay safe
- Develop an awareness of family life and how this may differ
- Develop an understanding and acceptance of diversity

Staff use their judgment as to what the pupils will understand and their emotional maturity to plan appropriate programmes of work.

Barbara Priestman Academy's planned PSHE curriculum is based on the approach advocated by the PSHE Association which is adapted to meet the specific needs of our students. The curriculum also offers the opportunity for flexibility and the ability to react to current local, national and international affairs. RSE is woven throughout the PSHE curriculum which is based on the themes of :

- Health and wellbeing
- Relationships
- Living in the wider world

1:1 and small group intervention and support tailored to meet individual needs is available through work with our counsellor, speech and language therapist and wellbeing specialists.

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

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 Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), to ensure that RSE 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 RSE policy, with the expectation that they should involve parents and young people (in secondary education) in developing their RSE 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 RSE, 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);

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.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/programme-study-pshe-education-key-stages-1%E2%80%935>