



# WEST GRANTHAM

Church of England Secondary Academy

## RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Review cycle:	Two yearly
Reviewed by:	Assistant Principal Teaching and Learning
Approved by:	Local Governing Body

VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHANGES
2	May 2023	Stevie Thornton	<p>4a, page 5 - PSHE is taught as discreet drop-down days, calendared throughout the academic year on a rotation basis each half-term</p> <p>4c, page 5 – teaching and non-teaching staff</p> <p>4e, page 5 - There is an option for staff who are uncomfortable with topics/content to make bespoke arrangements with the lead for PSHE to change/swap topics with other staff.</p> <p>4i, page 5 - At KS4, all students are taught about sexuality, sexual relationships (both in and outside of marriage) and artificial and natural contraception.</p> <p>4j, page 5 - Other topics in RE support the delivery of PSHE and these can be identified on the appropriate Learning Journeys (available under the curriculum section of the academy's website)</p> <p>6, page 6 - Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from RSE content that is not part of the statutory National Curriculum for Science up until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the academy will arrange this.</p>
3	December 2025	Lee Hulse	<p>3 g (Page 5). The updated statutory RSHE (relationships, sex and health education guidance) guidance. Schools have until Sep 2026 to implement these changes.</p>

Our academy mission is to provide outstanding provision for all our pupils and support them through every stage of their journey with us. We believe that education is more than academic; we are successful because we work as a family, supporting academic and pastoral needs to develop inquisitive, resilient and well-rounded students who reach their full potential. We work hard to inspire and nurture our students, whatever their age, so that they feel both safe to explore their education and challenged to succeed at every level.

Our RSE policy has been written with these core messages in mind.

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### 1. Introduction to the policy

The Sex Education Forum defines RSE as ‘learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It equips young people with the information, skills and positive values they need to have safe, fulfilling relationships, understand sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.’

Sex education is part of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum in our academy. We teach this area within a framework of Christian values and with the Christian understanding that sex is a gift of God as part of creation. Whilst we use RSE to inform students about sex, we do this with regard to matters of morality and individual responsibility, and in a way that allows students to ask and explore moral questions. Sensitivity and respect should be shown to all students when teaching RSE and should be taught in a way to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of students based on their home/personal circumstances or their own sexuality.

Our RSE policy has been written and based on the Department for Education’s ‘Relationships education, relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and health education’ 2019 statutory guidance document.

This policy also takes into account Framework for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) and is consistent with the Christian principles of the academy as determined by the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham Multi-Academy Trust (SNMAT).

### 2. Christian Context

As a Christian academy, when teaching RSE we appreciate the following points:

- RSE should be based on inclusive Christian principles and values, emphasising respect, compassion, loving care and forgiveness.
- RSE should be taught in the light of the belief in the absolute worth of all people and the unconditional infinite love of God.
- RSE should reflect that sex is a gift from God as part of creation: a human longing for an intimate union.
- RSE should be sensitive to the circumstances of all students and be mindful of the variety of expressions of family life in our culture, yet it should also uphold the Christian values regarding relationships and marriage.
- Issues regarding human sexuality should be addressed sensitively.
- The exploration of reproduction and sexual behaviour within the science curriculum should stand alongside the exploration of relationships, values and morals and Christian belief within the RE

curricula.

- The sanctity of marriage is an important belief in Christian teaching and practice. Students should learn the significance of marriage and families as key building blocks of community and society.
- RSE is part of a wider social, personal, spiritual and moral education process.
- Students should learn that some people choose not to engage in sexual activity and that this should be respected and valued as a response to the gift of faith.
- Students should be made aware of God's forgiveness and that there is always a way back to Him.

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

In line with mandatory government guidance we build on students RSE knowledge from primary school to teach our students the following points, about families, relationships, being safe and the law.

We will cover each of these areas appropriately and sensitively taking into account each of the protected characteristics outlined the 2010 Equality Act and we will adjust materials as required for SEND students to ensure they are accessible.

#### **a) Families**

Students should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- what marriage is, including their legal status – for example, 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.
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- 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), how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

#### **b) Respectful relationships, including friendships**

Pupils should know:

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as: 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
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- 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
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help

- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- 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

c) **Online and media**

Pupils should know:

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- 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
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- the impact of viewing harmful content
- that specifically sexually explicit material, for example 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
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

d) **Being safe**

Pupils should know:

- 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
- 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

e) **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health**

Pupils should know:

- 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
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- 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)
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing

- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

#### f) **The Law**

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- Marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)

#### g) **Guidance changes to be implemented by September 2026**

The new guidance is currently under review, and we will have until September 2026 to adapt our curriculum throughout the year to meet these updated requirements which are summarised below:

The guidance places **greater emphasis on misogyny, violence against women and girls** and related factors, including the negative impact of pornography, in line with government priorities and widespread safeguarding concerns about such issues.

**Aspects of personal safety have now been included for the first time**, including a focus on how to recognise risk and keep safe around roads, railways, including level crossings, and water, including the water safety code, as well as personal safety in public spaces. There is a recognition of the safeguarding risks caused by the rapid technological developments in recent years, with requirements now covering topics from AI deepfakes to toxic online influencers and subcultures.

## 4. **Organisation**

We teach RSE through different aspects of the curriculum, though PSHE, Science and Religious Education are the main curriculum areas set to cover RSE.

### **PSHE**

- a) PSHE is taught as discreet drop-down days, calendared throughout the academic year on a rotation basis each half-term
- b) During these sessions we aim to fulfil each of the objectives listed in section 3 of this policy, tackling each topic across the different year groups in an age-appropriate manner. For example, our year 7 students start their RSE education by learning about healthy relationships and it is not until later years that they are introduced to topics such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and pornography.
- c) The content covered during PSHE sessions is delivered by a mixture of teaching and non-teaching staff, form tutors, senior leaders and outside professionals.
- d) All resources used have been selected and developed by a PSHE specialist and teaching staff are able to access training on the delivery of RSE prior to the relevant session.
- e) There is an option for staff who are uncomfortable with topics/content to make bespoke arrangements with the lead for PSHE to change/swap topics with other staff.

### **Science**

- f) KS3 students are taught about puberty, male and female reproductive organs, sex cells, the act of sex, fertilisation and pregnancy.
- g) GCSE students then cover each of the areas above in far greater detail. Considering also the role of hormones in reproduction, contraception and fertility.

### **Religious Education**

- h) Both KS3 and KS4 RE students learn about the commitment of people of faith to each other in marriage and how this is expressed in marriage ceremonies. They also learn about the beliefs and values that underpin this commitment and support the nurture and care of children in the family.
- i) At KS4, all students are taught about sexuality, sexual relationships (both in and outside of marriage) and artificial and natural contraception.
- j) Other topics in RE support the delivery of PSHE and these can be identified on the appropriate Learning Journeys (available under the curriculum section of the academy's website).

## **5. Difficult Questions and Sensitive Issues**

Whilst we will provide opportunities for students to talk honestly and openly, at the same time we understand the need to respect the pace of students' maturation and therefore take this into account when dealing with particularly sensitive issues.

In the context of RSE sensitive issues are dealt with by teachers in the form of whole class teaching, discussion and answering questions. The emphasis is on biological facts, with no judgment. However, where students ask questions that raise concern the teacher/staff member will pass information on to the student's Head of House and the safeguarding team.

Advice for teachers on particularly sensitive issues such as female circumcision can be found at: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/familyandcommunity/pupilprotection>

Due to the nature of this content, staff are reminded that whilst teaching such sensitive topics they may receive safeguarding disclosures and/or feel the need to complete referrals for support, all of which will be completed through CPOMS as per our safeguarding policy.

As underage sexual activity should always be seen as a possible indicator of Child Sexual Exploitation and safeguarding procedures will be followed if deemed necessary (see Section 9).

## **6. The role of parents/carers**

The academy is well aware that the primary role in students' RSE lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of students at our academy through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we:

Inform parents/carers about the academy's relationship and sex education policy and practice;

- Answer any questions that parents may have about the relationship and sex education of their child;
- Take seriously any issue that parents/carers raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for relationship and sex education in the academy;
- Inform parents/carers about the teaching about relationship and sex education in the academy so that the parents and academy can work together to support the pupil with regard to relationship and sex education. We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, students will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing responsibilities.

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from RSE content that is not part of the statutory National Curriculum for Science up until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the academy will arrange this. If a parent/carer requests that their child be removed from relationships and sex education, we will support this decision and provide support by offering access to our resources should the parent/carer wish to use these at home to discuss relationship and sex education with their child.

If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education programme, they need to:

- Write a letter to Mr Hulse, Assistant Principal, and make clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in.
- A discussion with Mr Hulse will follow to ensure clarity. The academy always complies with the wishes of parents/carers in this regard.

## **7. The role of the local church and community**

We encourage other valued members of the community to work with us to provide advice and support to the students with regard to health education. In particular, members of the Local Health Authority, Relate, Stonewall, Pintsized and the Police give us valuable support with our sex education programme. Other people that we call on include our chaplain, social workers and church youth workers.

As part of our safeguarding protocols, visitors/external agencies which support the delivery of RSE will be required to submit their resources prior to the session, so they can be reviewed to ensure they achieve the aims and outcomes set out in this policy and are age-appropriate. All sessions led by visitors/external agencies will also have a teacher and/or member of staff present.

## **8. Confidentiality and Safeguarding Students Procedures**

Teachers conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue.

If the teacher has concerns, they will draw their concerns to the attention of the relevant Designated Person for Child Protection within the academy.

The Designated Person will then deal with the matter in consultation with the Senior Designated Person and relevant agencies, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

## 9. The role of the Assistant Principal responsible for RSE

It is the responsibility of Mr Hulse, Assistant Principal, to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our sex and relationships education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also his responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The Assistant Principal liaises with external agencies regarding the academy sex education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with students on these issues are aware of the academy policy, and that they work within this framework.

The Assistant Principal monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

## 10. Monitoring and review

The governing body monitors our RSE policy on a regular basis. The governing body gives serious consideration to any comments from parents about RSE and makes a record of all such comments. Governors require the Assistant Principal to keep a written record, giving details of the context and delivery of the RSE programme that we teach in our academy. Governors should scrutinise materials to check that they are in accordance with the academy's ethos.

In addition, teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RSE through our quality assurance procedures. Students will have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning at appropriate times and have access to additional support, if required. Student voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities to ensure they remain effective.

The RSE Policy has clear links with other academy policies aimed at promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the:

- Anti –Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Acceptable and Responsible Use of Internet Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

Documents that have informed the academy's RSE policy include:

- *Education Act (1996)*
- *Learning and Skills Act (2000)*
- *Education and Inspections Act (2006)*
- *Equality Act (2010)*
- *Supplementary Guidance RSE for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2014)*
- *Keeping children safe in education – Statutory safeguarding guidance (2016)*
- *Children and Social Work Act (2017)*
- *Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory Guidance (2025)*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68b8499e11b4ded2da19fd92/Relationships\\_education\\_relationships\\_and\\_sex\\_education\\_and\\_health\\_education\\_-\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68b8499e11b4ded2da19fd92/Relationships_education_relationships_and_sex_education_and_health_education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)