



Relationships & Sex Education and Health Education (Secondary) Policy

Document provenance

This policy was approved by Trustees as follows –

Approver: Education Committee

Date of Approval: March 2021

Executive Leadership Team Owner:

Date of Review: March 2023

National Director of Education

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed every two years. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

Summary of changes at last review:

- Definition of relationships & sex education and health education;
 - Inclusion of statutory guidance ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education’ (DfE)
 - Specific reference to SEND
 - Schools freedom to determine age-appropriate content;
- Amended academy aims to fit with this statutory guidance;
- Reference to the academy Personal Development Lead;
- Specific reference to the link between this policy and keeping children safe;
- Amended coordination examples (e.g. check-ins, PSHE and SMSC provision);
- Inclusion of DfE update due to COVID-19 where schools have flexibility to deliver by summer term 2021¹;
- Specific reference to clear ground rules for sensitive topics;
- Specific reference to assessment of progress being based on regular feedback;
- Update to ‘The role of parents’ around withdrawal (up to and until three terms before the child turns 16) and any discussions recorded on CPOMS;
- Signposting to additional resources for staff training;
- Consideration for staff wellbeing based on personal experiences/views.

Related policies

- Relationships Education and Health Education (Primary) Policy

Summary of policy:

The policy outlines the legal framework around relationships and sex education for secondary school pupils and explains how the curriculum content will be determined and quality assured.

¹[DfE Guidance: Implementation of relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education 2020 to 2021](#)

Academy contact for policy questions (i.e. Personal Development Lead):

E-ACT national contact for policy questions:

Governance.team@e-act.org.uk

Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (Secondary) Policy

1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. Relationships and sex education is giving 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 marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). 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. Health Education is teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing (and that they are interlinked) to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. It should enable them to recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others and, when issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.
- 1.2. Relationships and sex education (hereafter to include health education) is a key part of helping children and young people to stay safe and be well-prepared for life in modern Britain. This policy outlines the legal framework around relationship education for secondary school pupils, how the curriculum is planned and quality checked and confirmation that from September 2020 pupils cannot be withdrawn from these lessons by their parents. Parents should be aware that our academies have to uphold the legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and not discriminate against anyone with protected characteristics.²

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all E-ACT secondary academies.

3. Legislation and Regulation

- 3.1. The legal framework and guidance came into effect from September 2019 and is an amendment to the Children and Social Work Act 2017³. Section 34 states:
 - 3.1.1. Relationships education to be provided to pupils of compulsory school age receiving primary education at schools in England;
 - 3.1.2. Relationships and sex education to be provided (instead of sex education) to pupils receiving secondary education at schools in England.

- 3.2. The regulations must include:

² [Equality Act 2010: Guidance](#)

³ [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)

- 3.2.1. Schools to make statements of policy in relation to the education to be provided, and to make the statements available to parents or other persons;
- 3.2.2. The circumstances in which a pupil (or a pupil below a specified age) is to be excused from receiving relationships and sex education or specified elements of that education.
- 3.2.3. When relationships education or relationships and sex education is given, the pupils learn about:
 - Safety in forming and maintaining relationships;
 - The characteristics of healthy relationships, and,
 - How relationships may affect physical and mental health and well-being.
- 3.3. The education is appropriate having regard to the age and the religious background of the pupils.
- 3.4. We must also have regard to the statutory guidance 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE).⁴
 - 3.4.1. Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning teaching for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities who represent a large minority of pupils. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility.
 - 3.4.2. Schools will retain freedom to determine an age-appropriate, developmental curriculum which meets the needs of young people.
 - 3.4.3. Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught. As staff are not qualified to give legal advice, pupils will be directed to appropriate sources of advice.

4. Policy Statement

4.1. The academy aims to help pupils understand:

- Characteristics of a healthy family (commitment, stability, care, security etc) and how to recognise/respond if a family relationship is making them feel unhappy/unsafe;
- Respecting differences in others' families;
- That marriage (civil or religious) is a formal/legal commitment intended for life;
- The importance of friendships and its characteristics (caring, respect, trust, loyalty, kindness etc); and how to recognise/respond if a friendship is making them feel unhappy/unsafe;
- Respect and respecting difference (including self-respect, bullying, cyberbullying,

⁴ [DfE Statutory Guidance: Relationships Education and RSE and Health Education](#)

- stereotyping, permission-seeking/giving);
- Online risks (people, relationships, data) and how to stay safe online/report concerns;
- Being safe through boundaries, privacy, a person's body belonging to them, responding appropriately to adults, how to recognise/report feeling unsafe and abuse;
- The importance of their physical, emotional and moral development;
- How to develop skills to enable them to make healthy responsible choices about their health and wellbeing (including mental health);
- How to move more confidently and responsibly into adolescence;
- Basic first aid;
- The facts/risks with smoking, alcohol and drugs;
- Different types of committed relationships and why marriage must be freely entering into;
- Characteristics of successful parenting;
- How to determine whether sources of information are trustworthy and when a relationship is unsafe;
- Managing conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships;
- How stereotypes can cause damage (e.g. normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice);
- Tolerance of others' beliefs;
- Violent behaviour, coercive control, sexual harassment and why these are always unacceptable;
- Risks with sharing online material, the impact of viewing harmful content, how data is collected/shared/used online;
- The concepts and laws of a range of safeguarding risks (i.e. sexual consent, exploitation, grooming, domestic abuse, honour-based abuse, FGM);
- Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health and the increased risks with alcohol and drugs.

4.2. This policy is fully considered in conjunction with keeping children safe and it is a key aspect of safeguarding through raising pupils' awareness and providing an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues.

5. Coordination and Implementation

5.1. The proposed content of a programme of relationship and sex education from Year 7 to Year 11 will be determined by each academy and overseen by the Regional Education Directors.

5.2. The headteacher in each secondary academy will oversee the planning of a programme of content for relationships education. Each Regional Education Director will review this on an annual basis with our secondary headteachers. The headteachers will ensure it is age appropriate, meets all statutory guidance and is taught well.

5.3. Relationships and sex education is coordinated by the Personal Development Lead and delivered through:

- National curriculum subjects (e.g. citizenship, science, computing, PE, RE);
- Themes and topics within PSHE;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision;
- Pastoral, tutor time, check-ins and assemblies;
- Use of external agencies/organisations to enhance existing delivery – The academy will ensure appropriate checks are completed on any visitors to ensure their credentials and that the delivery is in line with the planned programme.

5.4. Staff will ensure clear ground rules are set when teaching sensitive topics. Examples include: safeguarding, confidentiality, respect, listening and non-judgemental.

5.5. We have high expectations of the quality of pupils' work within relationships education. We will build on the knowledge that pupils have previously acquired and obtain regular feedback to assess and capture progress.

5.6. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DfE issued guidance to schools⁵. It states: 'Schools that are not ready to teach the new subjects, or are unable to adequately meet the requirements because of the challenging circumstances, should aim to start preparations to deliver the new curriculum as soon as possible and start teaching the new content by at least the start of the summer term 2021.'

5.7. As recommended in this guidance, we have prioritised supporting mental health and wellbeing as pupils return to schools.

6. The role of parents

6.1. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at the academy through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation.

6.2. In promoting this objective, we:

- Inform parents about the academy's relationship education policy and practice;
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the relationship education of their child;
- Inform parents about the best practice known regarding relationship education.

6.3. We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing bodies and their increasing responsibilities.

6.3.1. We will provide clear opportunities for all parents and carers to know what will be taught and when, and to discuss the programme of relationship education lessons so that they understand the purpose and our approach. We will explain what the issues are and how they are taught and give parents and carers the opportunity to

⁵ [DfE Guidance: Implementation of relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education 2020 to 2021](#)

see the materials the academy uses in its teaching.

- 6.3.2. Parents should be aware that since September 2020, they no longer have the right to withdraw their child from any part of our relationships education or health education programmes at primary or secondary level.
- 6.3.3. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory relationships and sex education. We will discuss any request with parents/carers (and the child if appropriate) to understand the rationale, provide clarity on the purpose, the benefits of inclusion and the detrimental effects of withdrawal. This will be recorded on CPOMS. Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

7. Training

- 7.1. Headteachers are responsible for organising the training of staff and assuring the quality of this training.
- 7.2. Staff will receive training that equips them with the knowledge and understanding to deliver our E-ACT policy and programme of relationships and sex education lessons effectively.
- 7.3. Staff wellbeing will also be considered at all times. Staff will discuss with their line manager if they have any personal experience or views that need to be considered to ensure delivery is appropriate and effective for all.
- 7.4. The DfE have provided useful resources to support this process:
 - [DfE Guidance: Teacher Training - Being Safe](#)
 - [DfE Guidance: Teaching about relationships, sex and health](#)
- 7.5. The PSHE Association also provides a wealth of resources to support staff training: www.pshe-association.org.uk

8. Responsibilities

- 8.1. The following responsibilities apply in relation to this policy:
 - The Board of Trustees is responsible for evaluating the impact of the policy and for reviewing it annually to ensure compliance with statutory regulations.
 - The National Director of Education and the Regional Education Directors are responsible for monitoring the implementation and impact of the policy.
 - Headteachers (together with Personal Development Leads) are responsible for

implementing the policy and assuring high quality in the teaching of relationships and sex education.

9. Monitoring and Compliance

9.1. This policy will be monitored in Regional Performance Boards (RPBs) throughout the year.

9.2. The Regional Education Directors will work with headteachers to review compliance of this policy and provide an evaluation to the Executive Leadership Team about implementation including the quality of staff training and engagement with parents/carers.