

Relationships and sex education policy

January 2024

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1 Policy statement

The government requires that relationships and sex education will be age-appropriate, building knowledge and life skills over time in a way that prepares pupils for issues they will soon face.

This focuses on:

- different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships, dealing with strangers and, at secondary school, intimate relationships;
- how to recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, including self-respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent, and how to manage conflict, and also how to recognise unhealthy relationships;
- how relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health;
- healthy relationships and safety online; and
- factual knowledge, at secondary school, around sex, sexual health and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships.

2 Scope and purpose

Relationships and sex education are learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships, including marriage, and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health, including online safety.

Diverse Academies wholeheartedly supports this philosophy and believes it is best taught as part of personal, social, health and citizenship education. The programme seeks to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students as well as preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life in a digital age. It also incorporates the major strands of the National Healthy School Standard.

3 Responsibility for implementing the policy

Diverse Academies Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. The Trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Principal.

3.1 Members of the Senior Leadership for each academy will be responsible alongside Pastoral leaders for the drawing up of the RSE appendix to this policy. Students have the opportunity to provide their views through student voice activities and parents can contribute through parent consultation activities.

3.2 The appendices must outline how the academy delivers the curriculum on:

- safety in forming and maintaining relationships
- the characteristics of healthy relationships
- how relationships may affect mental and physical health

3.3 The RSE appendix will be developed in consultation with parents and the local community whilst complying with the Equality Act (2010). It will allow flexibility to respond to local public health and community issues.

Role of senior leaders and pastoral heads in each academy

These members of staff will together:

- a. Manage all aspects of the RSE programme developing curriculum materials where appropriate
- b. Liaise with external agencies to deliver specific elements of the programme
- c. Monitor and quality assure the programme to ensure continuity and progression within the spiral curriculum.
- d. Ensure high-quality training is provided for teachers delivering RSHE.

4 Aims and objectives of RSE

The aim of RSE is to help students develop a healthy, safer lifestyle. The overall objectives of the RSE curriculum are concerned about raising awareness of attitudes and values, developing personal and social skills and promoting knowledge and understanding. RSE covers more than biological facts and information. It endeavours to help young people develop self-esteem, self-responsibility as well as the acquisition of understanding and attitudes which prepare students to develop caring, stable relationships. Appreciation of the value of self-respect, dignity, stable relationships, marriage, civil partnership and parental duty should be encouraged in all students together with sensitivity to the needs of others, loyalty and acceptance of responsibility. All sexual relationships and diverse family groups are also discussed.

5 The content and organisation of the RSE

RSE will be taught through timetabled lessons, pastoral/tutor sessions, assemblies and dedicated events.

Diverse Academies believes in a whole-academy approach and contributions can be made by different curriculum areas. All teaching is reinforced by the general ethos of the academy in creating a supportive environment for all students. Students are regularly informed of who can offer confidential support and where they can access sexual health services. Across all key stages, students will be supported with developing the following skills:

- communication (including how to manage changing relationships and emotions);
- recognising and assessing potential risks;
- assertiveness;
- seeking help and support when required;
- informed decision making;
- self-respect and empathy for others;
- recognising and maximising a healthy lifestyle;
- managing conflict;
- discussion and group work.

6 Sensitive issues and safeguarding

It is inevitable that controversial issues may occur as part of RSE e.g. divorce, rape, abortion, etc. The issue will be addressed with sensitivity and at a level appropriate to the age group, in an objective manner free from personal bias. Account must be taken of different viewpoints, e.g. different religious beliefs. Discussion should be set within the legal framework and students made aware of the law as it relates to these issues. Students are made aware that some information cannot be held confidential, and should understand that if certain disclosures are made, certain actions will ensue. At the same time students will be offered sensitive and appropriate support.

7 Confidentiality and disclosure

It is almost inevitable that effective RSE which allows for open discussion to take place may lead to disclosures from students. It is essential that those teaching RSE are completely familiar with the

child protection procedures. Student disclosures or suspicion of abuse must be followed up with the student concerned, that same day and referred to the designated senior teacher for child protection or the designated person. They will deal with these disclosures or suspicions in line with the child protection policy.

8 Health professionals

They are bound by their own professional codes of conduct, but in the classroom setting they are also bound by relevant academy policies. Outside the teaching situation they can give one-to-one advice or information to a student on health-related matters including contraception.

9 Teenage pregnancy – contraception advice

By law teachers are not allowed to give individual or personal advice. They may offer advice, but only to a group with reference to legal situation and the aspect of sexually transmitted diseases. However, students should be educated as to the other sources of advice and support.

10 Family life

The value of family life is an important aspect, which will be approached largely through a consideration of the qualities and relationships between the group of people, with the emphasis on; respect; caring and support. This will be in the context of heterosexual and same-sex relationships. All family groupings are discussed and respected. It will include consideration of permanent, monogamous relationships.

11 Religion and faith

Through curriculum days, citizenship or personal and social development lessons and by linking to other curriculum areas such as religious studies, students are made aware of other religions, faiths, cultures and citizenship. Where there is a cultural or ethnic mix in the classroom, teachers

will need to make themselves aware of pertinent issues relating to the needs of specific students, for example, discussion of some topics in a mixed sex group is forbidden in some religions.

12 Equal opportunities, inclusion and disability

RSE must be inclusive and should seek to help young people to:

- a. Be aware of sexuality
- b. Understand the arguments for and benefits of delaying sexual activity
- c. Understand the reasons for having protective sex
- d. Value themselves and others
- e. Avoid exploitation
- f. Understand the wider legal implications of the decisions they may make

Whilst these issues are pertinent for all young people regardless of their physical or intellectual capabilities it is essential that language and methodologies used are appropriate and adapted where necessary to accommodate their disability.

13 Children and young people in public care

Children and young people in public care are particularly vulnerable to poor sexual and emotional health. They often miss out on RSE at home, at their academy and in care because of the often-disrupted pattern of their experiences. Designated staff from each academy will ensure that each young person's entitlement is met in this regard.

14 Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+)

Within the PSHE framework, teachers should help students to develop skills to enable them to understand difference and respect themselves and others. This will lead to a greater understanding of the nature of sexuality, removing the likelihood of prejudice and bullying.

The sexual, social, emotional, and mental health needs of LGBTQ+ young people will be addressed through designated staff at the respective academy or other externally sourced professionals.

Diverse Academies is committed, through a formal partnership with Stonewall, to promote the well-being of children who identify as LGBTQ+, and to educate the wider academy community on issues around gender identity.

Homophobic Bullying

Diverse Academies will take positive steps to eradicate homophobia as a motivator for bullying. Through curriculum days, citizenship, personal and social development lessons and subjects such as religious studies work will include discrimination, social injustice and respecting diversity, with specific reference to the human rights of gay, lesbian and bisexual people. Homophobic bullying within any of the Trust academies is not acceptable. Diverse Academies will support all students in a positive manner observing the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

15 HIV/AIDS awareness and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

As part of the RSE programme issues of contraception; HIV/AIDS; STIs; sexuality and abortion are addressed. Facts are presented in a balanced and objective way, with students being encouraged to consider their attitudes and values. They are made aware of the difference between fact, opinion and religious belief.

16 RSE and students with special educational needs and disability

Diverse Academies Trust is an inclusive organisation. Students with special educational needs and disability will, wherever possible, follow the mainstream curriculum and may have supporting lessons from a teaching assistant. The students' opinions will be sought and valued as with all students. Appropriate interventions will be made to enable academies to handle SEN as appropriate on an individual basis.

17 Sexual harassment and sexual violence

Diverse Academies will ensure that students understand that sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence (including sexualised language) are not acceptable. There will be a focus on developing healthy relationships with an understanding of acceptable behaviour and the right of everyone to be treated well.

18 RSE and students with SEMH

Diverse Academies will ensure that students with SEMH have RSE with tailored support by designated staff where appropriate.

19 Physical health and mental wellbeing

Diverse Academies will promote positive physical health and mental wellbeing. This will include coping with puberty changes.

20 Staff training

RSE can be a sensitive issue and teachers may welcome support and training. Provision will be made available for teaching staff to clarify legislation, curriculum requirements and to consider appropriate teaching approaches and materials. Diverse Academies will support the use of visitors from outside the trust (such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE).

21 Monitoring, evaluation and review

To ensure that the RSE programme is effective; is meeting the needs of students and complies with RSE guidelines the following strategies will be used to quality assure the Diverse Academies RSE programme:

- a. Evaluation self-review from students after specific topics or at the end of key stages
- b. Comments from students and representatives of the Student Forum
- c. Whole class discussions

22 Dissemination of the policy

The policy will be located on the Diverse Academies website to ensure that it is disseminated to all stakeholders. Copies will be available at individual academy receptions and academy websites will have a direct link to this policy and each academy will have their academy specific appendix on their website.

23 Parental rights to withdraw

Our academies will continue to be required to describe the teaching of RSE and will continue to provide opportunity for consultation with parents. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from any part of the Relationships Education programme in primary or secondary school. Parents will be able to withdraw their child from primary school classes that address aspects of sex education. Parents cannot withdraw their child from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction that is part of the National Curriculum science (see appendix 2). At secondary school level parents will be able to withdraw their child from sex education (other than the sex education which sits in the National Curriculum as part of science). A child will have the right to opt into sex education from their 15th birthday (specifically 3 academic terms before their 16th birthday). This is because parents should have the right to teach this themselves in a way which is consistent with their values. Parents wishing to exercise this right must do so in writing to the Principal at the respective academy. The Principal will discuss the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal may have. The academy will respect the parent's wishes to withdraw the child from sex education up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. The academy will make reasonable adjustments and provide suitable work for their child(ren) at this time.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the students' educational record.

24 Review of the policy

This policy will be reviewed by January 2025 by the Trust who will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

Policy Lead	Matt Pennington
Policy renewal date	January 2025
Policy approving body	Standards and Outcomes Committee
Date of approval	17 January 2024
Adopted on	24 January 2024

Appendix A: RSE Content

The RSE content of PSHE/Citizenship/Curriculum Days is detailed below.

It aims to address the following, including where relevant the legal provisions:

- **Puberty changes:** personal hygiene, expectation of change, body image, variety and stereotypes
- **Gender identity:** transgender and cisgender
- **LGBTQ+:** lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity)
- **Relationships:** relationship skills including “being safe”, self-image and identity, body language, relationships with family and friends, platonic and sexual relationships, marriage, morality in relationships, coping with abuse
- **Human sexuality:** questions about human sexuality, sexual alternatives, HIV & AIDS, the expression of sex within relationships, consent, the age of consent, the right not to be sexually active, peer group and media pressures, the importance of safe sex, pornography
- **Sexual exploitation:** an understanding of actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes
- **Sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online:** Includes time for open discussion of topics such as consent and the sending of ‘nudes’.
- **Violence** against women and girls
- **Female Genital Mutilation** – including associated ethical and moral questions
- **Population, growth and control:** population growth, the choice of parenthood, discussion of contraceptive methods
- **Education for parenthood:** the nature of families – pressures and responsibility, parenting skills
- **Gender role:** changing attitude to gender role; sexism, equal opportunities
- **STIs:** including associated ethical and moral questions
- **Abortion:** including associated ethical and moral questions
- **Substance misuse:** including associated ethical and moral questions
- **Violence and exploitation** by gangs
- **Criminal exploitation** (for example, through gang involvement or ‘county lines’ drugs operations)
- **Hate crime**
- **Extremism/radicalism**
- **Online behaviours** including image and information sharing (including ‘sexting’, youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)

- **Agencies:** voluntary and statutory help available for individuals and families

It should prepare young people for an adult life in which they can:

- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour
- Be aware of their own sexuality and understand human sexuality
- Understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity
- Understand the importance of consent
- Understand the reasons for having protected sex
- Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships
- Have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationships they want
- Communicate effectively
- Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from unintended/unwanted conceptions, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- Avoid being exploited or exploit others
- Avoid being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex
- Access confidential sexual health advice, support and, if necessary, treatment

Appendix B: Primary and Secondary RSE

Page numbers refer to the DfE RSE document:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

Primary: (see pp20-22 of DfE RSE document)

At primary school level relationship education should contribute to the foundation of PSHE and Citizenship by ensuring that all children:

- Develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships.
- Are able to name parts of the body and describe how their bodies work.
- Can protect themselves and ask for help and support.
- Are prepared for puberty.
- By the end of primary pupils should know about:
 - Families and people who care for me
 - Caring friendships
 - Respectful relationships
 - Online relationships
 - Being safe

National Curriculum at primary

Key stage 1

Statutory requirements:

- Pupils should be taught to identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense.

Key stage 2

Statutory requirements:

- Pupils should be taught to notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults
- Pupils should be introduced to the basic needs of animals for survival, as well as the importance of exercise and nutrition for humans.
- They should also be introduced to the processes of reproduction and growth in some plants and animals.

- The focus at this stage should be on questions that help pupils to recognise growth; they should not be expected to understand how reproduction occurs.

Secondary

By the end of secondary school pupils should:

develop the topics from primary and know about:

- families
- respectful relationships, including friendships
- online and media
- being safe
- intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health

National Curriculum at Secondary

Secondary: (see pp20-22 of DfE RSE document)

KS3 and KS4 Science includes

- reproduction in humans
- the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems
- menstrual cycle
- gametes
- fertilisation
- gestation
- birth
- HIV/AIDS

Appendix C: A value framework for RSE

Young people should be taught RSE within a framework that models and encourages the following values:

- A respect for self
- A respect for others
- Non-exploitation in sexual relationships
- Commitment, trust and bonding within sexual relationships
- Honesty with self and others
- A development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others
- An exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in sexual relationships
- Compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care when people do not conform to their way of life
- An acknowledgement and understanding of diversity regarding religion, culture and sexual orientation
- Self -discipline regarding their sexuality

Appendix D: Physical health and mental wellbeing

Page numbers refer to the DfE RSE document:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

Primary: (see pp32-35 of DfE RSE document)

By the end of primary pupils should know about:

- mental wellbeing
- internet safety and harms
- physical health and fitness
- healthy eating
- drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- health and prevention
- basic first aid
- changing adolescent body

Secondary: (see pp36-38 of DfE RSE document)

By the end of secondary pupils should:

develop the topics from primary and know about:

- mental wellbeing
- internet safety and harms
- physical health and fitness
- healthy eating
- drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- health and prevention
- basic first aid
- changing adolescent body

Appendix E: Resources

See Annex B pp46-47 of DfE RSE document

www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education