

# Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

**Reviewed by Governor committee:**

n/a

**Date to be reviewed:**

Autumn 2025 ( or sooner if the DfE publish new guidance following on from a consultation in May 2024)

**Responsibility of:**

Assistant Principal (Inclusion)

**Approved by:**

The Principal - ELT Meeting 12th November 2024

## 1. Introduction

This policy sets out the aims, objectives and nature of the Academy's provision of Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) through the wider Personal Development Curriculum. As a Church of England Academy, the moral and ethical foundations of our approach to RSE are based on those of the Christian faith. These principles will be extended and emphasised throughout all curriculum areas and reinforced during the Academy's collective acts of worship. Whilst reflecting the Academy's Christian ethos, it is essential that the delivery of Relationships & Sex Education should be inclusive, respecting the views of those of other faiths or none and in doing so will also reflect current DfE guidelines (2019) on inclusive practice in SRE and the [London Diocesan Board for Schools guidelines on Relationships & Sex Education in Secondary Schools \(2020\)](#).

This policy will define RSE; describe how it is provided and who is responsible for providing it; explain how RSE is monitored and evaluated. It will include information about statutory aspects of RSE, parents' right to withdraw their child from certain aspects of RSE; explain the Academy's position on managing sensitive topics in the classroom and more widely when working with parents; how the RSE policy links to other policies; confidentiality and finally, working with outside agencies and partners in the delivery of RSE.

Our approach to RSE is inspired by the CoE's Vision for Education (2016) and in particular Educating for Community and Living Well Together. We want students to flourish as together they explore key issues and aspects of RSE.

## 2. General Principles

Our General Principles are derived from the guidance from the [DfE \(2019\)](#).

- a. Relationship and Sex Education is part of a child's broad, balanced curriculum, integral to the basic curriculum of the Academy and part of the child's all round development as they grow and flourish.
- b. DfE guidance (July 2019, updated in September 2021) states that: "children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way."
- c. The Academy recognises that 2019 DfE guidance makes RSE compulsory in all secondary schools, as well as making Health Education compulsory.
- d. The Academy accepts that post September 2020 parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from RSE that does not fall under the science curriculum and is sensitive to those parents who for religious and / or other reasons find the delivery of some explicit teaching in school unacceptable.
- e. Parents/ carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from lessons on Relationships or Health Education.
- f. It is essential to regard parents as partners in the delivery of RSE in the Academy and affirm their valuable role in the home, or delivered through the home. Students learn more about marriage and relationships from their own homes than they do anywhere else. For many this will be predominantly positive. The ordinary, everyday working out of long-term commitment, will give them a sound template to work from. For others, whose experience of relationships may include neglect and abuse, it will be confusing and possibly painful. The Academy encourages parents to discuss issues around relationships and sex with their child, especially around the times RSE is delivered in the curriculum.

Active parental involvement in RSE means that students are able to place the learning they receive in RSE lessons in the context of their family's values and beliefs about relationships and sex.

- g. As children grow older, their earliest learning is supplemented by a widening circle of acquaintance and by social media, television, film, public lives and literature. Children absorb knowledge that fits with their early patterning easily. It is vital, therefore, that the Academy should explicitly participate in this area of children's learning.
- h. Regardless of background, religion, gender or sexuality, all students will be welcomed and accepted within Chelsea Academy. Church of England guidance makes it clear that "church schools must do all they can to ensure that *all* children, particularly those who may identify as, or are perceived to be lesbian, bisexual or transgender are kept safe and can flourish." (Valuing All God's Children: 2nd Edition, 2019)
- i. The National Curriculum context for understanding reproduction, sexual behaviour and safety should also include the exploration of relationships, values, morals and Christian and other beliefs in the multi-faith context, so that increasing knowledge is gained alongside the development of communication and decision making skills and positive attitudes to oneself and others. In this way students will become increasingly responsible for their own sexual behaviour and able to flourish in their adult lives.
- j. The Academy provides a safe and secure environment in which marriage and other long term human relationships can be explored. This implies that teaching is designed to present concepts and ideas that individual students may choose to relate to their own experience.

### **3. Objectives**

The objective of RSE at Chelsea Academy is to provide students with their statutory entitlement to an understanding of human growth and reproduction as set out in DFE guidance (2019) within a wider Personal Development curriculum framework. This holistic approach to RSE will allow students to learn about sex within the context of healthy emotional and social wellbeing and responsible citizenship.

### **4. Leadership & Management**

RSE will be led by the Personal Development Curriculum Leader with the oversight of the Leadership Team.

### **5. Delivery**

The Personal Development Curriculum is primarily delivered by Personal Development teachers through a discrete lesson each week. Students study Personal Development in Years 7 to 9 following topics found in the PSHE and Citizenship framework. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the Science Curriculum. Other aspects of RSE are delivered through pastoral coaching time sessions and RE lessons. Students at all key stages may also receive stand alone RSE sessions delivered by trained professionals. RSE is delivered within this context. In accordance with LDBS RSE guidance (2009), RSE should always enable students to grow up understanding that sex is not a singular phenomena of adult life but instead learn to properly place their conception of sex within a wider understanding of a healthy, balanced and committed adult relationship, e.g. marriage. Sixth Form RSE is delivered through identified sessions within the weekly Lecture Series and may include workshops delivered by external partners. The School Nurse is available on a weekly basis by appointment but will only speak to students under the age of 16 with consent from parents/carers.

### **6. External Partners/ Providers**

In order to ensure that the highest quality of health advice and guidance is provided to students, visiting speakers will sometimes be used to support Personal Development teachers in the teaching of RSE. When external agencies are utilised by the Academy, due diligence will be carried out by the RSE Curriculum Leader and parents/ carers will be informed. External partners such as the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust and Youth Workers specialising in sexual health, STI prevention and treatment and

contraception advice may deliver some RSE lessons. In these instances, the Personal Development teacher will be present and will act in a supporting role to the external partners to ensure that learning is tailored to the individual needs of the students. External partners will be required to conform to this policy statement. Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with individual students but, in a classroom situation, they should follow the Academy's Confidentiality Policy. It is the Personal Development Curriculum Leader's responsibility to ensure external partners follow the Academy's RSE policy and will invest in partnerships where the partner has worked to embrace our distinct Christian ethos.

### **7. Aspects of sexual behaviour raised outside of the Personal Development Curriculum**

The teaching of apparently unrelated topics may occasionally lead to a discussion or questions on aspects of relationships and/or sex in lessons other than Personal Development (English Literature, RE, Art, Media Studies and Drama are likely subjects due to their focus on human nature and society). It should be recognised that in these situations, questions from pupils will be addressed and dealt with in the most appropriate manner and not disregarded. Provided that such a discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it will not necessarily form part of the Academy RSE programme. In such cases, particularly since they may involve students whose parents have withdrawn them from sex education, teachers will need to balance the need to give proper attention to relevant issues with the need to respect students' and parents' views and sensibilities.

The Governing board expects that teachers will draw upon their professional judgement and common sense to deal effectively with such occurrences and that they will be conversant with this policy document and act accordingly.

### **8. Pastoral Support through the delivery of RSE**

Sexuality is an important part of living, learning, and flourishing, but it may present some individuals with worries and tension at certain times in their lives. The quality of support available for individual students worried or disturbed by some aspect(s) of their development, relationships or environment is of prime importance.

When Academy staff are supporting individual students, care will be taken, in counselling and giving advice, particularly with regard to their sexual behaviour. It must not trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. It will require skilled judgement to know when to counsel and when - and how - to refer for specialist counselling and support. Staff with safeguarding concerns will always report their concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). (Related information on confidentiality and safeguarding can be found in section 6).

### **9. Working with Parents**

RSE at Chelsea Academy is designed to be complementary to, and supportive of, the role of parents in educating their children about sexuality and relationships. The Academy will share this policy with parents and will invite parents/carers to a virtual meeting with the Personal Development Curriculum Leader to discuss and view selected resources that are used before the RSE lessons are taught. The Academy, however, will use its professional judgement to teach topics that are age appropriate and support the pastoral development of students. We will also ensure that we uphold our duty outlined in law through the Equalities Act.

Parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from Sex Education that does not fall under the science curriculum. At Chelsea Academy, Sex Education includes the following:

- Intimate and sexual relationships
- Developing safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time

- Developing knowledge about safer sex and sexual health
- Further sexual advice

Parents/carers who wish to withdraw their child from Sex Education must attend the virtual meeting with the Personal Development Curriculum Leader. They must then apply in writing to the Principal of the Academy detailing their case for withdrawal. Alternative accommodation will be made for withdrawn students in this instance and alternative work will be provided by the Academy.

Students who attend the Academy have the right to opt into Sex Education lessons from their 15th birthday (specifically three terms before they turn 16). A relevant member of staff will discuss such requests from students with parents/carers to ensure their views are also heard.

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from lessons on Relationships or Health Education.

Relationships Education includes:

- Families and family life in its varied forms
- Respectful Relationships, including LGBT+ relationships as outlined in the Equality Act 2010
- Online and social media interactions and relationships
- Inappropriate and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Health Education includes:

- Mental Wellbeing
- Internet Safety and Harms
- Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco

Notice will be given to parents at least four weeks prior to the start of RSE teaching in Personal Development lessons so parents have the opportunity to discuss the planned RSE lessons with teachers, seek advice and / or speak to their child before the commencement of RSE lessons.

## **9. Confidentiality in RSE – Safeguarding Children**

Staff are required to adhere to the Academy's policy on confidentiality between themselves and students as set out within this section. Students should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained. However, staff cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. If confidentiality has to be broken, the student should be informed first and then supported, as appropriate.

When discussing issues in the classroom any disclosures from students that indicate the student is at risk (see below) must be reported by the teacher to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will decide whether parents should be informed, and any other action taken. Class teachers will not directly inform parents of disclosures. Staff will recognise the importance of listening to the concerns of individual students.

Students are deemed to be 'at risk' if they are:

- Involved in situations where they can endanger themselves or others;
- Victims of Harmful Sexual Behaviour of any type;
- Involved in situations where they are being exploited or are exploiting others;
- Victims of abuse, physical / sexual or emotional - this would require referral to the appropriate external services.
- If a teacher learns from a student under 16 years old that they are having, or are contemplating having, sexual intercourse, they should take steps to ensure that:
  - Wherever possible, the young person is persuaded to talk to their parent or carer before staff from the Academy make contact;
  - Any child protection issues are addressed.

The Academy Governors and Leadership Team will support the staff member in exercising her / his professional judgement about what is in the young person's best interest.

It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the Academy should be in the position of handling information without parental knowledge. Where younger children are involved this will be grounds for serious concern and child protection issues will need to be addressed.

Students should be encouraged to talk to their parents and given support to do so. If there is evidence of abuse, the Academy's child protection procedure should be adhered to, ensuring that students are informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the Academy nurse, counsellor, GP or local young person's advice service.

## **10. The Academy's position on managing sensitive topics in the classroom**

### Sexual Orientation

DFE guidance (2019) requires all schools to teach 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.

Guidance from LDBS (2009) states that "schools should not avoid the issue of sexual orientation" recognising that diversity in sexual orientation and same sex relationships are controversial issues for the Christian faith (this is the case for other faiths too) "on which there is no one agreed Christian view." The LDBS policy advises Church of England Schools that, "the topic should be discussed calmly and objectively as part of the curriculum in secondary schools without either approval or disapproval. Homophobic name-calling should be dealt with firmly, in the same way as racist name-calling. This should be covered by the Academy's anti-bullying policy."

### Contraception

Teachers may not give personal, individual advice on contraception to those under 16 years of age for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. Teachers must 'signpost' or advise students to seek advice from parents and / or general practitioners. Different types of contraceptive methods will be dealt with together with information about agencies offering help and advice in age appropriate RSE lessons and parents will be notified at least four weeks before in the first instance to enable them to consider their option to withdraw their child from RSE lessons that cover the topic of contraception if they so wish.

### Cultural approaches to Sexually Transmitted Infection prevention

#### i. HPV vaccination programme

Since 2018, the NHS has operated a nationwide vaccination programme providing the HPV (Human Papillomavirus) vaccine to all boys and girls aged 12-13 (Year 8). The SRE Forum (2013) recognises "the HPV programme making a positive contribution to sexual health and wellbeing of young people and support the reach and effectiveness of the programme." Sex Ed Forum recommend all Secondary Schools teach about the social and biological aspects of HPV starting in Year 7. However, the Academy will ensure that any discussion and promotion of the availability of the HPV vaccine is culturally sensitive and objective. Parents should be offered or signposted to further information on the benefits of the HPV vaccine and teachers should ensure that discussions that may arise in Personal Development lessons, and informally around the Academy, are managed sensitively to ensure students are not left confused by conflicting viewpoints between family and school.

#### ii. HIV / AIDS

DFE guidelines state that, "for all Sex & Relationships educators including schools, knowledge on HIV / AIDS is vital." The RSE curriculum will cover HIV / AIDS along with other common STIs (as advised by our local

health professionals). An important aspect of teaching on the subject of STIs including HIV / AIDS is dispelling myths about the transmission, prevention and treatment of such diseases.

### Abortion

It is accepted that abortion is an emotive issue and that any teaching must present a balanced view that respects a range of religious beliefs and which takes into account the law relating to abortion. The DFE guidelines state that “young people need to be aware of the moral and personal dilemmas involved in abortion and know how to access a relevant agency if necessary.” The LDBS RSE Policy (2009) advises that “Schools should teach that abortion is an emotive issue where strong arguments are voiced from every side. It must be dealt with in school calmly and carefully, treated in a Christian caring manner with all the relationships involved explored honestly and meaningfully. The abortion law must be covered as must adoption. Again the responsibility rests on a member of staff who can deal with this in an even-handed way, being able to present all sides of the argument. The decision for abortion rests with the mother to be guided, possibly by her family, her doctor and the prospective father. She must be provided with all possible facts so that her decision can be made on the basis of caring knowledge and not on a panic reaction. School has to play a great, if not total, part in disseminating this knowledge.”

### Pornography and sexual content online

Our Relationships Education provision needs to reflect the growth of the exposure young people face to pornography and other sexual content on the internet and social media platforms. When covering pornography, learning should be focused on dispelling misleading stereotypes of body image and ensuring students’ perceptions of what constitutes healthy sexual practices are not distorted by exposure to extreme pornographic material.

### Online and social media safety

The Personal Development Curriculum explores social media and online safety. These lessons involve discussions around online grooming, discerning between appropriate and inappropriate personal images and videos and how to protect themselves and others. The teaching of online safety forms a vital part of Relationships and Health Education and will be responsive to changing technologies and associated risks or potential risks and local and national context. Parents/carers should be reminded that the Academy cannot accept responsibility for a student’s inappropriate use of social media or technology which takes place off the Academy site.

## **11. Equal Opportunities (inclusion)**

The RSE Curriculum must adhere to inclusive practices and ensure the curriculum and its delivery is sensitive, in particular to students from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds. It must also ensure that discussions and teaching materials (including film, images and text) are inclusive of students of all sexual orientations.

Differentiation to ensure the inclusion of students with additional educational and social needs is of particular relevance to learning and teaching in RSE because of the sensitive and often confusing nature of the subject; especially to the most vulnerable of adolescents. It is important that Personal Development teachers work in partnership with parents and the Inclusion Team when determining the most appropriate provision for students with particular learning and social needs.

## **12. Links with other policies**

This policy has specific links with the following policies:

- Anti-Bullying
- Christian Ethos
- Curriculum and Assessment
- Student Code of Conduct

- Equalities and Equal Opportunities
- Inclusion Statement

### **13. Assessment**

Assessment in Personal Development uses the PSHE Association framework and the Academy assessment policy for guidance. Teachers use Assessment for Learning tools to assess students' knowledge and understanding based on learning objectives linked to the end of key stage statements for PSHE.