



Relationship and Sex Education Policy

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1. Introduction

Walsall Studio School in conjunction with the Mercian trust are increasingly aware that students are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. It therefore become imperative that students need to know how to be safe and healthy, as well as provide them with tools to help them manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

2. Aims

The aim of RSE is to give students the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It will empower students to recognise a healthy relationship, a good colleague, a good friend, a successful marriage, civil partnership or any other type of committed relationship. It will also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure) as well as the principles of the LGBTQ+ community. This will aid students to understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are toxic and understand how such situations can be managed.

In addition to being taught intimate relationships, students will also be taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult.

Teaching of RSE at the Studio School will enable students:

- To distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are toxic or harmful;
- To understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect and to understand that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing;
- To become more resilient and understand the options available to them should they require further support.
- To be taught the statutory information about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age appropriate and inclusive way, principles of the LGBTQ+ community as well as peer on peer abuse;
- To recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for themselves or others at risk;
- To recognise risk, harmful content and contact, and how and when to report issues to keep them safe online (e-safety);
- To, within the law, be well equipped to make decisions for themselves to maintain their wellbeing, whilst respecting the rights of others.

3. Statutory Guidance

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 make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. The regulations also make Health Education compulsory in Academies.

This policy was developed in response to:

- [Statutory guidance on RSE and health education](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education: for schools and colleges](#)
- [Behaviour and discipline in schools: guidance for headteachers and staff](#)
- [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#)
- [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#)
- [Alternative provision](#)
- [Mental health and behaviour in schools](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying](#)
- [Cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)
- [Advice for parents and carers on cyber bullying](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)
- [Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools](#)
- [National Citizen Service: guidance for schools and colleges](#)

4. Links with Other Policies

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following School's policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Equality Information
- PSHCE Policy

5. Delivery of the programme

The Studio School acknowledges that high-quality, evidence based and age appropriate teaching can help students to prepare for the experiences and responsibilities of adult life as well as promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of students both at school and in society.

The RSE curriculum will be based on the school's ethos and approach to developing students socially, morally, spiritually and culturally within the pastoral care system.

Effective teaching will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to pupils, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme of lessons. Teaching will include sufficient well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to practise applying and embedding new knowledge so that it can be used skilfully and confidently in real life situations. This will also serve to include elements of peer on peer abuse (point 11) delivered by both the Sexual Health Nurse and External Agencies.

6. Students with special education needs and disabilities (SEND)

The Studio School believes in providing RSE for all students. Quality first teaching is implemented with differentiated and personalised programmes to ensure accessibility to all students. The school is mindful of preparing students for adulthood as set out in the SEND Code of Practice. We are mindful that some students are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationship education becomes a priority for students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

a. The Trust

The Trustees will:

- Monitor the implementation of the policy across all Academies within the Trust
- Monitor pupil progress to ensure that pupils achieve expected outcomes;
- Ensure that Academies are resource in such a way that the Trust fulfils its legal obligations.

b. The School

- All pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes;
- The subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned;
- That the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- That the subjects are resourced in a way that ensures the Studio can fulfil its legal obligations.

c. The Principal

The Principal will ensure that:

- All staff are informed of the policy and the responsibilities included within the policy;
- All teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support subjects;
- The subjects are staffed and timetabled in a way to ensure the Trust and the Studio School fulfils their legal obligations;

- The teaching of RSE is monitored to ensure that it is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- The School works with external agencies when planning and delivering RSE to pupils.
- Clear information is provided to parents/carers on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.

d. Staff

All staff will ensure that:

- Ground rules are negotiated with the group before embarking on lessons of a sensitive nature so that both the staff and pupils can work together in a supportive atmosphere in which all members can speak with confidence and without fear of embarrassment, anxiety or breach of confidentiality;
- All students are offered the opportunity to explore ideas, situations and feelings in an atmosphere of confidence and support;
At all times teaching will take place in the context of an explicit moral framework;
- All points of view they may express during the course of teaching RSE are unbiased;
The teaching of RSE is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- The emphasis of teaching RSE will always be the importance and understanding of personal relationships and the right of the individual to make informed choices;
Issues of stereotyping, sexual equality, harassment, rights and legislation underpin the teaching of RSE;
- Where appropriate they direct pupils to seek advice and support from an appropriate agency or individual. It is inappropriate for staff to give students personal advice on matters such as contraception;
- Where a student has embarked on a course of action likely to place them at risk, the member of staff will ensure that the student is aware of the implications of their behaviour. The member of staff should refer any potential concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Parents/Carers

The Trust acknowledge the key role that parents/carers play in the development of their children's understanding about relationships. Parents are the first educators of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.

All Parents/Carers will be:

- Given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education and RSE;
- Encouraged to participate in the development of Relationships Education and RSE;
- Able to discuss any concerns directly with the School.

8. Right to be excused from Sex Education

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. The School, before granting any such request, will require the Principal to discuss the request with the parent and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

Following the discussions, except in exceptional circumstances, the Principal will respect the parents' request to withdraw their 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 should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

The Principal will ensure that where a pupil is excused from sex education, the pupil will receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

There is no right to withdraw from the national curriculum or the relationship aspect of the curriculum.

9. Working with External Agencies

- The School is aware that working with external partners will enhance the delivery of RSE and will support the school to bring in specialist knowledge and implement different ways of engaging with young people.
- Where the school uses external agencies, they will check the credentials of the visiting organisation and any visitors linked to the agency. The school will also ensure that the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with the planned programme and the published policy.
- School will work with external agencies to ensure that the content delivered is age-appropriate and accessible for all pupils. Any materials that are used as part of the delivery must be approved by the Assistant Principal in advance of the session.
- The School will ensure that the visitor is aware of aspects of confidentiality and understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

10. Safeguarding, reports of abuse and confidentiality

- The School recognises that at the heart of RSE, the focus is on keeping children safe, and acknowledges the significant role the Studio School has in preventative education.
- At the Studio School, we will allow children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children will be made aware of the processes to enable them to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This will also include processes when they have a concern about a peer or friend.

- In line with the document Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), all staff are aware of what to do if a child tells them that they are being abused or neglected. Staff are also aware of need to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those that need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and children's social care. A member of staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this is not in the best interests of the child.
- The involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) will ensure that trusted, high quality local resources are engaged, links to the police and other agencies are utilised and the knowledge of the any particular local issues it may be appropriate to address in lessons.

Peer on peer abuse

Context and Definition

Peer abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others.

All staff are aware that children are capable of abusing their peers. All staff are also aware of safeguarding issues from peer abuse including:

- bullying (including online bullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

This abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm

Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g.:

- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse
- Educational under-achievement
- Involved in crime

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the first priority of any education setting, but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical. School staff, alongside their Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy, have to make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

More information can be found:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719902/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf