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Engage Academy

Relationships & Sex Education Policy

October 2023



Nurturing inclusive learning communities



1	Summary	Relationships & Sex Education Policy			
2	Responsible person	Gemma Harvey			
3	Accountable ELT member	Alison Ward			
4	Applies to	All staff			
5	Trustees and/or individuals who have overseen development of this policy	Gemma Harvey			
6	Headteachers/Service Heads who were consulted and have given approval (if applicable)	Alison Ward			
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10	Available on	Every	Y/N	Trust Website Academy Website Staff Portal	Y/N Y/N Y/N
11	Related documents (if applicable)	Click or tap			
12	Disseminated to	All Engage Academy			
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15	Consulted with Recognised Trade Unions	N/A			
16	Adopted by Ethos Academy Trust following consultation	N/A			

Date	Version	Action	Summary of changes
20/09/2022	1.1	Policy revision	Policy adapted to local academy policy
24/09/2023	1.2	Policy review	No changes

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1. Introduction

Engage Academy considers that Relationships, Sex Education (RSE) is an integral part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and is embedded throughout the curriculum (e.g. science, PE, topic-based learning) and throughout the school day. We aim to offer students a carefully planned programme on human development, relationships, sexuality and family life within a safe, comfortable atmosphere and in a relaxed relationship between teacher and pupil. The programme is set within a moral framework and matched to the pupils' level of maturity. The policy is informed by [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex education \(RSE\) and Health Education statutory guidance \(DfE,2019\)](#)

2. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) within our provision are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy to value themselves and others
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

3. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

At Engage Academy, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

We must provide relationships education to all pupils under section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#).

We don't have to follow the National Curriculum, but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including requirements to teach science. This would include the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum.

In teaching RSE, we're required by our funding agreements to have regard to [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state, as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to

eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social, cultural development and physical aspects of growing up, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identify. Some aspects are taught in science, and others are taught as part of personal, social, health and economic education. It also gives pupils and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships, sharing information and exploring issues and values and staying safe both on and offline (21st Century Guidance 2014).

5. Policy development

In developing our policy and curriculum we have given due regard to the Government's statutory guidance for RSE. The views of the whole school community have been considered when developing the policy and content of RSE and involved the following steps:

1. **Review** – a member of staff reviewed current practice and pulled together all relevant information including national and local guidance
2. **Inform** - DfE guidance and information about RSHE was shared with stakeholders (children, staff, parents, and trustees).
3. Staff **Consultation** – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
4. Parent/Trustee consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to contribute to the policy and practice
5. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSHE
6. **Approval** – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with Trustees and approved
7. **Support** – the final policy, curriculum and resources were shared with all stakeholder and added to the school website. This will help parents complement the teaching in school

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The Board of Trustees

The Learning and Achievement Committee will represent the Board of Trustees in approving the RSE policy, and hold the CEO and Head Teachers to account for the implementation of this policy.

6.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, that parents and staff are informed about our RSE policy, that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity, monitor this policy on a regular basis and report to trustees on the effectiveness and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE.

6.3 Staff

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of continuing professional development and are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

6.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSHE and, when discussing issues related to RSHE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

6.5 Parents

Parents right to withdraw for Primary academies and free schools

- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of sex education within RSE.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 2 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher. Alternative school work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

7. Delivery of RSHE Curriculum

RSE is not delivered in isolation; it is embedded throughout the curriculum, both academic and personal development. The programme of study builds on an individual's knowledge, skills and experiences, demonstrating inclusion throughout, using a blend of active teaching methods, opportunities to practice skills and become familiar with situations. The broader personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme includes economic well-being, careers and enterprise education.

Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health (KS3/4)

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see please visit the website or contact for further information.

7.1 Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences
- During lessons, makes pupils feel:

- Safe and supported
- Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:
 - A whole-class setting
 - Small groups or targeted sessions
 - 1-to-1 discussions
 - Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

7.2 Use of resources

We **will** consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

8. Monitoring the Quality of Provision for RSE

A designated member of staff will report to the Headteacher and the RSE link trustee to discuss the quality of provision and effectiveness of RSE curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning of RSE is monitored by Senior Leaders through planning scrutiny, learning walks, pupil discussions and examples of work.

Pupil's development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy and scheme of work will be regularly reviewed bi-annually by the Personal Development lead and SLT and any feedback from teachers, parents/carers and pupils will be considered.

9. Policy Review

- The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the RSHE subject lead and the Headteacher. Changes will be communicated to all staff and parents and will be approved by the Board of Trustees.
- The review should consider any changes to statutory guidance; feedback from pupils, parents or staff; and the school context.

10. Further Policies

In conjunction with this policy, please also see:

- Behaviour policy and procedures
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Confidentiality procedures
- Personal Development Policy
- SMSC Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing

Appendix A: By the end of primary school pupils should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families and people who care about me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability • The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other’s lives • That others’ families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children’s families are also characterised by love and care • That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children’s security as they grow up • That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong • How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed
Caring friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends • The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties • That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded • That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right • How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • The conventions of courtesy and manners • The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness • 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 those in positions of authority • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help • What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive • The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults
Online relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not • That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous • The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them • How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met • How information and data is shared and used online

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context) • About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe • That each person’s body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact • How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know • How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult • How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard • How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so • Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

Appendix B: Sample letter to parents/carers (Engagement)

Dear

As a part of your child's education at Engage Academy, we promote personal wellbeing and development through a comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programme. PSHE education is the curriculum subject that gives children the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live safe, healthy, productive lives and meet their full potential.

I am writing to let you know that, over the next (insert number) weeks, starting (insert date), your child's class will be taking part in lessons which will focus on the relationships, health and sex education (RSE) aspect of this programme.

Lessons will include pupils learning about (select as appropriate or add examples below): Healthy relationships, including friendships; families; growing and changing, including puberty; personal hygiene; changing feelings; becoming more independent; keeping safe; developing self-esteem and confidence. Pupils will also have opportunities to ask questions.

RSE education is taught throughout the school and is monitored and reviewed regularly by the staff and governing body. To find out more about what your child will learn and discover how you can best support your child to discuss these topics at home, please visit the school's website: All RSE teaching takes place will take place in a safe learning environment and is underpinned by our school ethos and values.

As a school community, we are committed to working in partnership with parents; recent parental feedback has indicated that the overwhelming majority of parents continue to be highly supportive of the RSE programme.

Yours sincerely, (Subject lead for PSHE education & contact email address)

Sample letter to parents/carers (Withdrawal)

Dear

Thank you for your letter/request about withdrawing your child from sex education.

We respect the legal right of all parents to withdraw their child from some or all of sex education delivered as part of our PSHE ed programme, although we will still expect for your child to access the statutory parts of the curriculum.

Before you make the final decision about which aspects of sex education lessons you wish your child to be withdrawn from, I would like to invite you into school, so we can talk about this together. This will give us an opportunity to share our programme and look at some resources together and give you the chance to ask any questions or share any concerns you may have. We can put a plan together to agree when/how to withdraw your child whilst in school and consider when/how you can talk to your child about the content at home.

One of the reasons we are keen to keep all children in our lessons is that we believe that age appropriate relationships and sex education helps children to be safe, happy and healthy in their interactions with others (now and in the future). When children are withdrawn from lessons, there is always a possibility that they will hear information that is only partly accurate with no chance to ask questions in a safe environment.

In lessons, teachers are always careful to ensure that children learn about growing up in a way that respects different religious and cultural views and reflects the values and ethos of the school.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to learn more about how we can work together to support your child.

Thank you for considering this matter so carefully.

[**DfE: Relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education: FAQs**](#)

[**DfE: Relationships, sex and health education: guides for parents**](#)

Sample form to be used for parental withdrawal from sex education delivered as part of the RSE/PSHE ed curriculum

The parent(s) and the Headteacher will complete the form: This will record the main points of the discussion (if this has taken place), the reason for the withdrawal, and the arrangements for ensuring the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. This will be reviewed at least annually.

Parental withdrawal from sex education delivered as part of the RSE/PSHE ed curriculum A copy of this form should be given to the parent(s) and a copy retained in school	
To be completed by the parent(s)	
Name of child	
Name of parent(s)	
Year group/class	
Reason for withdrawing the child from sex education delivered as part of RSHE/PSHE education	
Any other information you wish the school to consider	
Parent(s) signature	
To be completed by the Headteacher	
Notes from discussion with parent(s)	
How the school will inform the parent about sex education	
Where the pupil will work/supervision	
Work to be undertaken by the pupil at this time	
Headteacher signature	
Review date	