



SANDWELL ACADEMY



Relationships & Sex Education Policy

July 2023

Policy Title:	Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
Policy Reference:	SA / Curriculum and Assessment
Description:	The aim of the relationship and sex education policy is to clarify the provision of relationship and sex education to all students (including education on sexual health) and the teaching of human growth and reproduction as set out in the National Curriculum.
Status:	Statutory
Category:	Academy
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Change Record		
Version	Date	Description
1.1	February 2015	Curriculum content review
1.2	July 2018	Change of contact details
1.3	July 2019	Curriculum content review
1.4	July 2020	Renaming of policy to bring into line with DfE policy Curriculum update
1.5	July 2022	Update of sex education aspect of RSE curriculum covered in each Year.
1.6	July 2023	Update of sex education aspect of RSE curriculum covered in each Year.

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Introduction

The aim of the relationship and sex education policy is to give young people the information that they need to develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It will 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 will cover contraception and developing intimate relationships. It will teach students what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships, helping them to 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.

This policy statement is designed to be complementary to, and supportive of, the role of parents in educating their children about sexuality and relationships. It recognises that the prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents. (In this policy statement, "parents" means all those having parental responsibility for a child.)

It is natural for caring adults to want to protect children and young people from information, attitudes and lifestyles which they themselves find distasteful. However, it is important to recognise the power of confusion caused by "informal" learning - from television, radio, magazines, newspapers, gossip, jokes, and various other sources.

Education within the curriculum can do much to dispel myths, reduce fear and anxiety, clear up misunderstanding and counteract prejudice.

A Department of Health publication, "The Health of the Nation", recognises that sex education is a vital element in promoting sexual well-being and in reducing the rates of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and control of HIV and AIDS. However, we need to recognise that some authorities, such as the Family Education Trust, believe that sex education may actually promote sexual experimentation. Account has been taken of both views in what follows.

It is important that our students develop understanding and attitudes based on values which prepare them to view relationships in a responsible and healthy manner.

Sex education will be part of the curriculum but will not be taken out of context or over-emphasised in any way. Relationship and sex education is not intended to encourage unlawful sexual activity or early sexual experimentation.

The policy is based on the belief that sex education:

- i is an integral part of the learning process, beginning in childhood and continuing into adult life;
- ii should be provided for all children and young people including those; with physical, learning or emotional difficulties;
- iii should encourage consideration of values, moral issues, sexuality, personal relationships and the development of communication and decision-making skills; and
- iv should foster self-esteem, self-awareness, the skills to avoid and resist unwanted sexual experiences and a sense of moral responsibility.

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Governing Body is required to have a written statement of the policy available to parents. The statement must be drawn up in consultation with the Head. The Head must ensure that any relationship and sex education is provided in a way that ensures students are taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult and that students are protected from teaching materials which are inappropriate, having regard to the age and cultural background of the students concerned.

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from all or some of any sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. However, children cannot be withdrawn from any part of Relationships, Health Education or any other aspect of PSHE education. Additionally, there is no right of withdrawal from National Curriculum science which includes elements of sex education such as puberty and reproduction.

As a school, we are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers and our relationship and sex education policy was designed to help children from all backgrounds build positive and safe relationships. Parents/carers will be informed prior to the delivery of the sex education content and should contact the Academy should they like to discuss the curriculum further.

The Academy's Relationship and Sex Education Programme

Aim

The Academy's relationship and sex education programme aims to support the personal and social development of all students, ensuring that they have the ability to accept their own and others' sexuality, to express their sexuality in positive ways and to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect and responsibility, free from any abuse.

Implementation

The programme will teach about relationships, it will help young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It will build on the relationships education taught in primary school and at an appropriate time extend teaching to include intimate relationships. This will provide knowledge about safer sex and sexual health ensuring that students are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. It may be necessary to link sex and relationship education with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour, such as the appropriate use of social networking, drugs, smoking and alcohol, and ensure that young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships.

Teachers have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of students and because teachers therefore act in loco parentis, parents need to be reassured that the personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of relationship and sex education within the RSE framework.

Students need to be taught to behave responsibly towards relationship and sex issues and be able to make informed decisions. Students may be consulted on this relationship and sex education policy.

Objectives

The objectives of the Academy's relationship and sex education programme are:

- to counteract misleading myths and folklore;
- to raise awareness of different types of committed, stable relationships and how these relationships might contribute to human happiness;
- to know what marriage is, including their legal status;
- to appreciate the value of family life, the implications of parenthood and the needs of the very young;
- to recognise the characteristics of positive and healthy relationships;
- to learn to respect each other as individuals, and to encourage boys and girls to understand and honour one another;
- to help children know their rights and responsibilities and opportunities online;
- to know the concepts of, and laws relating to relationships and sex education;
- to promote personal safety and self-esteem so that young people are able to resist unwanted touch or advances and can recognise consent from others;
- to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of health one-to-one intimate relationships;
- to enable students to accept variation in rates of growth and development (physical, emotional, social) and in ages when puberty or social activities develop;
- to provide constant reassurance that change is part of the life cycle and to give help in adjusting to such change;
- to encourage unembarrassed acceptance of sexuality by using appropriate words for all parts of the body and encouraging positive attitudes to all bodily functions;
- to create an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without embarrassment;
- to know the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices;
- to recognise there are choices in relation to pregnancy;
- to understand how risk can be reduced through safer sex;
- to understand and respect cultural and religious influences on individual sexuality;
- to learn how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour;

Organisation

In order to help students make informed choices, establish a healthy lifestyle and build up a system of values, the teaching methods used are as important as the content of the lesson. The participation of students in lessons is essential in order to encourage them to learn from others and to help them to use appropriate language in ways which are understood by others. This requires the use of a balanced range of teaching methods.

Delivery of sex education

Sex education will be carried out in a variety of different ways and by different specialists as well as teachers:

- i Specialist staff within the RSE programme;
- ii Nurse;
- iii Police Schools Liaison Officer; and
- iv By reference to sexuality in curriculum areas other than RSE.

Certain lessons are mandatory under the National Curriculum in Science and are excluded from the right of parents to withdraw their children.

The programme of study for sex education will demonstrate:

- i **Progression.** This extends from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 with language, concepts and content increasing in depth and complexity as the students mature physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.
- ii **Relevance and differentiation.** Teachers come to know the levels of development of their students; they are able to draw out existing knowledge and needs and to build on them appropriately.
- iii **Integration.** Sex education will be integrated into a programme of Personal, Social and Health Education and into other relevant areas of the Academy curriculum.

Sex education will not be isolated, taken out of context or over-emphasised in any way.

The hidden curriculum

A sex education programme is not just what is "taught" in the classroom. Young people learn much from the overall ethos of the Academy - from the attitudes of staff, from relationships, from gender and other issues. It is important that all staff, whether directly involved in the programme or not, discuss the Academy's approach to sex education in the broad sense. With increased understanding and support, most teachers will feel able to make some positive contribution to the "whole" curriculum.

Continuity

The programme and policy is co-ordinated by a senior member of staff. Continuity within the Academy is achieved by having in place a co-ordinated progressive curriculum which begins in Year 7 and extends through to Sixth Form. A general outline of progression in the taught curriculum delivered by the science team is outlined:

- Year 7** To know the structure and function of the male and female reproductive system. To appreciate changes that take place during puberty. To understand the importance of a healthy, balanced diet. To develop an understanding of different types of family relationships and recognise the characteristics of positive and healthy relationships. To understand how to talk about emotions. To know how to administer basic first aid.
- Year 8** To understand the benefits of good personal hygiene. To understand the different types of stable, caring relationships. To understand how to recognise and report abuse. To understand about the different types of bullying and its impact. To recognise the impact of time spend online using social media. To explore the facts about legal and illegal harmful substances, knowing their associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use and drug taking.
- Year 9** To understand the impact of social media on body image. To recognise the law related to sexual activity and understand the importance of consent. To understand the differences and effectiveness of different forms of contraception. To know their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online and identify the online risks. To understand the effects of stereotyping.
- Year 10** To explore mental wellbeing and happiness. To further develop understanding on methods of contraception. To learn the choices in relation to pregnancy and how different sexually transmitted infections are transmitted. To recognise the importance of consent in relationships. To understand your rights, responsibilities and opportunities online.
- Year 11 and Sixth Form** A recap of key topics covered in Years 7-10 through a mixture of curriculum sessions, Personal Tutor sessions, whole school/year group assemblies and where appropriate external agencies.

Pastoral Support

Sexuality is an important part of living and learning 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.

Good teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and well-being of children and young people.

Care must be taken, however, in counselling and advice to individual students, particularly with regard to their sexual behaviour, and 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

Morals and Morality

Morals and morality are essential dimensions of sexuality and relationships. The programme will respect individual differences - inspired by cultural, religious, ethnic and family backgrounds - and it will endeavour to promote those values of respect and dignity for human life which are common to all faiths and societies.

Relationships

Relationships have an important part to play in sex education. Friendship, making relationships, valuing friendship, will be topics in the early part of the programme. Choosing a partner, assessing personal qualities, considerations before marriage, together with relationships within the family, will be considered together with roles, avoidance of stereotyping and acknowledging different attitudes and influences.

Contraception

Teachers may not give personal, individual advice on contraception to those under 16 years for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. Teachers must advise students to seek advice from parents and/or general practitioners or appropriate sexual health agencies.

Different types of contraceptive methods will be dealt with together with information about agencies offering help and advice. This is also taught in the GCSE Science curriculum.

Abortion

It is accepted that abortion is an emotive issue and that any teaching must present a balanced view which respects a range of religious beliefs and which takes into account the law relating to abortion. It provides an opportunity to distinguish between fact and fiction in discussing such issues as the point at which human life commences.

Aspects of sexual behaviour raised outside the sex education programme

The teaching of apparently unrelated topics may occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour. 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 sex education programme.

In such cases, particularly since they may involve students whose parents have withdrawn them from sex education as such, 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 Body 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.

HIV/AIDS/Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Students in KS4 need to know how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex and the importance of and facts about testing. They will also need to know about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

The Governing Body recognises the need to ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. They will ensure teaching around LGBT content is sensitive and age appropriate and is but is fully integrated into their programmes of study rather than delivered as a stand-alone lesson. Objective discussion of LGBT may take place in the classroom.

Sexuality and physical development

The awareness of self and physical changes that occur are important in sex education, including development and puberty (physical/mental and social development) and acceptance of the nature of the sexuality in others together with the pressures imposed by such as peers and the media.

Sensitive issues

Avoiding sensitive or controversial issues does not make them go away and leaves children and young people confused and at risk. All official documentation is in favour of the discussion of topics such as contraception, abortion, LGBT, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Visiting speakers

Visiting speakers may be used to help enhance the sex education programme. Where they are used, they 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.

Confidentiality Policy

Teachers 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, teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. If confidentiality has to be broken, the student should be informed first and then supported, as appropriate.

It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the Academy should be in the position of having to handle 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.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.