



Huish Episcopi Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

	Date
Authorised:	<i>February 2025</i>
Policy Reviewed:	<i>January 2025</i>
Next Annual Review:	<i>January 2026</i>

INTRODUCTION

As a secondary school, we must provide Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) to all pupils as per the Department for Education document, [‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers’](#) and all associated documents contained within.

RATIONALE

At Huish Episcopi Academy, we believe that effective RSE is essential if our pupils, as they grow, are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. It contributes to promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, emotional, mental and physical development of our pupils, preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

We believe RSE should not be delivered in isolation, but be firmly delivered in a holistic manner through our Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship programme, supplemented by Science and other subjects of our taught curriculum.

DEFINITION OF RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

Relationship and Sex Education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. We are clear that parents and carers are the prime educators for children on many of these matters and the Academy aims to complement and reinforce this role.

At the Academy, we understand relationship education to be about respect, love and care. We recognise the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society. We believe that to be human is to experience sexual feelings, seek connections with other people and develop relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. Good relationship education should help pupils understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect.

We will refer to ‘Sex education’, as any teaching that includes lessons about intimate, sexual relationships and sexual health. Sex education will include learning about contraception, the risks associated with unprotected sex, the consequences of pregnancy and the sources of support and options available. Sex education will also include lessons that address resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure).

Our curriculum is designed to support young people who are growing up in an increasingly complex and digital world. Whilst the internet is an overwhelmingly positive development in our lives, it does present significant challenges; including but not limited to the dominance of social media, the prevalence of cyber-bullying and the risk that children may be exposed to inappropriate material or learn about relationships from untrustworthy sources. We aim to support our young people to make the right decisions and keep themselves safe and happy.

Our teaching of relationship and sex education is applicable to all sexual orientations and will include teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.

DEFINITION OF RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

At Huish Episcopi Academy, we aim to provide our pupils with an age appropriate and spiral RSE programme that is tailored to their physical and emotional maturity. It should enable them to make positive choices about their sexual and emotional health, both now and in the future.

Its objective is to enable pupils to learn about:

- (i) families and people who care for them, including the nature of marriage and civil partnership and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children,
- (ii) forming and maintaining caring relationships,
- (iii) the characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships, including online,
- (iv) how relationships may affect physical and mental health and wellbeing, and how to ensure they are safe and,
- (v) intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

The RSE programme of study sets out the learning opportunities that will be addressed, through lessons delivered as part of the wider PSHE curriculum:

Core Theme 1: Health and Wellbeing

Healthy lifestyles – the importance of taking increased responsibility for their own physical health, including self-examination.

Puberty and sexual health

Core Theme 2: Relationships

Positive relationships

Relationship values

Forming and maintaining respectful relationships

Consent

Contraception and parenthood

Bullying, abuse and discrimination

Social influences

MORAL FRAMEWORK

Pupils will be taught RSE within a framework that models and encourages the following values:

- Being honest with themselves and others
- Developing a critical awareness of themselves and others
- Learning to show tolerance, understanding, respect and care for others
- Acknowledging the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in sexual relationships
- Developing an awareness and belief in one's own identity
- Having a positive attitude towards the value of stable relationships for the upbringing of children
- Acknowledging and understanding diversity with regard to religion, culture and sexual orientation
- Having self-discipline regarding their sexuality
- Understanding the role of the media in relation to aspects of sex and relationships

WORKING WITH PARENTS

At the beginning of each academic year, the [PSHE curriculum](#) will be published on the Academy website in accordance with government regulations. Parents will have the opportunity to contact the Academy to make an appointment with the PSHE Co-ordinator to discuss content or materials used by teachers in the delivery of the RSE programme.

Parents will be informed about their child's engagement with PSHE topics via the usual school reviews and reports.

A parent or carer who is concerned about element of this policy, or is unhappy about their child's participation, should discuss their feelings with the Principal. Following discussion, parents can withdraw their child from some or all of the 'sex' elements of RSE. Parents do not have a right to withdraw their child from Health education, Relationships or any other aspect of sex education such as puberty or reproduction.

Three terms before they turn 16, a pupil can opt back in to sex education lessons against their parents' wishes. The Academy will provide sex education lessons during one of the remaining three terms.

The DfE has produced a free leaflet for parents entitled 'RSE and Parents'. Copies can be downloaded via the following link: [Understanding Relationships, Sex and Health Education - a guide for secondary school parents \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614222/Understanding_Relationships_Sex_and_Health_Education_-_a_guide_for_secondary_school_parents.pdf)

In considering a request to withdraw from elements of the RSE curriculum, the school will use the following process:

- The Principal should discuss with the parent (and, if appropriate, the child) to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum and the content that will be covered.
- The Principal should discuss with the parent the benefits of the child receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child, including social or emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing from their peers what was covered (and having that content channelled through a child's voice rather than a teacher's).
- Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. safeguarding concerns), the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the 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.
- For the vast majority of pupils with SEND, their SEND should not be a consideration in deciding whether to grant a parental request. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Principal will want to take a pupil's SEND into account when making this decision.

If a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

CONTENT AND ORGANISATION

RSE is delivered through planned programmes in Science and PSHE. In addition, contributions are made by the ICT/computing curriculum, which teaches about online safety. The PSHE programme and ICT scheme of work teach that the internet and social media are important resources for learning and information, and a great opportunity to build social networks, as well as teaching about the risks and how to stay safe online. Occasionally, issues about RSE may arise spontaneously in other lessons (e.g. while studying English Literature) where it is not the main focus of the lesson. This is not considered to be part of the planned RSE programme and parents or carers cannot withdraw pupils in these circumstances.

Normally, male and female pupils will be taught together. However, when deemed appropriate, there may be occasions when pupils are taught in separate sex groups. Where appropriate, additional support and guidance will be offered to pupils from the school's LGBT+ community.

Where visitors are invited to deliver aspects of the RSE programme, the Academy follows the guidance in 'School use of visitors and outside agencies in health promotion' published by the Somerset Healthy Schools Team, 2001. Visitors will be used to support, not supplant, the role of the teacher and they will always be accompanied in the lesson by a teacher. Visitors will always be fully briefed on their contribution to the programme and will be given a copy of the current policy beforehand.

We believe that RSE will be best achieved by providing an environment and atmosphere where pupils feel safe, relaxed, not intimidated, but focussed; and where they have confidence and trust in the knowledge, ability and skills of their teachers. Pupils, therefore, will experience weekly PSHE/RSE sessions with their form tutor.

A range of teaching approaches will be used, including working individually, in pairs, in groups, and as a whole class. The Academy aims to allow teachers of PSHE to continually develop professionally, when necessary, in order to ensure a high level of expertise for the delivery of this subject.

The overview and coordination of the taught curriculum is the responsibility of the PSHE Coordinators in the Academy, with the Vice Principal holding responsibility for oversight of PSHE.

The teaching and learning of PSHE is regularly evaluated, by pupils and teachers, in order to help inform the planning of future sessions.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

RSE is inclusive of all pupils; they have an equal entitlement to good quality RSE. The whole Academy community will support an approach which ensures that no individual will be discriminated against on grounds of sex, race, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

If a pupil is absent from the Academy (e.g. through illness, school refuser) and does not participate in the PSHE programme, the Academy aims to ensure that online teaching resources will be made available, so that the pupil continues with PSHE learning that broadly reflects the topics studied by their own peers.

Resources selected to support the programme will be free from cultural bias wherever possible and will avoid sex, race, disability or sexual orientation stereotyping. The programme will be sensitive to all the needs of all pupils in the Academy.

THE SEXUAL OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) ACT 2000

Teachers have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils. They are in a particular position of trust. Sexual relationships involving children under 16 are a criminal offence. A sexual relationship between a teacher and any pupil at the same school is a breach of that trust. The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 states that it is "*an offence for a person aged 18 or over to engage in sexual activity with, or directed towards a person under that age if he is in a position of trust in relation to that person.*"

SPECIFIC ISSUES

Personal beliefs

The personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence their teaching of RSE.

Language and ground rules in lessons

All staff teaching RSE will set ground rules in their classes. The following will be mandatory:

- No one (teacher or pupil) will have to answer a personal question
- No one will be forced to take part in a discussion
- The only language used will be easily understood and acceptable to everyone in the class
- Only the anatomically correct names for body parts will be used
- Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way
- Every person has the right to be heard and a responsibility to listen to others

Pupils will be involved in a negotiation/setting of additional rules. Distancing techniques will also help to avoid the inappropriate disclosure of information. These may include case studies, role play and speaking in the third person.

Dealing with difficult questions

We have a variety of strategies for dealing with difficult questions. For example:

- If a question is too explicit or is inappropriate, the teacher will attend to it later, on an individual basis and a decision will be taken whether or not to inform the child's parents/carers;
- If a child makes a disclosure that causes the teacher concern, then they should follow child protection procedures established within the county. [South West Child Protection Procedures \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

Menstruation

Our programme will include preparation for menstruation. Basic information about the process of menstruation will be given to both boys and girls to ensure there are no misconceptions and that all pupils understand that this is a normal process.

We will make appropriate and sensitive arrangements for the changing and disposal of sanitary wear for our pupils (e.g. requests for sanitary protection are dealt with in the medical room). There are trained first aid staff in the office who are used to dealing with sensitive issues.

Contraception

Staff are able to give pupils full information about different types of contraception, including emergency contraception, and their effectiveness and appropriateness. Individual advice cannot be given to pupils. Trained staff can, however, give both individual pupils and groups of pupils additional information and guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling and, where necessary, treatment.

Abortion

In KS4, pupils will learn about the choices and support available in the event of an unplanned pregnancy, including abortion. Lessons will include consideration of the moral and personal dilemmas involved.

Safer sex, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

STIs are major concerns of ill health, which can have long-term physical and psychological health consequences.

Teaching about safer sex remains one of the Government's key strategies in reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS and STIs. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of individuals diagnosed with genital infections, including Chlamydia, genital warts and gonorrhoea.

Young people may become complacent. Therefore, teaching includes:

- Helping pupils to clarify their knowledge of HIV/AIDS and STIs
- Participation in World AIDS Day
- Teaching them assertiveness skills for negotiating relationships
- Enabling them to become effective users of services that offer advice on the prevention and treatment of STIs

Teaching about gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans relationships

The diversity of sexual orientation founded in society will also be reflected in the Academy community. Pupils will need to be given information regarding access to relevant support agencies. The Academy will seek to ensure that RSE is relevant and positive for all pupils.

The Academy will seek to take account of different sexual orientations throughout RSE, ensuring that a balanced approach is taught. For example, there may be a number of occasions where, in order to avoid the impression that programmes are based on an assumption of heterosexuality, it is appropriate to use inclusive language such as 'partner' rather than 'boyfriend/girlfriend'.

Homophobic bullying (i.e. based on perceived gay or lesbian sexuality) is totally unacceptable. The Academy has a specific Behaviour/Anti-bullying Policy. All pupils and teachers are aware of this policy and a copy is available on request.

Confidentiality in lessons

Staff teaching RSE have a duty of care and may wish to make a ground rule that opinions and ideas expressed in discussion should not be repeated outside the lesson. Again, it must be stressed that no absolute confidentiality can be promised. Clearly a lesson situation is also a significantly different context to a conversation with an individual. Pupils should be reminded of this difference. Through distancing techniques and ground rules, pupils should understand that lessons are not an appropriate place to disclose personal information.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The RSE policy will be monitored and evaluated through an annual review process involving pupils, parents, teachers, PSHE Coordinators, Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body.

Complaints

Any complaints about the relationships and sex education programme should be made in accordance with the school's usual complaints procedure, which is publicly available on the school's website.