

**Relationships Education,  
Relationships and Sex Education  
(RSE) and Health Education  
Policy  
Erdington Academy  
Part of Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust**

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<b>Date Ratified:</b>	<b>May 2025</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>May 2027</b>

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## Introduction

This policy has been produced in consultation with key stakeholders, including senior leadership, the safeguarding officers and Academy Associates. The policy is available for parents and carers via the academy website. The policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis to ensure all content is relevant and up to date.

## Aims

The aims of any relationships and sex education 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
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

As a secondary academy, we must provide RSE to all pupils under section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#).

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](#), and
- 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.

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

*RSE is not about* the promotion of sexual activity.

At FMAT we aim to develop articulate, resilient and ambitious students, regardless of background, with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to excel in modern Britain. Effective relationship and sex education (RSE) makes a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills required by students to establish and maintain positive, healthy relationships. It enables young people to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

The provision of Relationship and Sex Education at Erdington Academy will ensure that young people are healthy, happy and safe. We aim to enable students to make safe decisions and give them the information and tools they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships.

It will enable them to understand what a healthy relationship looks like, including resisting pressures, giving consent, what makes a good friend or a successful marriage, as well as respect (for both ourselves and others). The curriculum will teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships, which will help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not healthy or positive and understand how such situations can be managed.

RSE is also about the physical, emotional, social, moral and legal dimensions of human sexuality as well as factual teaching about sex, sexuality and sexual health. RSE is not just about having the knowledge, it is also about having the skills to make the right decisions.

This policy will provide clear progression throughout each Key Stage in Relationship education. We have adapted our curriculum based on the local context to ensure that we meet all aspects of student need. Please see appendix 1 for further information. We will build on this foundation and as the students grow, at the appropriate time, students will look at intimate relationships.

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In addition, FMAT believes that RSE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people.
- Encourage every student to contribute to our community and aims to support each individual as they grow and learn.
- Be set within this wider academy context and supports family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.
- Encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any type of family structure. **The important values are love, respect and care for each other.**
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- Recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer, and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

## Subject content and delivery

RSE will be set in the context of a wider whole-academy approach to supporting students to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond the academy, for example in PSHE, RE, science and computer science lessons. The academy acknowledges that age-appropriate teaching can help students prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life as well as promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of students both at the academy and in society. The RSE curriculum will complement and be supported by both the Trust and wider Academies policies on Equality and Diversity, safeguarding, SEND provision, Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) and Drug Education.

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually or at another time. Should students have a question that they don't feel able to ask in the lesson, the academy will have a 'question box' for students to submit their question to the Curriculum Lead who will then address the matter.

The curriculum has been planned and designed using a variety of different sources, such as the Department for Education: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health education<sup>1</sup>, PSHE Association: Programme of study for PSHE Education<sup>2</sup> and Publishing Resources<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/805781/Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

We will cover the following, in-line with the Department for Education's guidance:

### **By the end of secondary phase**

Families

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Online and media

Being safe

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

The Law (in relation to RSE)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/programme-study-pshe-educationkeystages-1%E2%80%935>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources/shop/EC Resources](https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources/shop/EC_Resources)

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and 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.

The Curriculum Lead will work closely with colleagues to ensure that RSE is being taught in a safe and supportive manner, where the students are making healthy, happy and safe choices. As part of this process, students will be consulted throughout the year on the content being covered and whether they feel it is best suited to them.

As with all learning the effectiveness of the curriculum will be monitored throughout and student progress will be evident in their books. For example, students may be asked to produce a spider diagram on a topic at the start of the unit and then add to it at the end with information they now know. This will show the content is suited to those in the lesson. Along with this, staff will be asked to feedback to the Curriculum Lead at the end of each topic who will then meet with the safeguarding lead in the academy to ensure there is no additional area which needs to be covered.

Whilst the content has been outlined above, this is subject to change due to the needs of the students.

The Academy Associates have a responsibility for overseeing, reviewing and organising the revision of the Relationship and Sex Education Policy.

Ofsted is required to evaluate and report on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. This includes evaluating and commenting on the academy's sex and relationship education policy, and on support and staff development, training and delivery.

## Roles and responsibilities

### The Academy Associates

- Ensure the RSE policy is fit for purpose and fulfils its legal obligation.
- Ensure parents and carers have had a consultation period before the implementation of the policy.

### The Principal

- Monitor the implementation of the policy.
- Ensure all staff are informed of the policy and the responsibilities they have.
- Ensure staff have time to receive up to date training.
- Work with parents and carers to keep them informed of the curriculum and ensure all information is clear, including to those who wish for their child to be withdrawn.

### Curriculum Lead

- Monitor the implementation of the policy and delivery of content with the Vice-Principal.
- Ensure Continued Profession Development (CPD) opportunities are provided for staff, specifically those who are delivering RSE.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of the curriculum in place to all students.
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to ensure the curriculum is most relevant to our students.

### Staff

- Ensure the classroom is a safe place with established ground rules prior to delivering the content.
- Ensure they are aware of the up-to-date statutory requirements and academy policy.
- Ensure resources are appropriate for those students they are teaching.
- Emphasise the importance of RSE in relation to making informed choices.
- Ensure all teaching is unbiased.
- Where appropriate, they direct students to seek advice from an appropriate agency or individual.

### Parents and Carers

The academy recognises the key role that parents and carers play in the development of their children's understanding about relationships. Parents are the first educators of their children as they have the most significant influence in enabling their child to grow and mature, forming healthy relationships.

## Inclusion

### **Ethnic and Cultural Groups**

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups.

We will respond to parental requests and concerns and action these where possible.

### **Different Religious backgrounds**

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of students from different religious backgrounds.

We will respond to parental requests and concerns and action these where possible.

### **Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

We will ensure that all young people receive RSE, and we will offer provision appropriate to the needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary. As far as is appropriate, young people with SEND follow the same RSE programme as all other students. Careful consideration is given concerning the level of differentiation needed, and in some cases the content or delivery will be adapted. Learning support assistants work with individual students where required, sometimes on a one-to-one basis.

### **Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation**

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate question and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them.



## Right to be removed from sex education

Parents and carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE (they cannot be withdrawn from relationship education). The academy, before granting any such request, will require the Vice-Principal to discuss the request with the parents and carers, who try to resolve any issues and will bring to their attention the legal framework which applies to such withdrawals.

This is to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum at which point parents and carers are welcome to review any RSE resources the academy uses. If you wish to withdraw your child from sex education then a letter or email must be sent to the Principal at [enquiries@erdington.fmat.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@erdington.fmat.co.uk).

Following these discussions, except in exceptional circumstances or where the request does not meet the legal threshold, the Trust will respect the parents' and carers' 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 academy should arrange to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

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

## Working with external agencies

Whenever possible it is hoped to involve and welcome visitors and other outside agencies to help and support RSE provision within the academy. This can be as part of the planning process as well as with the delivery of RSE. When visitors are used this is to compliment the RSE Programme, they will never be used to substitute or replace planned provision. When visitors and other outside agencies help and support in the delivery of RSE, there will always be a member of staff present during the lesson and the content will always be reviewed carefully prior to the lesson taking place.

The Academy will also ensure that the visitor is aware of aspects of confidentiality and understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy.

## Safeguarding and confidentiality

Staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.

Staff are not legally bound to inform parents/carers or the Principal of any disclosures made by a student, however information of this nature will be passed to the academy designated safeguarding officer.

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the member of staff will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality must be broken, they will be informed first.

Health professionals in the academy are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the academy's confidentiality policy.

Through the academy nurse and other key members of staff (including the Curriculum Lead), students are signposted towards confidential sources of support for relationships and sexual health issues in their area.

## Links with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust/Academy policies:

- PSHE policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Drug Education policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- SEND policy

## Curriculum adaptations - Local Context: Erdington Academy

The RSE curriculum is adapted at each academy based on local context and need.

Erdington Academy is an 11-16 academy located in Birmingham. The Academy serves the local area of Erdington, and surrounding areas.

The academy has a deprivation indication which is above national and local trends. Data shows that students in such areas are more at risk of exploitation, whether this be sexual or criminal and could face dangers such as grooming into criminal gangs and county line rings.

The PSHE curriculum will link to these external contextual factors. The curriculum is also adaptive to be changed quickly to meet any urgent or new threats that might affect the safety and wellbeing of students. This could be in relation to factors at play within the school and student body, or external factors in the local or national sphere of influence.

## Appendix 1

Whilst many of our measures are positive compared to National Data, extensive work with our local community and Police Liaison officers have raised the following concerns:

- Knife Crime
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Online safety, in relation to 'Taking and Sharing indecent images'.
- Risk of Exploitation

Erdington Academy has a safeguarding culture of vigilance where staff and students are actively encouraged to raise concerns they have about students or themselves. This has led to an increase in reports of self-harm and concerns over wellbeing. We use both our curriculum and in-lesson resources as well as external speakers and events including presentations from the local Police and various charities, to ensure that this topic, and the ones mentioned above, are covered within each year group.

Staff training from our SEND team ensures that all curriculum work can be adapted to support learners with additional needs.

## **By the end of secondary school**

### **Families**

Students should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- what marriage is, including their legal status – for example, that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered.
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- how to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships), how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

### **Online and media safety**

Students should know:

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
- the impact of viewing harmful content.
- that specifically sexually explicit material, for example pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

## **Being safe and safe decision making**

Students should know:

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online.

## **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health**

Students should know:

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

## The Law

Students should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM).