



Dame Alice Owen's School
The Dame Alice Owen Foundation - 1613

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY (Statutory)

Agreed by the Governing Body Curriculum Committee
To be reviewed
(*reviewed annually*)

May 2021
Autumn 2022

To be monitored by the Head of PSHRSE, Headteacher and Governing Body Curriculum Committee

This policy has been drafted in consultation with the [DfE guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#).

1. 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 should enable students to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage, civil partnership or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help students 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.

The School's RSE policy provides clear progression from what students should be taught in primary school within Relationships Education. At Dame Alice Owen's School, we will build on this foundation and, as students mature, at the appropriate time we shall extend teaching to include intimate relationships. Alongside teaching about 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 Dame Alice Owen's School will enable students:

- to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted 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 believe they can achieve their goals and that in order to achieve those goals they must stick at the tasks despite the challenges they may face;
- to be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way;
- 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 risks, harmful content and contact, and how and when to report issues to keep them safe online;
- within the law, to be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives in the future, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs.

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

This policy has been 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](#)

3. Definition

Relationships and sex education (RSE) as part of the PSHE education curriculum is vital to the development of the young people in our schools. Using key documents, statutory information and in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, the teaching of RSE is embedded in conjunction with the delivery of PSHE. Four ‘strands’ were identified to enable a fluent and coherent delivery of both the RSE and PSHE content. These are outlined below:

- Relationships and Sex
- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- The Wider World

The four strands make up the new PSHRE programme, branded as Learning 4 Life, and it encapsulates the statutory RSE alongside PSHE education. The planned programmes are designed to help students deal with the difficult moral, social and health-related issues that arise in their lives and in society. They also help students to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy, independent lives as individuals, parents, workers and members of society. Effective RSE is a key component in our approach to safeguarding our students through the curriculum.

Dame Alice Owen’s School defines ‘relationships and sex education’ as learning about physical, moral and emotional development that students need in order to understand their own and others sexuality. Whilst knowledge of biology and the reproductive system is important, RSE is concerned with attitudes and values, personal and social skills, respect for self and others, family, stable loving relationships, feelings, gender roles and decision-making. It is about the physical, emotional, social, moral and legal dimensions of human sexuality as well as factual teaching about sex, sexuality and sexual health.

4. Curriculum and Delivery of RSE programme

Dame Alice Owen’s School acknowledges that high-quality, evidence-based and 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 school and in society.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, students and staff, considering the age, needs and feelings of students. RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE). RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of students 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 students may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

Students in Key Stages 3 and 4 will access the full RSE provision through their timetabled PSHE education lessons. Staff will deliver the content set out in Appendix 1.

Teaching methodologies

The RSE programme will be taught through a range of teaching methods. These are outlined in the [Teaching and Learning policy](#). Our programme recognises that students will bring prior learning and real life experiences to their learning. Our programme respects and builds on these, providing a programme that reflects both the universal and unique needs of our students.

We will ensure that all RSE sessions remain positive in tone by setting clear expectations at the beginning of the year and reinforcing them at the start of each topic. Behaviour will also be managed according to the [Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy](#).

The Head of PSHRSE will work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education programmes complement each other and do not duplicate content covered in national curriculum subjects such as Religious Studies, science, IT and PE. Working closely with key subjects to ensure cross-curricular learning is explicit. Learning about relationships and sex in PSHE classes will complement learning in Science (primarily Biology) and Religious Education.

The curriculum on relationships and sex will complement and be supported by the School's wider policies on behavior, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, anti-bullying and safeguarding. RSE will sit within the context of the school's broader ethos and approach to developing students socially, morally, spiritually and culturally and its pastoral care system.

The curriculum on health education will similarly complement and be supported by the school's education on healthy lifestyles through physical education, food technology, science and its sport as extracurricular activity and school meals.

Inclusion and differentiation

Our RSE programme recognises that students will bring prior learning and real life experiences to their learning. Our programme respect and build on these, providing programme that reflect both the universal and unique needs of our students. In this way, the programme recognise and respect students' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example their own sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture (which may, depending on their age and maturity, not be something they have yet considered or may be emerging) or the sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture of their immediate family, close friends and wider community.

Assessment of learning

As with any learning, the assessment of students' personal, social and emotional development is important. It provides information that indicates their progress and achievement informs the development of the programme. Students do not pass or fail in this area of learning, but have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning and personal experiences, and set personal goals and agree strategies to reach them.

This process of reflective assessment has a positive impact on young people's self-awareness and self-esteem, and there are opportunities to record learning and progress in different ways. We will assess pupil's learning through; in class question and answer, discussion, group work, peer assessment and self-assessment.

Students with additional educational needs

As far as reasonably appropriate, students with special educational needs will 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. It is the school's policy not to withdraw young people with special educational needs from RSE to catch up on other national curriculum subjects, as these aspects of personal and social development are as important as academic achievement.

Dame Alice Owens School will also be mindful to the 'preparing for adulthood' outcomes as set out in the SEND code of practice, when preparing these subjects for students with special educational needs. The school is also aware that some students are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of the special educational needs. Relationships Education can also be a priority for some students, for example some with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning difficulties. For some students there may be a need to tailor the content and teaching to meeting the specific needs of children at different development stages.

How will we ensure that our equalities obligations are fulfilled?

At Dame Alice Owen's School, we promote the needs and interests of all students, irrespective of gender, culture, ability or aptitude. Teaching pedagogy will consider the ability, age, readiness and cultural backgrounds of the young people to ensure that all can access the full RSE provision. We promote social learning and expect our students to show a high regard for the needs of others. RSE is an important vehicle for addressing both multicultural and gender issues and for ensuring equal opportunities for all. The planning and delivery of RSE is monitored by the Deputy Head, Pastoral.

Every student in Key Stages 3 and 4 has access to the full RSE provision through their timetabled PSHE education lessons.

Students' questions

Students' questions will be answered by staff honestly but not referring to personal experience. Answers will endeavour to reflect different sides of an argument if the topic is one of debate. Staff will provide information and guidance but not instruction. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, staff will respond in an appropriate manner so students are fully informed and do not seek answers online.

Students can raise anonymous questions by having scheduled lessons where students may write anonymous questions and drop them into a box. These questions will be answered during lesson time however students are also encouraged to speak with their teacher discretely after the lesson if they wish.

If a student discloses information which is of concern with regards to child protection, the procedure outlined in the Safeguarding policy will take place. Dialogue between the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head of PSHRSE and pastoral staff will ensure that any students who are thought to be 'at risk' are supported through sensitive discussion of topics. Students are also able to take a timeout if a topic is in anyway distressing for them. They will not be made to discuss this, rather they will be offered support if wanted.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. The Governing Body

The governing body will approve the RSE policy, and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

5.2. The Headteacher

The Head teacher 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 that the School fulfils their legal obligations;
- The teaching of RSE is monitored to ensure that it is delivered in ways that are accessible to all students with SEND;
- The School works with parents/carers when planning and delivering RSE to students.
- Clear information is provided to parents/carers on the subject content and regarding the right to request that their child is withdrawn.
- Managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory components of RSE (see section 7).

5.3. Head of PSHRSE

The Head of PSHRSE will ensure that:

- All form tutors are provided with materials suitable for their Key Stage
- All form tutors are aware of the issues of confidentiality and responsibilities for reporting any disclosure
- Materials used are in line with the current DfE requirements
- Students, staff and parents/carers are given opportunities to contribute to the RSE curriculum
- There is adequate consultation with parents and carers about the content and delivery of the RSE curriculum
- The quality of delivery of the RSE materials is monitored regularly

5.4. 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 Students 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 Students 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 Students 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.

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. The majority of teaching staff at the school will be involved in the delivery of the PSHE programme, which includes RSE.

5.5. Students

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

5.6. Parents/Carers

The School acknowledges 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 consultation regarding Relationships Education and RSE;
- Able to discuss any concerns directly with the School.

7. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Parents should complete the form at appendix 2 and return to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher, before granting any such request, will discuss the request with the parents/carers and, as appropriate, with the student 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 school 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. This process is the same for students with special educational needs.

If a student is excused from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the student receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

8. Working with external agencies

The School is aware that working with external partners will enhance the delivery of RSE and will 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.

The School will work with external agencies to ensure that the content delivered is age-appropriate and accessible for all students. Any materials that are used as part of the delivery must be approved by the Head of PSHRSE in advance of the session.

The School will ensure that any visitor is aware of aspects of confidentiality and understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with the School's [Safeguarding Policy](#).

9. Safeguarding, reports of abuse and confidentiality

The School recognises that at the heart of RSE the focus is on keeping children safe, and acknowledges its significant role in preventative education.

At Dame Alice Owen's School, we allow students an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions may lead to increased safeguarding reports. Students will be made aware of the procedures in place to enable them to raise their concerns or make a report, as well as how

any report will be handled. This will also include procedures to follow when they have a concern about a peer or friend.

In line with [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 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 pastoral care team, as well as 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 as well as bringing their knowledge of any particular local issues which it may be appropriate to address in lessons.

Appendix 1: By the end of secondary school students should know

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 e.g. 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 into ● The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships ● The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of 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); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship ● Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships ● How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) ● 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 people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs ● About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help ● That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control ● What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable ● The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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, e.g. 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 ● That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressuring 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/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

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

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)

Appendix 2:



Dame Alice Owen's School
Withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of student		Form	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	

Appendix 3: Policy Development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

Review

In 2019, two members of staff performed a review of the school curriculum to identify how best to design our approach to delivering RSE. Using key documents and statutory information and in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, the decision was taken to embed the teaching of RSE alongside and in conjunction with the delivery of PSHE. Four 'strands' were identified to enable a fluent and coherent delivery of both the RSE and PSHE content. These are outlined below:

- Relationships and Sex
- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- The Wider World

The four strands make up the new programme, branded as Learning 4 Life, and it encapsulates the statutory RSE alongside PSHE education. Four 'Strand Leader' roles were created and filled to lead the creation of new content for each strand. By producing the content for each strand, the school can ensure that the learning that takes place is tailored to suit the needs of our students.

Staff consultation

Staff have been consulted with throughout the process. Staff attended training sessions on the content of the RSE during INSET days. Time was allocated during INSET for staff to assist in the creation of content for the new RSE curriculum, which was reviewed by Strand Leaders. Updates on the policy have been delivered during compulsory whole staff meetings and via email. Strand Leaders have worked one to one with staff on aspects of the RSE and staff have been informed of the consultation process with parents. A key aim of the delivery of RSE at the school is that all staff are involved.

Parent/carer consultation

We are committed to working with parents and carers closely on all aspects of the RSE. Parents have been written to with information about the delivery of RSE at Dame Alice Owen's and sent key documents to read. Videos of each Strand Leader explaining the content and delivery of each strand were shared with parents alongside a Google Form to capture questions and feedback. Parents and carers are invited to contact the school directly with any queries or concerns. The resources used are also available on request.

Student consultation

Consultation with students takes place both formally and informally and we are committed to working with students to ensure that the RSE is meaningful and impactful. Student feedback on the existing PSHE programme, which covered aspects of the RSE requirements, was used to inform the process. Student evaluation more formally in PSHE sessions will help the provision to continue to meet their needs. Informally, there is open dialogue between staff and students. The use of plenary activities in sessions will inform the way the programme evolves.

Ratification

Once amendments were made, the policy was shared with the governing body and ratified.