

Walsall Academy



Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy

Policy Title	Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy
Policy Reference	WA/RSE
Description	This document sets out the Academy policy for providing students with a broad and balanced curriculum regarding relationships and sex education and health education
Status	Statutory
Category	Academy
Person Responsible	R Somerfield – Deputy Head
Version	V 1.5 October 2025
Other relevant policies	This policy replaces the Health, Drugs and Sex Education Policy and PSHE Policy (Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education)
Adopted by the Governing Board on	November 2024
Next Review Due	October 2026
Data Protection	Data will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the General Data Protection Regulation

Version Records		
Version	Date	Description
1.1	September 2021	New RSE Policy
1.2	November 2022	Review
1.3	October 2023	Review
1.4	October 2024	Review
1.5	October 2025	Review
1.6		
1.7		
1.8		
1.9		

THE ACADEMY'S RESPONSIBILITY

Walsall Academy believes that physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked and recognises the importance of communicating this clearly and openly with students. Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) and Health education is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, mental wellbeing, personal safety including online, diversity and personal identity. Walsall Academy takes a whole-school approach to the teaching and promotion of RSE and health education and when doing so, provides students with clear, up to date and accurate information. This then allows students to make informed decisions and develop strategies for life. Our effective teaching aims to reduce any stigma attached to health issues and encourages students to feel they can check their understanding and seek any necessary help and advice.

AIMS

The aims of this policy are to provide through a broad and balanced curriculum, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students,
- prepares students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the policy are to provide RSE and Health education which:

- gives young people the kind of information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships.
- enables them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.
- helps students understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect.
- gives them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing.
- enables them to recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others and, when issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible.
- creates responsible young people who make a positive contribution to society.
- address the new mandatory teaching of Relationships Education and a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy which is required in all schools from Summer 2021.
- give information to staff, parents and carers, governors, pupils and outside visitors about the content, organisation, and approach to teaching RSE.
- enable parents and carers to support their children in learning about RSE.

STATUORY REQUIREMENTS

As a secondary academy we must provide RSE to all students under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. In teaching RSE we are required by our funding agreement to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) which 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.

COMPONENTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP & SEX EDUCATION (RSE) AND HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMME

RSE and Health education 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
- Mental wellbeing
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping
- Health protection and prevention
- Personal safety
- Basic first aid
- Developing bodies

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.

POLICY IN PRACTICE

At Walsall Academy we believe that:

- All students have the right to be informed on matters of health and sexual development and that this should be delivered across the curriculum.
- Staff will promote within the Relationships & Sex Education Programme, courtesy, respect and acceptance of responsibility for self and for others and will develop a teaching approach which will be complementary and supportive to the role of parents.
- Parents will be informed of the content of the Sex Education Programme.

The Headteacher and teachers will ensure that the Health and Sex Education programme is delivered in accordance with the recommendations of the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019,

PROGRAMME OF STUDY FOR RELATIONSHIPS, HEALTH, DRUGS AND SEX EDUCATION

All students, as part of the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2019, will learn about:

Families

- 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

Students will learn about:

- 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 relationships.
- 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

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 online scams and 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 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 under the age of 18 (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
- AI-related risks including the malicious use of deepfakes and chatbots
- the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation online, including conspiracy theories

Being Safe

Students will learn about:

- 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 will learn:

- 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 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/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.

Mental wellbeing

Students will learn about:

- How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary
- That happiness is linked to being connected to others.
- How to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns.
- Common types of mental health.
- How to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health.
- The benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.

Internet Safety and Harms

Students will learn about:

- The similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online, how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online.
- How to identify harmful behaviours online and how to report, or find support, if there have been affected by those behaviours.

Physical Health and Fitness

Students will learn about:

- The positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress.

- The characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardiovascular ill-health.
- About the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

Health Eating

Students will learn about:

- How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Students will learn about:

- The facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions.
- The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
- The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood.
- The physical and psychological consequences of addiction including alcohol dependency.
- Awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.
- The facts about the harms from smoking tobacco, the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.

Health and Prevention

Students will learn about:

- Personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, virus, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.
- About dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-up at the dentist.
- The benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
- The facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination.
- The importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.

Basic First Aid

Students will learn about:

- Basic treatment for common injuries.
- Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.
- The purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.

Changing Adolescent Body

Students will learn about:

- Key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing.

- The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.

THE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP & SEX EDUCATION POLICY

At Key Stage 3, relationships and sex education and health education is delivered through weekly timetabled sessions in a rotation with other subjects throughout the key stage.

During Key Stage 4 the RSE and Health programme is delivered through subject areas. In addition, some aspects of the policy will be delivered through enrichment programmes.

In Key Stage 5 RSE and Health education is delivered through regular updates with bespoke online activities designed to assess understanding. Delivery methods will include group teaching, online learning and additional enrichment opportunities designed to utilise the expertise of external professionals where appropriate.

At each stage the programme will be delivered in a variety of ways to include video, discussion, worksheets and visiting specialists and care will be taken to ensure its appropriateness for the age range and stage of development and any special educational needs of the student. Consideration will be given to how the diverse range of students will respond to the sessions and will be sensitive to students' experiences.

Working with Parents

A parents' RSE consultation meeting is scheduled yearly providing parents and carers the opportunity to discuss specific aspects of the programme. Copies of the policy are available for inspection by all parents.

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from the non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before their child turns 16. If parents wish to withdraw their child from any part of the Sex Education Programme, they will be given the opportunity to do so by contacting Dr R Somerfield, Deputy Head. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 of this policy.

POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The content and organisation of the programme will be monitored by the co-ordinator and those staff involved in its delivery in collaboration with the Deputy Head with responsibility for RSE. This policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1:

Parent/carers form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS/CARERS			
Name of child		Year group	
Name of parent/carers		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/carers	