



Heath Lane Academy

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Part of United Learning

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

REVIEWED BY: United Learning

DATE REVIEWED: Summer 2026

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: Summer 2027

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Introduction

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education at Heath Lane Academy are 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.

Relationships and sex education will only use teaching and materials which are appropriate to the age and the religious background of the pupils receiving it.

This policy should be read alongside the PSHE Curriculum Overview, Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Policy.

Parental, staff and pupil involvement regarding the policy

The academy will consult with parents and staff on the formation of the policy, and any changes made to it when it is reviewed, which will be at least annually.

Parental right to withdraw children

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE (excluding those elements taught within the science curriculum).

Parents do **not** have the right to withdraw their child from:

- Relationships education
- Health education

The academy identifies any curriculum content that includes sex education using the following coding:

- **(W)** – fully or predominantly sex education
- **(PW)** – partially includes sex education elements

Where a unit is marked (PW), only specific lessons may be withdrawn and the school will discuss this clearly with parents.

Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Principal. The school will discuss the request with parents to ensure they understand the nature and purpose of the curriculum before a final decision is made

In considering such a request, the academy 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 academy 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 academy 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 academy will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Teaching and Learning Objectives

Definition

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is part of a wider programme of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. It supports pupils' emotional, social and cultural development, enabling them to build healthy relationships, understand their bodies and make informed, responsible decisions.

RSE includes learning about:

- Relationships, including families, friendships and online interactions
- Physical and mental health
- Puberty and human development
- Sexual health and wellbeing
- Personal identity, diversity and equality

RSE involves a combination of knowledge, skill development and discussion. It is not about the promotion of sexual activity

Curriculum

Our RSE curriculum is delivered through a carefully sequenced PSHE programme from Year 7 to Year 11. Content is age-appropriate, revisited over time and designed to support pupils in building knowledge and applying skills in real-life contexts.

The curriculum is structured around three key areas:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Living in the Wider World (including careers and finance)

A detailed curriculum overview is available on the academy website.

Our curriculum is set out on our website but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary. We have developed the curriculum in consultation with academy staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. We will ensure RSE is matched to the needs of our pupils by reviewing each topic as it is being delivered to ensure pupils are getting the most out of their lessons. Assessment in RSE will take the approach of multiple choice quizzes to assess key terms. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online. For more information about our curriculum, see our curriculum map on the academy website.

Religious background of all pupils will be taken into account when planning teaching and materials, so that sensitive topics are handled appropriately, and that all relationship education teaching will meet the requirements of equality law. We may teach about faith perspectives and give pupils the opportunity to reflect on faith teachings about certain topics as well as how faith institutions may support people in matters of relationships and sex.

The delivery of the RSE Curriculum will be made accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND.

To ensure transparency for parents, curriculum maps clearly indicate:

- **(W)** – units that include sex education, where parents have the right to request withdrawal
- **(PW)** – units that include some elements of sex education; only specific lessons may be withdrawn, while the majority of content remains statutory

Most of the curriculum is statutory and covers relationships and health education, from which withdrawal is not permitted.

Delivery of Relationships and Sex Education

RSE is delivered primarily through timetabled PSHE lessons, supported by:

- Tutor time
- Science curriculum (biological aspects)
- External agencies and specialist providers, where appropriate

Lessons are designed to be interactive and inclusive, allowing pupils to explore sensitive topics in a safe and respectful environment. Ground rules are established to ensure respectful discussion.

Teachers and pupils will agree ground rules by having a discussion about what rules they both feel to be appropriate to the lessons being taught. RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- i. Families
- ii. Respectful relationships, including friendships
- iii. Online and media
- iv. Being Safe
- v. 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 children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, 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).

Visitors and external agencies which support the delivery of RSE will be required to share their resources with the academy before delivery to ensure they are appropriate for the pupils. All staff teaching RSE will be supported to deliver this to a high quality.

Safeguarding and Contextual Relevance

The RSE curriculum plays a vital role in safeguarding pupils by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to recognise risk, seek support and make safe decisions.

Content is regularly reviewed and adapted where necessary to respond to:

- Local safeguarding issues
- Emerging online risks
- National guidance and current issues

Pupils are taught how to access support and identify trusted adults.

Alignment with Statutory Guidance

This policy reflects the updated statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education published by the Department for Education in 2025, which becomes mandatory from September 2026.

The academy has reviewed and updated its curriculum to ensure it reflects current guidance, including:

- Increased focus on online safety and digital literacy, including emerging risks
- Strengthened teaching on consent, respectful relationships and sexual ethics
- Greater emphasis on mental health, wellbeing and resilience
- Clear coverage of equality, diversity and protected characteristics

The curriculum will continue to be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant, age-appropriate and responsive to emerging safeguarding issues.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governors - The Governing Body will approve the RSE Policy and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

The Principal - The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the academy, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE.

Staff - Staff are responsible for:

- i. Delivering RSE in a sensitive way.
- ii. Modelling positive attitudes to RSE.
- iii. Monitoring progress.
- iv. Responding to the needs of individual pupils.
- v. Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents withdraw them to be withdrawn from the non- statutory components of RSE.

Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. In this instance the teacher will refer to the Safeguarding Policy. 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 Principal

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

Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. We will also invite visitors from outside the academy, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE. As part of our approach to RSE, Parent Information sessions and opportunities for parents to gain better understanding on RSE topics will be made available.

Complaints

Complaints about the relationships and sex education programme should be made in accordance with the academy's usual complaints procedure. The procedure for complaints can be found in the complaints policy on the academy website.

Policy Review Date

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board.

	Date	Name of owner
Authorised:		
Policy Reviewed:		
Next Annual Review Date:		

