

OA-Thurrock

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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Updates/revisions included as agreed:	The academies will be trialling the new guidance and this policy will be updated during the 2025-2026 academic year.
Academies to note: This is an OA template which should be updated with academy relevant contacts and any changes to curriculum that are agreed. The lead for RSE in OA-Thurrock is: Kelly Black Parents and carers may visit the FAQ page on the government website regarding compulsory relationships education and RSE.	

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1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) 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

We are committed to meeting the needs of our pupils in line with our values and beliefs:

- Conviction – everyone has the capacity to reach their potential;
- Determination – not giving up on those who have not yet experienced consistent success;
- Ambition – all challenges can be overcome with the right support both in education and in life;
- Reflection – learning from experiences and developing a capacity to improve further.

This policy is intrinsically linked to policies on:

- Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- ICT and online safety policy
- Careers policy

Within all these policies there is an emphasis on the creation of a robust contextual safeguarding culture where pupils feel confident reporting concerns and knowing they will be listened to. RSE covers topics which are likely to raise sensitive issues and feelings amongst pupils – at OA we recognize that it is vital that all staff are trained and skilled in listening to pupils and that there are clear reporting systems in place that are promoted and understood by all.

2. Statutory requirements

As a multi-academy trust which provides primary and secondary education to children and young people, we must provide relationships education to all pupils as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

For primary education, we do not have to follow the National Curriculum but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including requirements to teach science which would include the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum.

For secondary education, we must provide RSE to all pupils as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we are 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](#)
- 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

At Olive we teach RSE in our academies as set out by this policy.

3. Policy development

Guidance from the government is that schools **must** consult with parents and carers when developing and reviewing policies for RSE and that it is good practice to consult with staff and pupils too. We are doing this in the following ways:

- Development of the policy by a group of staff who are leading on PDBA across Olive academies – ensuring that all relevant information including national and local guidance is incorporated
- Staff consultation – ensuring all school staff are given an opportunity to review this policy and make recommendations

- Parent and carers consultation – parents and any interested parties are invited to comment on this policy
- Pupil consultation – staff will discuss with pupils what they would value from an RSE curriculum
- Publication of this policy including the curriculum map on our website and letting parents and carers know that they can view the policy and raise any questions or concerns about the curriculum content on an ongoing basis
- Sharing this policy with trustees for approval and Academy Advisory Board members for ratification

We will engage with staff, students, parents and carers and listen to their feedback. This feedback and our experience of having delivered the curriculum will help shape an updated policy for the coming year.

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, 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. We aim to support people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

5. Curriculum

Each academy has in place a curriculum map which reflects the age range and particular needs of the pupils – this is set in place at the beginning of the year but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary. The curriculum map (published on the website) is designed to ensure that pupils build an understanding of the topics outline in the statutory guidance – and summarised at the end of this policy – ‘what pupils should know by the end of primary school and secondary school’.

We have developed the curriculum, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. 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.

Whilst primary sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, in our setting, we consider it to be a vital component of our education. Where relevant, primary sex education will focus on:

- preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings
- how a baby is conceived and born
- healthy relationships and relevant information on child-on-child abuse, online safety and mobile phone technology and bullying behaviours.

6. Delivery of RSE

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).

Pupils also receive relationships and sex education sessions delivered by trained health professionals.

For our **secondary** pupils:

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

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendix 1 – ‘what pupils should know’ and each academy’s curriculum map which is available on request and is published on website.

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).

6.1 Inclusivity

Our academies will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all pupils’ experiences
- During lessons, makes pupils feel:
 - Safe and supported
 - Able to engage with the key messages

They will also:

Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that is appropriate for them, for example in:

- A whole class setting
- Small groups or targeted sessions
- 1-to-1 discussions
- Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

6.2 Use of resources

Our academies will consider whether any resources they plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan

- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and will not provoke distress

6.3. Use of external organisations and materials

Across our trust, we will make sure that an agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

We remain responsible for what is said to pupils. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources used do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Our academies **will**:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
 - Are age-appropriate
 - Are in line with pupils' developmental stage
 - Comply with:
 - This policy
 - The Teachers' Standards
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where they have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on:
 - What they are going to say
 - Their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use
- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to the school, or to parents and carers
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers

Our academies **will not**, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The board of trustees and AAB

The education performance and standards committee within the board of trustees will approve the RSE policy and hold the CEO via the Director of Academies to account for its implementation across the academies.

The AAB will advise, support and challenge the headteacher on the implementation of the policy receiving regular updates at its meetings.

7.2 The Director of Academies and headteacher

The Director of Academies will provide leadership on the implementation of this policy across the trust's academies.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory or non-science components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- monitoring progress
- responding to the needs of individual pupils
- responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE

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.

7.4 Pupils

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

8. Parents' right to withdraw

For **secondary** pupils, parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

9. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. OA academies are members of the [PSHE Association](#) and use resources from there, from [JigsawPSHE](#) as well as the training modules provided by the DfE for the statutory [relationships sex and health education](#) curriculum.

The headteacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the senior leader responsible for RSE in the academy and the trust. Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the trust annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by Education Performance and Standards committee of the Board of Trustees.

Appendix 1: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
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	
Signed by OA staff member/date	

APPENDIX 2 - By the end of secondary school pupils should know:

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
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	• 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

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	• 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 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	• 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)

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	• 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 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