

January 2023



**Riverside Meadows**  
Academy

## RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION AND HEALTH POLICY

HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST  
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**Introduction:**

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is part of the curriculum which:

- Is delivered through a planned series of activities within the curriculum, normally as part of Personal Social Health Education (PSHE).
- Addresses many relationship issues including appropriate interactions with staff and peers, appropriate social behaviours, getting along with others in learning activities and leisure activities.
- Supports pupils to learn about how social interactions are different in different situations.
- Supports an understanding of our bodies and our right to safety.

This policy takes into account the consultation and guidance document July 2018 from DFE: 'Relationships education, Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education. This guidance is issued under Sections 34 and 35 of the 'Children and social work Act' 2017. This 2018 guidance replaces the 'Sex and relationships Education guidance' 2000.

**Rationale:**

At Riverside Meadows Academy, we believe that the provision of high-quality curriculum for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) enables pupils to develop the essential skills for building and maintaining positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships.

**AIMS:**

Our aim is to encourage pupils to be independent, confident and be able to make clear decisions which they can act upon in a range of relationships.

We will:

- Create a safe, supportive and caring community where everyone feels they belong.
- Address behaviours that support personal safety both off and online
- Support pupils to understand the principles of positive relationships.
- Support pupils to understand protective measures to keep themselves safe and report abuse (emotional, physical or sexual).
- Support pupils to appreciate their rights over their bodies.
- Work with families to address the specific needs of individual pupils relating to RSE.

**Principles and Approaches:**

RMA has a values-driven curriculum. We promote the values of:

- Listening
- Moral Purpose
- Trust and Respect
- Supporting Innovation
- Integrity
- Communication
- Building Confidence
- Empathy
- Collaboration

RSE makes a major contribution to fulfilling our schools values by preparing our students for life beyond school.

## **RESPECTING DIFFERENCE AND DIVERSITY**

We aim to provide an environment that is free from discrimination on any grounds including gender, race, ethnicity, colour, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, age, religious or political belief.

We recognise that each pupil is an individual, who may be at a different stage of their emotional, social, physical, personal and intellectual growth compared to their chronological age.

Therefore our pupils require opportunities for the content of the curriculum relating to RSE and health to be adapted and personalised to meet individual needs in discussion with parents and carers.

When teaching RSE and health education we acknowledge that individual families will have their own cultural diversity and ethos in relation to human sexuality and sexual relationships. However all children have human rights and that includes safeguarding them from any form of abuse.

We do not aspire to provide the moral guidance to pupils that is part of the family ethos but will ensure that the RSE delivery is never value-free and we will support parents in how best they may approach moral issues with their child in discussion with them.

For more information on teaching RSE to children with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC), see Appendix 1.

### **Sex Education**

We define Sex Education as learning how a (human) baby is conceived and born.

This includes learning about sexual reproduction in some plants and animals. It also complements the statutory requirement to teach about puberty, as understanding sexual reproduction in humans enables children to understand the processes of puberty.

We share the belief that "all people are sexual beings whatever their learning ability" and as such have the same value, the same needs and the same human rights as any member of our society. They have the right to enjoy their sexuality, to have the freedom to practice it and to have it recognised by others.

Sexuality is not limited to sexual practice, but it is also a way of expressing personality. Children and young people with learning difficulties show the same interest in sexual activity as everyone else. Pupils have a need for and right to:

- Clear practical information and guidance.
- Personal and social skills to enable them to develop relationships independently.
- Guidance on appropriate sexual behaviour.
- The sexual preferences of our pupils will be respected and supported.

When talking about human sexuality, we locate sexual activity firmly in the context of a loving and stable relationship.

The programme of RSE available to all pupils is designed to enhance their understanding and skills in making and maintaining appropriate and positive personal relationships, specifically:

- Respect for oneself and other people
- Responsibility for one's actions
- Responsibilities within the family
- Importance of a relationship that is not coercive
- Sensitivity towards the needs and views of others
- Recognising the implications and risks of certain types of behaviours
- Recognising and accepting the differences and views of others

At Riverside Meadows Academy:

- We accept that all people are sexual beings, whatever their learning and/or physical impairment and that any consenting disabled young person who wishes to have a sexual relationship should be allowed to do so within the limits of the law.
- We remain mindful of the pupils' individual ability in the area of communication and use of augmentative communication aids, their ability to make judgements and to give informed consent and how these will impact the content chosen and presented to meet the individual needs of pupils.
- We recognise that young people are likely to show the same sexual preferences, including those for the same sex, and the same varieties of sexual behaviour as other members of society. Within the limits of the law, these preferences will be respected and supported.
- We recognise young people have the right to full sexual relationship including sexual intercourse in their personal life and the right to carry these out in private.
- We recognise that masturbation is normal sexual behaviour. Young people will not be made to feel guilty about masturbation, nor be prevented from doing it in private.
- We support the view that forming intimate relationships is an important part of emotional development, but that behaviour appropriate for a public venue is reinforced.
- All opportunities will be used, within a planned structure, to model and encourage appropriate forms of social behaviour and to develop understanding of the difference between public and private activities and places.
- We recognise that young people have a right to privacy and to be treated with respect.
- We acknowledge that the right to make relationships includes the right to make mistakes, and that all relationships carry the risk of rejection.

- We believe that the right to engage in sexual relationships in their personal life is accompanied by the right to information about contraception and safer sex practices and health. The young person's choice in these matters will be paramount.
- If discussing sexual intimacy in relation to an individual, condom use will be strongly encouraged.

**Organisation & Provision:**

At all key stages there is a focus on boundaries (including the right to say "no"), positive relationships, resilience and being an active citizen.

RSE is incorporated into the PSHE curriculum. Elements of RSE incorporated into their schemes of work at a level which is both age and developmentally appropriate.

As a school we advise that each pupil has a right to be included and to participate at their level. To be more effective it will occasionally be appropriate to deliver specific aspects of the scheme in single sex groups.

**The schemes of work will include the following areas of learning:**

- Forming and maintaining relationships of all kinds with peers, family members, carers and friends.
- Understanding and learning social boundaries – what is and what is not acceptable.
- Understanding the feelings they may have and how to express them appropriately.
- Knowing about the ways their bodies work and the changes as they grow.
- Increasing self-awareness and facilitate a development of self-advocacy.
- Developing interpersonal, decision making and assertiveness skills.
- Developing the skills to recognise and reduce the risk of abuse and exploitation.
- Developing positive, personal values and a moral framework that will guide student's decisions and behaviours.

The curriculum encourages pupils to make choices necessary for good health and supports pupils in expressing themselves if they are unwell. Pupils are supported by having access to a school nurse and are encouraged to seek advice.

Additionally, the following elements are focused on in specific Key Stages:

➤ **KEY STAGE 3**

- Self-esteem: being yourself
- Private parts
- Physical changes at puberty: menstruation and semen
- Personal hygiene
- Psychological changes at puberty
- Changing friendships
- Changing relationship with parents
- What makes a good friends
- Acceptable behaviour
- Appropriate touch
- Asserting yourself: saying "no"

➤ **KEY STAGES 4**

- Private parts
- Private and public places
- Appropriate behaviour
- Body changes
- Recognise emotions: what makes you...?
- Review hygiene and appropriate behaviour.
- Good relationships and staying happy
- STDs
- Contraception.
- Preparing to move in wider circles
- Resisting social pressure / self-assertiveness
- Learning to negotiate
- Sexual feelings
- Difference between 'like' and 'love'
- What are we looking for in a partner
- Would you be a good partner?
- What is important in a good relationship?

Teachers will differentiate the coverage and content of these areas of learning to suit the individual needs of pupils in the class.

RSE may be taught in groups according to pupil's abilities and needs, rather than class groups.

If more in-depth information is needed especially regarding sexual relationships sessions may be arranged with external health providers.

For more information about our age-related expectations for RSE, see Appendices 2 and 3.

### **Supporting Staff**

All staff share responsibility, directly or indirectly, for helping them to understand about relationships and sex, and allowing young people to express their sexuality.

Any member of staff who has queries about, difficulties in supporting, or being

actively engaged in, the programme should arrange to discuss this with a suitable member of the senior team.

Appropriate training for all members of staff is central to the effective implementation of this policy. Correspondingly, staff will be supported in any aspect of their work concerning relationships and sexuality.

### **Use of language**

It is good practice to use medically correct terms for genitalia and sexual parts of the body, for example vulva, vagina, penis and testicles. Staff will therefore use the correct terminology as

Staff will openly engage with pupils about the meaning of slang words (where appropriate) and that some are offensive.

We believe that the use of respectful language which challenges sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice can be established through the RSE curriculum and has benefits for the whole school community.

Staff will use inclusive language (such as partner instead of boyfriend/girlfriend).

### **Safeguarding:**

Some issues may result in children and young people making disclosures which will be addressed in line with school safeguarding policy and procedures.

RSE plays a very important part in fulfilling the statutory duties all schools have to meet, including helping pupils understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships, and equipping them with the skills to get help if they need it.

Staff will follow school's policies with regard to confidentiality. Pupils should also be made aware of the boundaries of confidentiality should they choose to make a disclosure to a member of staff.

A member of staff cannot promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

### **Parental Engagement**

The involvement and support of parents and carers can be invaluable in enhancing pupil's learning, understanding and skills in the area of personal relationships and sexuality. We believe that parents and carers are essential in supporting a successful RSE programme.

If this is to be maximised, open, honest and clear discussion needs to be held between staff delivering the programme and parents/carers. A common language will be used and learning which takes place in the RSE programme can be reinforced by family and home.

- Before the delivery of more explicit modules a letter is sent home outlining the content of the unit of work. Annual training for parents will be offered by the school's SRE Co-ordinator.
- Individual pupils may have specific objectives and these would be shared with parents and carers through discussion, IEPs, Personal Care Risk Assessments or Pupil Support information. The school will seek the advice of other professionals as appropriate.

## **PARENTAL RIGHT TO WITHDRAW THEIR CHILD**

Sex education is not statutory for primary schools. However, we take into account that our pupils are growing up in an increasingly digital world which provides them with both opportunities and risks around forming relationships. Therefore, RSE and broader health education are a compulsory part of our curriculum offer.

Parents have the right by law to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education programme except those elements covered by the National Curriculum.

Any parent who wishes to withdraw their child from sex education should speak to their teacher to talk through concerns and the changes they wish to make. All requests will be met sympathetically and all effort will be made to ensure the pupil retains their access to all acceptable areas of the RSE programme.

### **Other Documents:**

This policy guidance should read with reference to the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2022, and the following school policies:

- Teaching & Learning
- Behaviour
- Equal Opportunities
- Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE)
- E-Safety
- Life Skills
- Social, Moral, Spiritual & Cultural (SMSC) and Fundamental British Values(FBV)

### **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

Any monitoring or observation of the planning, teaching and learning linked to RSE will take place in accordance with the school's monitoring cycle.

### **Equal Opportunities:**

This policy has been written according to the guidelines laid down in the school's Equal Opportunities Policy. As with all teaching at Riverside Meadows Academy, the humanities are delivered in such a way as to include all children, irrespective of their ability, gender, race or ethnicity.

### **Policy Review:**

The policy will be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate by the designated teacher, with input from other staff and advisors, as appropriate.



Policy agreed on: \_22 July 2020\_\_\_\_\_

Signed on behalf of the Trustees\_\_\_\_\_

Committee: Teaching, Learning and Welfare Committee

Author:\_\_\_\_\_

Website **Y**/N

## **Appendix 1**

### **Teaching RSE to Children with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC)**

General guidance on the approach to teaching and learning for children with ASC may be found within the school's Autism Handbook.

Students with ASC demonstrate the following characteristic learning and thinking styles:

- A relative strength in concrete thinking, for example, direct interaction with their environment.
- A preference for visually as opposed to orally presented materials, for example, the use of artefacts and pictures.
- A relatively slow speed of processing of orally presented materials leading to partial or incomplete understanding of a spoken instruction.
- A relative strength in rote memory, for example, recalling a list of dates or key words particularly if these are presented visually and using sequencing techniques such as timelines.
- A strength in understanding visuospatial relationships, for example, relative locations of places and features including on a map.
- Difficulties in abstract thinking, for example, comprehension of themes or topics that they do not link to their own experience.
- Difficulties in social cognition, for example, understanding the motivations of people in different circumstances.
- Difficulties in communication. Many people with ASC are reluctant writers, some ASC adults describe struggling to understand why they were expected to write down something they already knew.
- Unusual patterns of attention, for example, total absorption in a favourite activity and fleeting attention to something that is not preferred.

Students with ASC are often helped by:

- Use of video, ICT and interactive resources
- Clear and specific language supported by signs and symbols
- Access to artefacts and hands-on experiences
- Opportunities to take part in structured and guided role play
- Routines
- Repetition
- Time limits

## Appendix 2 - by chronological age 11

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families and people who care about me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability</li> <li>• The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives</li> <li>• That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care</li> <li>• That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up</li> <li>• That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong</li> <li>• How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed</li> </ul>
Caring friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends</li> <li>• The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties</li> <li>• That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded</li> <li>• That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right</li> <li>• How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed</li> </ul>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</li> <li>• The conventions of courtesy and manners</li> <li>• The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness</li> <li>• 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 those in positions of authority</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help</li> <li>• What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive</li> <li>• The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults</li> </ul>
Online relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not</li> <li>• That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous</li> <li>• The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them</li> <li>• How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met</li> <li>• How information and data is shared and used online</li> </ul>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)</li> <li>• About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe</li> <li>• That each person’s body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact</li> <li>• How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know</li> <li>• How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult</li> <li>• How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard</li> <li>• How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so</li> <li>• Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources</li> </ul>

### Appendix 3 – by chronological age 16

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships</li> <li>• How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into</li> <li>• The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships</li> <li>• The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help</li> <li>• That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control</li> <li>• What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them</li> <li>• What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online</li> <li>• The impact of viewing harmful content</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail</li> <li>• How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online</li> </ul>
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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)</li> </ul>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women</li> <li>• That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others</li> <li>• That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex</li> <li>• The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available</li> <li>• The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment</li> <li>• How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour</li> <li>• How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment</li> </ul>