



St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Diocesan Multi Academy Trust

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Date Approved and Minuted	MAT Board	16 th July 2026
Date of Next Review	MAT Board	July 2029

Relationships and Sex Education **(RSE) Policy**

This policy covers our school's approach to the teaching, planning and resourcing of Relationships and Sex Education. It was produced through consultation with pupils, parents, governors and staff members.

Our Christian vision

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We undertake to follow the principles in the Church of England Charter for faith sensitive and the DfE's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health education July 2025. Other documents that have informed this policy include the guidance document 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good – The Church of England Vision for Education (2016); Statutory Inspection of Church of England and Methodist Schools – Inspection Schedule Strand 5 (2018); Sex and Relationship Education Guidance' (2000); 'The Education Act (1996); Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st Century (2014); The Equalities Act (2010), and Valuing All God's Children – The Church of England's report (2017). We recognise that issues relating to human identity, sexual orientation and marriage are sensitive and important. The Church of England is exploring them through the work of 'Living in Love and Faith' commissioned by the Archbishops and due for publication in 2020.

1. Context

We aim to take a faith sensitive and inclusive approach to the requirement for RSE believing it will provide pupils with the knowledge that will enable them to navigate a world in which many will try and tell them how to behave, what to think and what do. It is our hope that the RSE curriculum will provide them with the skills to communicate their own views and make their own informed decisions.

All RSE in a Church of England School should be set in a context which is consistent with the school's Christian ethos and values.

- RSE should be based on inclusive Christian principles and values, emphasising respect, compassion, loving care and forgiveness.
- RSE should be taught in the light of the belief in the absolute worth of all people and the unconditional infinite love of God.
- RSE should reflect that sex is a gift from God as part of creation : a human longing for an intimate union.
- RSE should be sensitive to the circumstances of all children and be mindful of the variety of expressions of family life in our culture.
- Issues regarding human sexuality should be addressed sensitively.
- The exploration of reproduction and sexual behaviour within the Science curriculum should stand alongside the exploration of relationships, values and morals and Christian belief.

Pupils are given the opportunity to explore their own attitudes, values and beliefs within the context of our Church of England school with its distinctive ethos centred in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Our hope is for each pupil from these teachings to develop a strong sense of

morality which will guide their actions at the same time as exercising an understanding of the right of people to hold their own views within a framework of respect for others.

2. Guiding Principles for relationships, sex and health education

- a. **Engagement with pupils.** An inclusive and well-sequenced RSHE curriculum should be informed by meaningful engagement with pupils to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and engaging.
- b. **Engagement and transparency with parents.** Schools should engage with parents on the content of RSHE and be transparent with parents about all materials used in RSHE. All materials should be available to parents. Parents have a right to request that their children are withdrawn from sex education and schools should ensure parents are aware of sex education content within lessons in advance.
- c. **Positivity.** Schools should focus on building positive attitudes and skills, promoting healthy norms about relationships, including sexual relationships where relevant, and about health, including mental health. Schools should avoid language which might normalise harmful behaviour among young people – for example gendered language which might normalise male violence or stigmatise boys.
- d. **Careful sequencing.** Schools should cover all statutory topics, recognising that young people can start developing healthy behaviour and relationship skills as soon as they start school. Schools should sequence teaching so that pupils are supported and equipped with the knowledge to navigate different experiences in a positive way before they occur, and to prevent harms.
- e. **Relevant and responsive.** Schools should develop the curriculum to be relevant, age and stage appropriate and accessible to pupils in their area, where appropriate working with local partners and other bodies to understand specific local issues and ensure needs are met.
- f. **Skilled delivery of participative education.** The curriculum should be delivered by school staff or, where schools choose to use them, external providers who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to create a safe and supportive environment and to facilitate participative and interactive education which aims to support and not to alarm pupils. Staff should be trained in safeguarding and offering support, recognising the increased possibility of disclosures.
- g. **Whole school approach.** The curriculum is best delivered as part of a whole school approach to wellbeing and positive relationships, supported by other school policies, including behaviour and safeguarding policies.

3. Aims and Objectives for RSE

Our RSE programme is an integral part of our whole school PSHE education provision and our objectives are:-

- To provide an environment in which children may develop a healthy self-esteem and respect for their bodies and the bodies of others.
- Strengthened by our Christian ethos, to develop a sense of personal identity that will reflect the child's growing ability to make good choices of behaviour and lifestyle. It is our hope for each child's identity to be rooted in a deep understanding that they are loved by God and for this belief in their infinite worth to guide their decisions in life.
- To understand the nature of many types of personal relationships, including friendship, family relationships, love and conflict.

- To develop an understanding of the physical, emotional and sexual development of human beings leading to preparation for puberty.
- To provide an acceptable, accurate sexual vocabulary.
- To counter stereotypical gender attitudes.
- To develop communication skills – speaking, listening, negotiating and assertiveness.
- To provide the necessary knowledge and develop the skills required to enable children to keep themselves safe and understand that they have rights over their own body.
- To develop respect for their own bodies and the importance of sexual activity as part of a committed, long-term, and loving relationship or marriage.
- The characteristics of a healthy family life and that many families look different from their own.
- The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them.
- How people choose, make and maintain friendships.
- The rules and principles for keeping safe in friendships and relationships, including online

4. Organisation

Our RSE programme will be planned and delivered for all year groups following the X (each school to add) scheme of work (an overview of the learning in each year group can be found in Appendix 3- each school to add). Our programme, appropriate for each age group, has been reviewed and adapted in consultation between teachers and parent/carers. The needs and situations of individual parents' and classes' are always taken into account.

The teaching of all RSE is set within a clear, balanced and moral framework in which pupils are encouraged to consider the importance of responsibility, sensitivity, self-esteem, dignity, self-restraint, loyalty and fidelity.

Our RSE programme is inclusive of all learners and will be taught through a range of teaching methods and interactive activities such as question and answer boxes, problem page scenarios, story bag activities, pair and share work, circle time etc. High quality resources will support our RSE provision and this may include books, film clips, interactive whiteboard resources etc which will be used to support and promote understanding of the key objectives.

We teach RSE through different aspects of the curriculum. While we carry out the main sex education teaching in our personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, we also teach some sex education through other subject areas (e.g. science), where we feel that they contribute significantly to a child's knowledge and understanding of his, her or their own body, and how it is changing and developing. Student voice will be used to review and tailor our RSE programme to match the different needs of our pupils. There will be opportunities for children to ask questions both within the lesson and through systems where children can ask questions confidentially e.g. through a specific question box. Children's questions will be answered honestly and openly, taking into account the child's age and understanding.

Children with SEND

When necessary, the curriculum will be personalised and adapted through resources, small-group support, tasks, responses or outcomes. Appropriate provision will be made for pupils with physical and sensory impairments such as using technology, alternative means of communication and multi-sensory approaches. Where necessary, extra pre-teaching will be provided at the beginning of a unit or session to support any children with less experiences, knowledge or understanding.

5. The Role of parents

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's sex education lies with parents and carers therefore we consult them on a regular basis as a way of monitoring the subject. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. In promoting this objective we:

- inform parents about the school's RSE policy and practice;
- answer any questions that parents may have about the Relationships, Sex Education of their child;
- take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for sex education in the school;
- inform parents about the best practice known with regard to RSE, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home.

We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing responsibilities.

If they feel it necessary parents have the right to withdraw their child from part or entirety of the Sex Education taught curriculum that is not part of the Science curriculum, after consultation with the Headteacher. If a parent chooses to activate this right, they would have to assure the Headteacher that their child would receive this element of their education from an alternative source. Children may not be withdrawn from the relationship **or health** element of RSE.

We work closely with parents to ensure that they are fully aware of what is being taught and as part of our whole school approach to RSE there will be annual parent information sessions where the parents will have the opportunity to view the materials and resources being used in lessons.

6. The role of the headteacher

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our relationships and sex education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the headteacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The headteacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school sex education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy, and that they work within this framework.

The headteacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

7. The role of Governors

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, our governing boards also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes
- the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations

Foundation governors will also have wider responsibilities in relation to maintaining and developing the religious ethos of the schools. Schools with a religious character may teach their distinctive faith perspective on relationships, and balanced debate may take place about issues that are contentious. For example, the school may wish to reflect on faith teachings about certain topics as well as how their faith institutions may support people in matters of relationships and sex. Schools should be clear when they are delivering content that reflects religious belief.

8. The role of other members of the community

We encourage other valued members of the community to work with us to provide advice and support to the children with regard to health education. Visitors, professionals or parents, used as leaders of or contributors to RSE, must always abide by the school's RSE policy. They must never be left in control of a class, but must be accompanied at all times by a staff member.

9. Confidentiality

Teachers conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse.

- We will ensure a safe learning environment by agreeing ground rules as a class before the sessions take place.
- Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality and pupils must be made aware of this.
- The best interests of pupils will always be maintained and they can be assured of this. If there is any possibility of abuse the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedure will be set in motion.

- The child will be informed first if confidentiality has to be broken and will then be supported as appropriate. Personal disclosures may take place at an inappropriate place or time. If this happens the teacher will bring the disclosure to an end as quickly as possible, but ensure that the child is spoken to again before the end of the school day in a more appropriate setting.
- Teachers will consult with the designated safeguarding lead and in his/her absence the deputy of any safeguarding or child protection concerns.

9. Review

The governing body reviews our Relationships Sex Education policy on an annual basis.

Appendix 1: Relationships education: content to be covered by the end of primary

*Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education
Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, and teachers
July 2025 pp:8-12*

Relationships education: content to be covered by the end of primary

Families and people who care for me

Curriculum content:

1. That families are important for children growing up safe and happy because they can provide love, security and stability.
2. The characteristics of safe and happy family life, such as 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.
3. That the families of other children, 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.
4. That stable, caring relationships are at the heart of safe and happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up.
5. That marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.
6. How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.

Caring friendships

Curriculum content:

1. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
2. That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. Pupils should learn skills for developing caring, kind friendships.
3. That not every child will have the friends they would like at all times, that most people feel lonely sometimes, and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it.
4. The characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties.
5. That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened.
6. How to manage conflict, and that resorting to violence is never right.
7. How to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to get support when needed.

Respectful, kind relationships

Curriculum content:

1. How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others, including in families and friendships. Pupils should be encouraged to discuss how we balance the needs and wishes of different people in relationships and why this can be complicated.
2. The importance of setting and respecting healthy boundaries in relationships with friends, family, peers and adults.
3. How to communicate effectively and manage conflict with kindness and respect; how to be assertive and express needs and boundaries; how to manage feelings, including disappointment and frustration.
4. Pupils should have opportunities to discuss the difference between being assertive and being controlling, and conversely the difference between being kind to other people and neglecting your own needs.
5. That they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and the importance of respecting others, including those who are different (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices, or have different preferences or beliefs.
6. Practical steps they can take and skills they can develop in a range of different contexts to improve or support their relationships.
7. The conventions of courtesy and manners.
8. The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. Pupils should have opportunities to think about how they foster their own self-esteem and build a strong sense of their own identity, including through developing skills and interests.
9. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult), and how to get help.
10. What a stereotype is, how stereotypes can be unfair, negative, destructive or lead to bullying and how to challenge a stereotype.
11. How to seek help when needed, including when they are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

Appendix 2: Guidance on covering LGBTQ+ topics

*Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education
Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior
leadership teams, and teachers
July 2025 pp:36-37*

Your school's RSHE should cover the "facts and the law" about biological sex and gender reassignment. The guidance explains:

- This should recognise that people have legal rights by virtue of their biological sex which are different from the rights of those of the opposite sex with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment
- Pupils should also be taught to recognise that people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, as with the other protected characteristics, have protection from discrimination and should be treated with respect and dignity

Your school should not:

- Use materials that use cartoons or diagrams that oversimplify gender identity, or perpetuate stereotypes
- Endorse any particular view or teach it as fact, e.g. you shouldn't teach as fact that all people have a gender identity
- Suggest that social transition is a simple solution to feelings of distress or discomfort

Primary schools should:

- Teach about healthy loving relationships and include same-sex parents/carers when discussing families