



# Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex and Health Education Policy

Author	S Orumlu	Source	Previous policy
Review Body	Local Governing Body	Status	Statutory
Last Review	June 2025	Next review	June 2026

## Details of policy updates

Date	Details
10/06/24	Policy now reflects students needing to be able to describe their bodies – S Orumlu
03/06/25	Policy now includes updates regarding issues arising within society like misogyny, and challenging them. The DfE guidance has been updated.

## **1. Introduction**

All schools must provide a curriculum that is broadly based, balanced and meets the needs of all pupils. Under section 78 of the Education Act 2002 and the Academies Act 2010, a curriculum “promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life”.

At the North Star Academy Trust, we value Relationships Education and Relationships, Sex and Health Education as a way to support students’ development as human beings, to enable them to understand and respect who they are, to empower them with a voice and to equip them for life and learning.

## **2. Aims**

The aims of the Relationships Education (RE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education at our Trust 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 and those of others.

## **3. Statutory requirements**

“The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) continues to be compulsory in independent schools.” (DfE RE, RSE Guidance).

We include the statutory Relationships Education, Relationships, Sex and Health Education within our whole-Trust PSHE Programme. This policy is informed by existing DfE guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- Equality Act 2010 and schools
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)

- Alternative Provision (statutory guidance)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools (advice for schools)
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in school
- SMSC requirements for independent schools (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).
- National Citizen Service guidance for schools

#### **4. Definition of Relationships Education and Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)**

Relationships Education is about the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.

RSHE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. Effective Relationships and Sex Education can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by pupils if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables children and young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and well-being.

RSHE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values.

RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

#### **5. PSHE/RSE Curriculum**

At Primary our curriculum focuses on the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online. This will sit alongside the essential understanding of how to be healthy. At Secondary teaching will build on the knowledge acquired at primary and develop further pupils' understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs and alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex.

Our PSHE/RSE curriculum at Secondary will support the development of the skills, attitudes, values and behaviour necessary for life. Across Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils will be supported with developing the following skills:

- communication, including how to manage changing relationships and emotions
- recognising and assessing potential risks

- challenging sexism, misogyny, homophobia, racism and gender stereotypes
- assertiveness
- seeking help and support when required
- informed decision-making
- self-respect and empathy for others
- recognising and maximising a healthy lifestyle
- managing conflict
- discussion and group work

At Secondary we use the Jigsaw Programme across the whole school. It covers all areas of PSHE for the secondary phase including statutory RSE and Health Education. The table below gives the learning theme of each of the six Puzzles (units) and these are taught across the school; the learning deepens and broadens every year.

Term	Puzzle (Unit)	Content
<b>Autumn 1</b>	Being me in my world	Includes understanding my own identity and how I fit well in the class, school and global community. Jigsaw Charter established.
<b>Autumn 2</b>	Celebrating difference	Includes anti-bullying (cyber and homophobic bullying included) and understanding difference, Equality Act.
<b>Spring 1</b>	Dreams and Goals	Includes goal-setting, aspirations, who do I want to become and what would I like to do for work and to contribute to society.
<b>Spring 2</b>	Healthy me	Includes drugs and alcohol education, self esteem and confidence as well as healthy lifestyle choices, sleep, nutrition, rest and exercise.
<b>Summer 1</b>	Relationships	Includes understanding friendship, family, intimate relationships and other relationships, conflict resolution and communication skills, bereavement and loss.
<b>Summer 2</b>	Changing me	Includes Relationships and Sex Education in the context of coping positively with change.

These explicit lessons across the Trust are reinforced and enhanced in many ways:

- assemblies,
- praise and reward system,
- learning charter,
- through relationships student to student, adult to student and adult to adult across the school, • We aim to 'live' what is learnt and apply it to everyday situations in the school community.
- Class tutors/ a dedicated PSHE team deliver the weekly lessons.

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

### **6.1 The governing board**

The governing board will approve the Relationships Education and RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

### **6.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that PSHE/RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE (see section 7).

### **6.3 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 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.

### **6.4 Pupils**

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

## **7. Withdrawal from RSE lessons**

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE except for those parts included in statutory National Curriculum Science.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the headteacher. Parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited in to see the head teacher in school who will explore any concerns and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child.

Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in the specific sex education lessons until the request for withdrawal has been removed. Materials are available to parents/carers who wish to supplement the school sex education programme or who wish to deliver sex education to their children

at home. Parents and carers cannot withdraw from any aspect of Relationships Education and Health Education lessons covering the changing adolescent body (puberty).

### **8. Working with parents and carers**

The government guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (DfE, 2020) emphasises the importance of schools working in partnership with parents and carers. Parents/carers should be aware that schools are legally required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Sex and relationships topics can arise incidentally in other subjects, such as Science, Geography, History, RE, and it is not possible to withdraw pupils from these relatively limited and often unplanned discussions. Parents should be given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education and RSHE. Good communication and opportunities for parents to understand and ask questions about the school's approach can help increase confidence in the curriculum.

### **9. Safeguarding**

Teachers need to be aware that sometimes disclosures may be made during PSHE/RSE lessons; in which case, safeguarding procedures must be followed immediately. Sometimes it is clear that certain children may need time to talk one-to-one after the lesson closes. It is important to allow the time and appropriate staffing for this to happen. If disclosures occur, the school's disclosure and/or confidentiality policy is followed.

### **10. Training**

Staff are trained on the delivery of PSHE and RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

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

### **11. Monitoring and evaluation**

The PSHE Lead will monitor delivery of the programme through observation and discussion with teaching staff to ensure consistent and coherent curriculum provision.

Evaluation of the programme's effectiveness will be conducted on the basis of:

- Deep dive process
- Medium Term Planning
- Learning walks
- Book looks
- Pupil and teacher evaluation of the content and learning processes
- Staff meetings to review and share experience
- Staff CPD
- Improvement in attendance (attendance data)
- Improvement in behaviour (behaviour data)
- Positive trends in SNAP B data
- Positive stakeholder data (pupil, parent, and staff questionnaires)
- Reduction in bullying incidents
- A broad range of evidence, that indicates a full coverage of the SMSC strands

## **12. The Learning Environment**

Establishing a safe, open and positive learning environment based on trusting relationships between all members of the class, adults and children alike, is vital.

- We take turns to speak
- We use kind and positive words
- We listen to each other
- We have the right to pass
- We only use names when giving compliments or when being positive
- We respect each other's privacy (confidentiality)

## **13. Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues**

Sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise in learning from real-life experience. Teachers will be prepared to handle personal issues arising from the work, to deal sensitively with, and to follow up appropriately, disclosures made in a group or individual setting. Issues that we address that are likely to be sensitive and controversial because they have a political, social or personal impact or deal with values and beliefs include: family lifestyles and values, physical and medical issues, financial issues, bullying and bereavement.

Teachers will take all reasonable, practical steps to ensure that, where political or controversial issues are brought to pupils' attention, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views. Teachers will adopt strategies that seek to avoid bias on their part and will teach pupils how to recognise bias and evaluate evidence. Teachers will seek to establish a classroom climate in which all pupils are free from any fear of expressing reasonable points of view that contradict those held either by their class teachers or their peers.

#### **14. Answering Difficult and Sensitive Questions**

Staff members are aware that views around PSHE/RSE-related issues are varied. However, while personal views are respected, all issues are taught without bias throughout the curriculum. Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect that others have the right to a different opinion.

Both formal and informal PSHE/RSE arising from pupils' questions are answered according to the age and maturity of the pupil(s) concerned. Questions do not have to be answered directly, and can be addressed individually later. Individual teachers will use their skills and discretion in this area and refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are concerned.

We believe that PSHE/RSE should meet the needs of all pupils, answer appropriate questions and offer support. In lessons that cover RSE provision, this should be regardless of their developing sexuality and be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation and gender diversity, answer appropriate questions and offer support. LGBT+ bullying is dealt with strongly yet sensitively. Our schools liaise with parents/carers on this issue to reassure them of the content and context.

#### **15. Dissemination**

This policy is available on our schools' website where it can be accessed by the community. Copies are available from the school office on request from parents/carers. Training is regularly delivered to staff on the policy content.



## Appendix 1: Parents'/Carers' Right to Withdrawal Letter



Dear parents and carers,

As a part of your child's education at the North Star Academy Trust, we promote personal wellbeing and development through a comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programme. PSHE is the curriculum subject that gives young people the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live safe, healthy, productive lives and meet their full potential.

I am writing to let you know that, over this academic year, starting from \_\_\_\_\_, your child's class will be taking part in lessons which will focus on the relationships and sex education (RSE) aspect of this programme. RSE lessons will include teaching about: healthy relationships, including friendships and intimate relationships; families; growing and changing, including puberty; personal hygiene; changing feelings; becoming more independent; keeping safe and consent; developing self-esteem and confidence. Pupils will also have opportunities to ask questions that help prepare them for relationships of all kinds in the modern world. We will of course be sensitive to the children's feelings at all times, not expecting any child to answer any questions verbally if they do not wish to do so.

PSHE education is taught throughout the school in every year group and is monitored and reviewed regularly by the staff and governing body. Please visit the school's website for more detail about our PSHE curriculum. All PSHE teaching takes place in a safe learning environment and is underpinned by our school ethos and values.

As a school community, we are committed to working in partnership with parents. If you would like to find out more or discuss any concerns, we would like you to contact the Headteacher, PSHE Lead or your tutor in writing.

Yours sincerely,

PSHE Lead