



Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Don Valley Academy

CONTENTS

Contents.....	1
INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE.....	2
Document control.....	2
1. Equality, inclusion and social justice	3
2. Aims.....	3
3. Statutory requirements	4
4. Policy development	4
5. Definition of relationships and sex education	5
6. Delivery of RSE.....	6
7. Working with parents and carers	7
8. Pupils and Pupil Voice	7
9. Roles and responsibilities	8
9.1. The Academy Advisory Body	9
9.2. The Principal.....	9
9.3. Staff.....	9
10. Parental right to request their child be excused from Sex Education	11
11. Training.....	11
12. Monitoring arrangements	11

INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE

This policy covers Our Academy whole-school approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

RSE is vital for the personal, social, and emotional development of our pupils and students and equips children and young people with information, skills and values needed for safe, respectful, and enjoyable relationships. It empowers them to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

We believe that all children and young people have a right to holistic, inclusive, and needs led RSE. Though our Ethics, Philosophy and Citizenship curriculum (EPC) we provide high quality RSE, which upholds our ethos and values, our commitment to equality, and our celebration of difference and diversity.

This policy was produced in consultation with the Academy Trust, our staff, advisory body, pupils, and parents. We will communicate our policy to staff and parents, including publication on our school website.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Who is this policy for?

Parents, Students, Staff, and all stakeholders at the Academy.

Author

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3

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REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR
1	July 2020	New policy created	Sarah Gill
2	June 2021	Policy Reviewed	Jamie McMahon
3	October 2024	Policy Reviewed	Julian Harrison

1.EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Schools should consider what they can do to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls and provide an environment which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic, including through these subjects and as part of a whole-school approach. (RSHE Guidance, p14)

We believe that RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion, and social justice. Our RSE is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes and sexism and sexual harassment in schools. We take these issues seriously and ensure that we embed content on gender equality throughout the curriculum. We are also committed to an RSE that makes every pupil feel valued and included and is relevant to them. This means we are committed to an LGBT+ inclusive and SEND inclusive curriculum and are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice 2014 when planning for this subject. We will also ensure that we consider the religious and cultural background of all pupils when teaching RSE. An inclusive RSE at Don Valley Academy will seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010

2. AIMS

The aims of sex and relationship 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
- Ensure the delivery of RSE is factual, sensitive, and balanced. Staff will avoid the imposition of personal opinion. Instead, they will stay focused on the social, moral, spiritual, health and education aspects of the topics.
- RSE promotes meaningful, loving, and healthy relationships

The RSE policy is underpinned by the ethos and values throughout the school.

3. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Under the Academies Act 2010 all schools must provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum which:

- 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.

All maintained secondary schools must provide relationship and sex education (including education about sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS and child protection issues such as FGM and child sexual exploitation) and must teach human growth and reproduction as set out in the national curriculum. This is a statutory requirement.

Documents that inform the school's RSE policy include:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010),
- SEND Code of Practice (2014)
- Keeping children safe in education – Statutory safeguarding guidance (2024)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers.

4. POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils, and parents.

5. DEFINITION OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

Give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.

(RSHE Guidance, p25)

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is part of lifelong learning about physical, moral, and emotional development. At Our Academy RSE is centred on:

- Personal safety
- Caring for others
- Building strong family relationships.

This is coupled with teaching students about sexual health (including safe sex), and sexuality.

Effective relationship and sex education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. RSE at our Academy is intended to help students learn about relationships, emotions, sexuality, and sexual health.

We aim to present relevant facts in an objective and balanced manner.

Lessons are set in the context of the family, friends and wider societal issues and address responsibilities that arise from within these relationships.

RSE at Our Academy will help young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

SRE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

6.DELIVERY OF RSE

Effective teaching in these subjects will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to pupils, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme or lessons.

(RSHE Guidance, p8)

RSE is part of the EPC curriculum that is delivered at our Academy as a core element within the programme of study. This is a 5 or 7 year programme of study that ensures content can be age-related and suitable for all our students. Our programme also allows for specialist topics to be taught across the whole Academy either in lessons, Drop Down Days or during form learning time. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum.

Pupils will also receive stand-alone sex education sessions in the following ways:

- All students at DVA receive dedicated EPC lessons of 1 hour a week.
- The curriculum ensures students have access to at least one-half term's worth of RSE learning within the school year.
- It is a spiralled curriculum, so RSE is built on each year and is age appropriate.
- All RSE statutory content is covered in these sessions.
- Supplemented is support from external agencies such as NHS 5-19 team, School nursing team and With Me in Mind.
- External speakers also support the development of RSE at DVA.
- Tutor time sessions.
- Assemblies cover issues such as consent, county lines, unhealthy relationships and how to access support internally and through external agencies.

Across all Key Stages, pupils will be supported with developing the following skills:

- Communication, including how to manage changing relationships and emotions
- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- 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.

Across the faiths, there is some variation in attitudes and outlooks regarding Relationships and Sex. The teaching of RSE at Our Academy is respectful of all cultural and religious differences.

Inclusivity is an important part of the RSE curriculum and is accessible to all our students.

7. WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

Listening and responding to the views of young people will strengthen the policy, ensuring that it meets the needs of all pupils.

(RSHE Guidance, p12)

Successful delivery and teaching of RSE involves parents, carers and schools working together. Parents and carers also play an important role in the RSE of their children through exploring discussions at home that have taken place in school. Our RSE policy has been developed through consulting and involving parents and carers. We will work with parents and carers to ensure that they are aware of what we teach and when through informing parent and carers by letters giving information about when RSE will be delivered and when certain classes (including classes that involve sex education) will take place and by publishing information on the Academy website. In addition, any issues can be raised during parent consultation evenings, and visits to the school.

If parents and carers do have any concerns or special circumstances the school should be aware of, or if they would like any further information about the curriculum, we will identify time for them to come into the Academy. We may share examples of some of the key resources we use with parents/carers to reassure them of the content and to enable them to continue the conversations started in class at home.

8. PUPILS AND PUPIL VOICE

We want all pupils to be able to access the RSE provision in the Academy, and to do so in a way that supports their lifelong learning about physical, moral, and emotional development. This is set out in the Ethics, Philosophy and Citizenship (EPC) Programme that is central to the culture and ethos of the Academy. We use pupil voice to evaluate how relevant and engaging RSE is to children's lives throughout our RSE programme. We enable students to express their views on the range of topics and

issues that RSE covers and to ensure that they listen to other opinions and evidence, reflect on their own perspectives, and take a broader view. We want to ensure that all pupil voices are heard but that those views that are hurtful, offensive, or exclusionary do not dominate and are addressed. We want to ensure a culture where human rights, social justice, inclusion, and diversity are promoted.

8.1. Answering Pupil Questions

RSE explores issues that are likely to lead to questions from pupils. Questions are a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosity about themselves, their bodies, and their relationships with others. As far as is possible, where a question is relevant to a whole class, then they will be answered to the whole group. Occasionally the need may arise to deal with a question outside of the classroom if needs to be handled sensitively. Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way and consider whether a parent/carer has requested their child to be removed from sex education lessons.

School staff will not answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their students that could make either party vulnerable.

An open approach to answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and older students. Exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSE. Importantly, we believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they can discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The school's policy should cover how the school handles [difficult] questions. Given ease of access to the internet, children whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information.

(RSHE Guidance, p23)

9.1. The Academy Advisory Body

The academy advisory board has delegated the approval of this policy to Mr T Long as designated member from the AAB.

9.2. The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from components of RSE (section 7).

9.3. Staff

The Teaching of Relationships and Sex Education

RSE will be taught across the curriculum but specifically in EPC lessons and science. Form tutors, teachers and external professionals may also deliver elements of SRE and certain aspects of the programme.

Staff are guided by the Fraser Guidelines*, which provide guidance for health and education professionals and details of these are provided in the DfE Relationships and Sex Education (2021) guidance.

- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

Relationships Education – Primary

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-educationrelationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationshipseducation-primary>

We make it clear to pupils what our procedures are about confidentiality. Similarly, if questions are asked in class or in assembly adults will follow agreed practice based on DfE guidance. 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 the instance of a disclosure, staff will consult with the designated safeguarding lead:

Mrs A Callaghan and in their absence the deputy safeguarding Lead; Miss R Lewis or Miss L Kelly or the Principal.

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 components of RSE

Staff will:

- Use the correct terms for all body parts
- Use clear, unequivocal language in an objective manner.
- Discuss what 'slang' words mean and say that some can be seen as offensive. Staff will use their judgement in discussion depending on understanding and maturity level of learners.
- Use their professional judgement as to answering questions in front of the whole class or individually considering the Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy.
- Encourage learners to ask their parents/carers any question outside the planned programme.
- Set out clear ground rules regarding personal questions, which are agreed by staff beforehand.
- Have designated adults that learners know of to go to if they wish to talk.
- Partake in relevant CPD to support the delivery 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 Principal.

RSE resources:

RSE resources are chosen and checked for:

- Being inclusive – acknowledging the full spectrum of diversity in society
- Positive, healthy, and unbiased messages
- Age and understanding appropriateness.

10. PARENTAL RIGHT TO REQUEST THEIR CHILD BE EXCUSED FROM SEX EDUCATION

The new legislation brought in through the Children and Social Work Act 2017 brought important changes in relation to parental rights to withdraw children from all or part of the sex education lessons delivered as part of a school's RSE:

1. Parents will not be able to withdraw their child from relationships education in primary school or secondary school.
2. At secondary school level parents will be able to withdraw their child from sex education (other than the sex education which sits in the National Curriculum as part of science). **However, a child will also have a right to opt into sex education from their 15th birthday (specifically three academic terms before they turn 16).**
3. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Principal. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record and on CPOMS. The Principal will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.
4. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from RSE.

11. TRAINING

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

School nurses or sexual health professionals may provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

12. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Ethics, Philosophy and Citizenship (EPC) Leader

Elisha Williamson

Through:

- Regular learning walks
- Ingoing review of curriculum and delivery of content, in line with local priorities
- Student Voice and feedback
- Staff feedback
- Book looks and work scrutiny

The PHSE/ RSE team plan and monitor the delivery of the RSE programme and ensure that all aspects of RSE are covered as defined in government guidance especially the National Curriculum for PSHE- "personal wellbeing". The programme is reviewed on an annual basis.

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

As part of effective RSE provision, this policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff, and parents and that it is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance.