



**Moorlands**  
Learning Trust

---

## **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy: Secondary Schools**

---

	Position/Committee	Date
Approved	Trust Board	July 2022
Minor Updates (pending revised DfE guidance)	CEO	Feb 2024
To be Reviewed (following publication of revised DfE guidance)	CEO	By Summer 2025 or sooner

## **Contents**

[1. Background](#)

[2. Definition and aims of RSE](#)

[3. Roles and responsibilities](#)

[4. How is RSE delivered?](#)

[5. How is RSE monitored and evaluated?](#)

[6. Guidelines for teachers on sensitive issues, confidentiality and advice to students](#)

[7. Students with SEND](#)

[8. Right to Withdraw](#)

[9. Consultation](#)

[Appendix A: FAQ from DfE \(for secondary and primary schools\)](#)

[Appendix B: DfE 'What students should know'](#)

## 1. BACKGROUND

This is the Trust's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy for secondary schools. For information on primary schools, please see the Trust's separate Relationships and Sex Education Policy for primary schools.

High quality relationship and sex education (RSE) is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. It helps create a safe school community in which students can grow, learn, and develop lifelong positive, healthy, behaviour. It is an integral part of their education, supporting their physical, emotional and moral development, helping them to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

A comprehensive programme of RSE provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex and sexual health. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline. It is an integral part of the Personal Development and PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) programme within Moorlands Learning Trust schools.

It is also important to recognise the following:

Young people want to be prepared for the physical and emotional changes they undergo at puberty, and they want to learn about relationships. Older students frequently say that sex and relationships education was 'too little, too late and too biological'. Ofsted reinforced this in their 2013 Not Yet Good Enough report.

The Department for Education review of PSHE education states "The evidence shows that personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education can improve the physical and psychosocial well-being of students. A virtuous cycle can be achieved, whereby students with better health and well-being can achieve better academically, which in turn leads to greater success."

RSE plays a vital part in meeting the schools' safeguarding obligations. Ofsted is clear that schools must have a preventative programme that enables students to learn about safety and risks in relationships. Ex-chief Inspector Amanda Spielman stated "In the new inspection model, we are particularly interested in how schools contribute to the personal development of children.

Schools maintain a statutory obligation under the Student Act (2004) to promote their students' wellbeing and under the Education Act (1996) to prepare students and young people for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life. A comprehensive RSE programme can have a positive impact on students' health and wellbeing and their ability to achieve and can play a crucial part in meeting these obligations.

The Department of Health set out its ambition for all students and young people to receive high quality sex and relationships education in the Sexual Health Improvement Framework (2013), while the Department for Education's paper, The Importance of Teaching (2010) highlighted that 'Students need high quality sex and relationships education so they can make wise and informed choices'.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out that any public authority must in the exercise of its functions have due regard to the need to: a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act. b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, under sections 34 and 35 of The Children and Social Work Act 2017, placed a duty on the Secretary of State for Education to make Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all students receiving secondary education.

In creating a policy which supports effective delivery of Relationship and Sex Education, reference has been made to the following documents:

The statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) issued under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996, Ofsted Report “Not Yet Good Enough: PSHE education in Schools” published in May 2013 (Reference Ofsted 130065); this highlighted Ofsted concerns as to the emphasis on biological aspects in RSE teaching in secondary schools.

#### [Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges.](#)

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.
- RSE plays a vital part in meeting the schools’ Safeguarding obligations. Ofsted is clear that schools must have a preventative programme that enables students to learn about safety and risks in relationships.
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Regulations (2019), made Relationships and Sex Education for Secondary schools, compulsory.

## **2. DEFINITION AND AIMS**

### **What is Relationship and Sex Education?**

“Today’s children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.”  
(Secretary of State: DfE RSE Guidance 2020)

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is lifelong learning for all young people in school, irrespective of their sex, ethnicity or ability. It is about physical, moral and emotional development, the understanding of the importance of family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual activity or sexual orientation. RSE should enable students to make informed and appropriate choices as they become young adults and to develop responsible attitudes to sexual activity and the development of their own stable, loving relationships.

### **Aims:**

The aim of RSE in Moorlands Learning Trust secondary schools is to provide balanced, factual information about relationships, human reproduction and sexual health, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, moral, legal and religious dimensions, including the importance of consent and the right to say no. Our RSE programmes aim to prepare students for an adult life in which they:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within their relationships, including online
- understand and value equality and diversity and challenge prejudice and discrimination issues
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, hate crime, child to child abuse, and promote equality and diversity
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity
- understand the issue of consent and their right to say no, in an age-appropriate manner
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex
- understand the reasons for having protected (safe) sex
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV
- are aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships

Staff teaching RSE will remain neutral in their delivery whilst ensuring that students always have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

**The aim of RSE is NOT to:**

- encourage students to become sexually active at a young age
- promote a particular sexual orientation
- sexualise students

In addition, Moorlands Learning Trust's secondary school RSE programmes will:

- be an entitlement for all students
- be set within the wider school context and support family commitment, love, respect, affection, knowledge and openness. The RSE programme recognises that family is a broad concept and that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships, including same-sex relationships, outside marriage
- encourage students and teachers to respect each other's views with cultural awareness and sensitivity
- ensure students are aware of different sexual orientations, without promotion of any particular family structure
- recognise that parents/carers are the key people in teaching their student about

- relationships, sex and growing up
- work in partnership with parents/carers and students
- recognise that the wider community has much to offer and partnerships with other health professionals are actively encouraged
- promote the safeguarding of students (Student Act 2004), supporting their emotional wellbeing, and improving their ability to achieve in school
- promote a better understanding of diversity and inclusion, a reduction in sex and gender-based and homophobic/biphobic/transphobic (HBT) prejudice, bullying and violence and an understanding of the difference between consenting and exploitative relationships
- help students to keep themselves safe from harm, both on and offline, enjoy their relationships and build confidence in accessing services if they need help and advice
- reduce early sexual activity, teenage conceptions, sexually transmitted infections, sexual exploitation and abuse, domestic violence and bullying.

### **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **3.1 The CEO / Trust Board**

The CEO / Trust Board will approve the RSE policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

#### **3.2 The headteacher**

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

#### **3.3 Staff**

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE and are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive and neutral way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the (non- statutory/non-science) components of RSE

#### **3.4 Students**

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

#### **3.5 Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers are the key people in teaching their children about relationships and sex; maintaining the culture and ethos of their family; helping their children to cope with the emotional and physical aspects of growing up; and preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual maturity brings.

It is hoped a school's RSE programme will complement and support the role of Parents/Carers.

## **4. HOW IS RSE IS DELIVERED?**

Relationships and Sex Education is part of a planned, cohesive and sequenced PSHE programme. Delivery models in each individual school may vary but will typically be taught as part of the extended citizenship, RSE/PSHE and RE programmes as well as 'drop down days' whereby students have extended time to explore key ideas outlined in the curriculum overviews. Schools will also work with external specialist organisations, consultants and healthcare professionals to ensure their curriculum reflects current best practice.

## **5. HOW IS RSE MONITORED AND EVALUATED?**

This will be monitored in line with the school's QA policies, as well as informal drop-ins by members of the senior leadership team.

### **5.1 Monitoring**

It is the responsibility of all staff who deliver RSE to ensure that the work described is taught at the stated times. This will be through a variety of QA activities such as learning walks, book scrutinies and student voice in addition to centralised lesson resources created by the school.

### **5.2 Evaluation**

Students' knowledge and understanding will be monitored throughout the course of study. However, given the discursive nature of the subject matter, this will not necessarily be by means of a written assessment nor will it be given a summative grade.

## **6. GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS ON SENSITIVE ISSUES AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **6.1 Sensitive Issues may include:**

Puberty

Menstruation

Sexual orientation

Transgender status

Sexual intercourse

Contraception & Abortion

Safer sex

HIV, AIDs and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

Grooming and sexual exploitation

Abusive relationships

Female Genital Mutilation

The classroom teacher is directly responsible to the Headteacher in all areas of the curriculum. This includes areas that deal with sensitive issues. The teacher therefore should show the usual level of organisation and planning for these areas in terms of clarity of objectives, tasks and availability of resource materials. There should also be clear success criteria and understanding of how the work will be assessed.

Teachers should understand the difference between stating facts and stating opinions. If work in sensitive areas of the curriculum causes teachers any concerns, they should discuss them first with the Head of Subject/PSHE/Senior Leader.

## **6.2 Ground rules**

A set of ground rules will help teachers create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from students. Ground rules might be developed as part of the school's relationship and sex education policy or individually with each class or year group. For example:

- No teacher or student will have to answer a personal question;
- No one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
- Only the correct names for the parts of the body will be used;
- Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way

## **6.3 Dealing with difficult questions**

Teachers should establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting. Many teachers are concerned about responding to unexpected questions or comments from students in a whole class situation. Having a set of ground rules should reduce the chances of this happening but the following guidelines should be used: If a question is too personal, the teacher should refer back to the ground rules. If the student needs further support, the teacher can refer them to the appropriate person, such as the Head of Subject/PSHE or Pastoral Lead.

If a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question, it is important to acknowledge this, and to suggest that the answer is researched later. If a question is too explicit, seems inappropriate for the age of the student, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. In this way, the student will feel they have been treated with respect, but the rest of the class will not have to listen to personal experience or inappropriate information. To maintain trust and respect, the teacher must remember to talk with the student later; and if a teacher is concerned that a student is at risk of sexual abuse or any has any other safeguarding concern, they should follow the school's safeguarding policy referring the matter as a cause for concern to a Designated Named Person.

## **6.4 Confidentiality**

If a student makes a personal disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff cannot offer or guarantee unconditional confidentiality. The procedure set out in the Trust's safeguarding policy for when a child reveals abuse should be used in these circumstances. The information that has been disclosed should be reported to a designated Named Person.



## **6.5 Specific Issues**

### **6.5.1 Sexual Intercourse & Contraception**

In a case where a teacher learns from a student under the age of consent that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse, the student will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to their parents/carers and if necessary to seek medical advice. Child protection issues will be considered and referred to a Designated Named Person. The student will be counselled about contraception, including precise information about access to contraception and advice services.

Teachers will give students full information about different types of contraception, including emergency contraception and their effectiveness. Students may wish to raise further issues with staff arising from discussion in the classroom. Teachers can also give students – individually and as a class – additional information and guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling and, where necessary, treatment. N.B. Appropriate training should be provided for teachers prior to delivery as required.

In any case where safeguarding procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the student understands the circumstances in which confidentiality can be broken.

### **6.5.2 Transgender Status**

All people, including staff and students, have a right to privacy. This includes the right to keep private one's trans status or gender-nonconforming presentation at school.

Information about a student's transgender status, legal name, or birth sex also may constitute confidential medical information. School staff should not disclose information that may reveal a student's transgender status or gender- nonconforming presentation to others, unless legally required to do so or because the child or young person has asked them to do so.

## **7. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS or DISABILITY (SEND)**

SEND students follow the same RSE programme as all other students. When appropriate, and to ensure that the RSE Curriculum is accessible for all students, teaching will be responsive, and content will be adapted to meet the needs of SEND students. This will be done on a case by case basis, through collaboration between teaching staff, staff who specialise in SEND students in general or work closely with particularly SEND students and wider support systems as appropriate (e.g. parents or carers and specialist agencies). When delivering RSE to SEND students, we will be mindful of:

- The SEND Code of Practice, which includes a set of outcomes on preparing students for adulthood.
- The additional vulnerability that SEND students can face, to exploitation, bullying and other issues.
- The possibility that elements of RSE may be particularly important for some SEND students, because of the nature of a condition or disability.
- The potential need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of SEND students at different developmental stages.

### 7.1 Pupil Premium Plus and Looked After Children (LAC) students

It is recognised that all our students have different family dynamics and backgrounds and particular sensitivity should be shown towards students who are Pupil Premium Plus or identified as looked after or in care ('LAC') or previously looked after. Whilst we understand that each individual will have a different background and needs, there needs to be heightened awareness and empathy from teachers to ensure we are delivering an appropriate curriculum. Teachers should liaise with the SLT member with overall responsibility for Pupil Premium / LAC to ensure lesson material and content are appropriate.

## 8. RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

### 8.1. Parents' right to withdraw

In secondary education from September 2020:

- Parents will **not** be able to withdraw their child from any aspect of Relationships Education or Health Education.
- Parents **will** be able to withdraw their child (following discussion with the school) from any or all aspects of Sex Education, other than those which are part of the science curriculum, up to and until three terms before the age of 16.
- After that point, the guidance states that *'if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.'*
- Where students are withdrawn from sex education, schools should document the process and will have to *'ensure that the student receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.'*

Any parent wishing to withdraw their child is encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss the matter.

## 9. CONSULTATION

Each school is required to consult with parents on this policy each time they consult on their RSE curriculum content. There is no statutory timeframe for review and as such schools should ensure that they consult with parents (including this policy) whenever there is a major change to proposed RSE curriculum content or approach.

## Appendix A: FAQs from the DFE

### DFE FAQs

The Department for Education is introducing compulsory [Relationships Education for primary students and Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\)](#) for secondary students from September 2020. Also, from September 2020 it will be compulsory for all schools to teach Health Education.

Through these subjects, we want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe – we want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. Throughout our engagement process as we developed this curriculum, we have heard a number of wide-ranging concerns.

#### **Q: Will my child's school have to engage with me before teaching these subjects?**

A: Schools will be required to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their policies for Relationships Education and RSE, which will inform schools' decisions on when and how certain content is covered. Effective engagement gives the space and time for parents to input, ask questions, share concerns and for the school to decide the way forward. Schools will listen to parents' views, and then make a reasonable decision as to how they wish to proceed. When and how content is taught is ultimately a decision for the school, and consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content.

A school's policies for these subjects must be published online, and must be available to any individual free of charge. Schools should also ensure that, when they engage parents, they provide examples of the resources they plan to use, for example the books they will use in lessons.

For more information download our advice for primary schools on [engaging parents on Relationships Education](#).

#### **Q: Will my child be taught sex education at primary? This is too young.**

A: We are not introducing compulsory sex education at primary school.

We are introducing Relationships Education at primary, to put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships of all kinds. This will start with family and friends, how to treat each other with kindness, and recognising the difference between online and offline friendships.

Many primary schools choose to teach sex education (which goes beyond the existing national curriculum for science), and we recommend that they do so, tailored to the age, physical and

emotional maturity of their students. In those instances, we recommend you discuss this with the school, to understand what they propose to teach and how. If you continue to have concerns, you have an automatic right to withdraw your child from these sex education lessons.

**Q: Does the new Relationships Education and RSE curriculum take account of my faith?**

A: The subjects are designed to help children from all backgrounds build positive and safe relationships, and to thrive in modern Britain.

In all schools, when teaching these subjects, the religious background of students must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that topics are appropriately handled. Schools with a religious character can build on the core required content by reflecting their beliefs in their teaching.

In developing these subjects, we have worked with a number of representative bodies and faith organisations, representing all the major faith groups in England. Several faith organisations produce teaching materials that schools can choose to use.

**Q: Do I have a right to withdraw my child from Relationships and Sex Education?**

A: Parents will continue to have a right to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE in secondary schools which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, should be granted up to three terms before their child turns 16. At this point, if the child themselves wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements for this to happen in one of the three terms before the child turns 16 - the legal age of sexual consent.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at primary or secondary as we believe the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

**Q: Has the government listened to the views of my community in introducing these subjects?**

A: A thorough engagement process, involving a public call for evidence and discussions with over 90 organisations, as well as the public consultation on the draft regulations and guidance, has informed the key decisions on these subjects. The consultation received over 11,000 responses from teachers, schools, expert organisations, young people and parents – these responses have helped finalise the statutory guidance.

**Q: Will my child be taught about LGBT relationships?**

A: Students should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. These subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate students about healthy relationships.

Students should receive teaching on LGBT content during their school years. Teaching children about the society that we live in and the different types of loving, healthy relationships that exist can be done in a way that respects everyone. Primary schools are strongly encouraged and enabled to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families.

Secondary schools should cover LGBT content in their RSE teaching. RSE should meet the needs of all students, whatever their developing sexuality or identity – this should include age-appropriate teaching about different types of relationships in the context of the law.

**Q: What support will schools receive to deliver these subjects well?**

A: We are investing in a central support package to help teachers introduce these subjects well and with confidence. This will include a new online service, featuring access to high quality resources, innovative training materials, case studies and an implementation guide, available from Spring 2020.

There will also be training available for teachers through existing regional networks, offering opportunities to improve subject knowledge and build confidence.

We're working with expert organisations, schools and teachers to develop this support.

**Q: Where can I find out more information about what will be taught in my child's school?**

A: If you want to know more about what will be taught as part of the new subjects, the best thing to do is speak to your child's school. We have also published [parent guides](#), which explain what the subjects are, and parents' rights.

These subjects are designed to equip your child with knowledge to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships as well as preparing them for a successful adult life. The important lessons you teach your child about healthy relationships, looking after themselves and staying safe, are respected and valued under this new curriculum.

Teaching at school will complement and reinforce the lessons you teach your child as they grow up. Your child's school will have flexibility to deliver the content in a way that is age and developmentally appropriate and sensitive to the needs and religious background of its students.

## **APPENDIX B: DfE ‘What students should know’**

Appendix B: Link to the: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance documentation

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1090195/Relationships Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1090195/Relationships_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

This includes all the core topics that students should cover as a part of their Relationships Education or RSE Education both in Primary and Secondary Education.