



# Secondary Academy

## Relationships and Sex Education

### Policy

#### 1. Context

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships, and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes. RSE should empower young people, build self-esteem, offer a positive and open view of sex and sexuality and support sexual self and mutual acceptance and respect.

RSE is firmly rooted in the Academy's Citizenship Framework and is also delivered as part of other curricular areas such as Science and Religious Education. (It is one theme that is being developed in The Hastings Academies as part of the Healthy Schools Scheme). This policy links with other academy policies such as the Preventing bullying, Equal opportunities and Health and safety.

#### 2. Aims

The aim of RSE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. The Academy's RSE programme aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- 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 sexual and pastoral relationships.
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for relationships and sex issues.
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity.
- understand the reasons for having protected 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.
- be 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.

#### 3. Consultation

The consultation process has involved:

- Student focus groups / Academy Student Parliament
- Review of RSE curriculum content with staff and students
- Consultation with wider school community e.g. school nurse, EDS

A large part of the consultation process has involved 4 groups of students working with the Citizenship consultant exploring their wants and needs and therefore this policy should reflect these findings where appropriate.

#### **4. Principles and values**

The Academy believes that effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. It builds up knowledge and skills which are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on young people. RSE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people.
- Encourage every student to contribute to make the Academy community and aims to support each individual as they grow and learn.
- Be set within this wider Academy context and supports family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.
- Encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure. The important values are love, respect and care for each other.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussions on sexual matters can take place without fear or embarrassment.
- Recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents and students, consulting them about the content of programmes.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

#### **5. Course content**

Relationships and Sex Education in the Academy has three main elements:

##### **Attitudes and Values**

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices;
- learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships, and marriage;
- learning about the nurture of children;
- learning the value of respect, love and care;
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making;
- challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour.

##### **Personal and Social Skills**

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice;
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- managing conflict;
- empower students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter)

## **Knowledge and Understanding**

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay;
- the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

## **6. Organisation of Relationships and Sex Education**

The Academy specifically delivers RSE through its Citizenship Programme and Science lessons at KS3, and KS4.

Much of the RSE at the Academy takes place within Citizenship lessons. A team of teachers delivers the programme and receives frequent training and support from the leader of Citizenship and other relevant advisors. RSE lessons are set within the wider context of the Citizenship curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction are also included. The Citizenship Programme is taught during every year. The Science National Curriculum is delivered by staff in the science department. These lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten.

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

RSE is assessed at the end of a term block in every year group, and assessment varies from verbal to written answers.

## **7. Inclusion**

### **Ethnic and Cultural Groups**

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns.

### **Students with Special Needs**

We will ensure that all young people receive relationships and sex education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary.

### **Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation**

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that relationships and sex education is relevant to them. Relationships and Sex education will be delivered in line with the Academy's Equal opportunities policy and will promote equality.

## **8. Right of withdrawal of students from Relationships and Sex Education**

Some parents prefer to take all the responsibility for aspects of this element of education. Effective RSE is a partnership between parents and us, and parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the RSE except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (i.e. in Science lessons). The Academy would make alternative arrangements in such cases. Parents are encouraged to discuss their views with staff at the earliest opportunity. Parents are welcome to review any RSE resources that the Academy uses.

## **9. Confidentiality, controversial and sensitive Issues**

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.

In a case where a teacher learns from an under 16-year-old that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

- the young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice.
- child protection issues will be considered, and referred if necessary to the teacher responsible for Child Protection under the Academy's procedures.
- the young person will be properly counselled about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

Health professionals in the Academy are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the Academy's Safeguarding Policy.

## **10. Monitoring and evaluation**

It is the responsibility of the Citizenship Co-ordinators to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of RSE, in the context of the overall academy plans. He/she will also monitor the quality of teaching and learning through a variety of methods including classroom observations (in line with the Academy's policy) and learning walks. The Citizenship programme will be treated as a subject department in this exercise, under which all departments undertake yearly self-evaluation and a twice yearly monitoring and evaluation exercise led by the Academy Management Group.

## **11. Policy status and review**

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