Fir Vale Academy
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

Document Owner	Miss D Gautry
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Approved By	SIB Members

Introduction

Relationships, Sex and Health Education enables students to learn about:

(i) families and people who care for them, including the nature of marriage and civil partnership and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children,

(ii) forming and maintaining caring relationships,

(iii) the characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships, including online,

(iv) how relationships may affect physical and mental health and wellbeing, and how to ensure they are safe, and

(v) intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) will be delivered using teaching methods and resources that are appropriate to the age, developmental stage, and religious background of the pupils receiving it. The school will ensure that the curriculum remains fully compliant with the Department for Education statutory guidance, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* and will respond appropriately to emerging needs and any updates to Department for Education guidance.

Statutory Requirements

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Regulations 2019
- The Department for Education's statutory guidance, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education
- The Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Pupil, parent and staff involvement regarding the policy

This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils, parents and staff. It reflects the statutory requirements set out in the Department for Education (DFE), Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Statutory Guidance 2025.

The school will consult with parents and staff on the formation of the policy, and any changes made to it when it is reviewed, which will be at least annually. We will gather the views of teachers, students and parents in the following ways:

- Parents evenings
- Staff meetings
- Student Voice (Pupil Parliament, student panels, form representatives)

Parental right to withdraw children

Fir Vale Academy acknowledges the right of parents to withdraw their child from some or all of the sex education provided (except from sex education taught under the science curriculum), but not from relationships education.

Parents wishing to discuss the withdrawal of their child from some or all of the sex education provided should contact dgautry@firvale.com outlining this request.

In considering such a request, Fir Vale Academy will use the following process:

- The Principal will discuss with the parent (and, if appropriate, the child) to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum and the content that will be covered.
- The Principal will discuss with the parent the benefits of the child receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child, including social or emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing from their peers what was covered (and having that content channelled through a child's voice rather than a teacher's).
- The Principal will outline provision that will be made during lessons where the child has been withdrawn from sex education, which will be appropriate and purposeful.
- Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. safeguarding concerns), Fir Vale Academy will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

Safeguarding

RSHE plays an important role in safeguarding students. Through the curriculum, students are taught how to recognise abuse, exploitation, harmful behaviours and unhealthy relationships, and how to seek help and report concerns. Any safeguarding concerns arising from RSHE lessons will be managed in accordance with the Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Definitions: Relationships Education

Relationships education is designed to help pupils build and maintain positive relationships while also recognising potential risks and harms. As part of this, teaching may cover issues such as preventing sexual abuse or avoiding the sharing of inappropriate material online, without the need to describe any sexual activity in detail.

In line with safeguarding best practice, pupils should also learn the correct names for different parts of the body and be able to use these terms confidently and accurately. These terms can be taught without any reference to, or details of, sexual activity.

Relationships education is compulsory, and parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships education or health education.

Relationships education includes teaching about:

- families, including diverse family structures
- friendships and respectful relationships
- safe, caring and healthy relationships
- harmful relationships, sexual harassment and sexual violence
- boundaries, consent and communication
- online behaviour, digital safety, harmful online attitudes and image-sharing
- recognising and reporting unsafe behaviours

Relationships education does not describe the detail of sexual activity.

Definitions: Sex Education

Sex education is teaching about:

- sexual activity and sexual decision-making
- contraception and safer sex
- sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- sexual health services
- intimate relationships and sexual consent in context

Curriculum Content and Organisation

The RSE curriculum is delivered through:

- timetabled lessons
- tutor time
- assemblies
- expert-led workshops
- drop-down days
- cross-curricular links to Science, PE, Computing and Citizenship

Fir Vale Academy uses RSE materials which are created by the central team of subject specialists at United Learning and then adapted by our own teachers to meet the needs of our pupils. We also work with external organisations including **Sheffield Futures, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, South Yorkshire Police, the NHS** and other specialist agencies to deliver targeted sessions that complement the taught RSHE curriculum.

The majority of RSE lessons at Fir Vale Academy are delivered by our own teaching staff. The central curriculum is accompanied by guidance and support, and more bespoke training is delivered when lessons cover especially complex or sensitive materials. All teachers receive annual safeguarding training.

Fir Vale Academy uses external providers to supplement the curriculum at various points throughout the year. When external providers are invited to work with students, parents will be informed about the provider and the nature of the session.

Parents can request to see all student-facing lesson materials by contacting Luke Jenkinson, Assistant Principal: ljenkinson@firvale.com. Fir Vale Academy will endeavour to respond to requests within 48 hours, but if parents have immediate concerns, please contact the school office at 01142439391 or email enquiries@firvale.com.

The objectives that are covered in each year group are as follows:

Families

By the end of secondary school, students will know:

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships. (Year 7 - 11)
- How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children. (Year 7 - 11)
- What marriage is, including their legal status, e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony. (Year 8 -10)
- Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into. (Year 7 - 9)
- About the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships. (Year 7- 9)

- About the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting. (Year 11)

Students will also know how to:

- Determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy. (Y7)
- Judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe, and recognise this in others' relationships. (Y7 – Y11)
- Seek help or advice if needed, including reporting concerns about others. (Y7 – 11)

Respectful relationships, including friendships

By the end of secondary school, students will know:

- About the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships in all contexts (including online), including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationships. (Y7 – 11)
- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.(Y7 – 11)
- How stereotypes, particularly those based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage, e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour. (Y7 – 11)
- That in school and wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs. (Y7 – 11)
- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to seek help. (Y7 and Y8)
- About the types of behaviour in relationships that can be criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control. (Y7 – 11)
- What constitutes sexual harassment and violence and why these are always unacceptable. (Y8 – Y11)
- About the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, with reference to the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010, and that everyone is unique and equal. (Y7 – 11)

Online and media

By the end of secondary school, students will know:

- Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, and that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts.(Y7 – 11)
- About online risks, including that material shared with another person has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online. (Y7 – 11)
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which they receive. (Y7 – 11)
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online. (Y7 – 11)
- The impact of viewing harmful content. (Y9 – 11)

- That specifically sexually explicit material, e.g. pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners. (Y9 – 11)
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties, including jail. (Y7 – 11)
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online. (Y7 – 11)

Being safe

By the end of secondary school, students will know:

- About the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships. (Y9 – 11)
- How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn – this includes online. (Y7 – 11)

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

By the end of secondary school, students will know:

- How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship. (Y7 – 11)
- That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively and negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing. (Y9 – 11)
- The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for both men and women. (Y10 – 11)
- The range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others. (Y10 – 11)
- That they have a choice to delay sex or enjoy intimacy without sex. (Y10 – 11)
- The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, their effectiveness and options available. (Y9 – 11)
- The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage. (Y10 and 11)
- That there are choices in relation to pregnancy, with legally and medically accurate, impartial information on all options including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help. (Y10 and 11)
- How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex and the importance of facts about testing. (Y9 - 11)
- About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment. (Y9 - 11)
- How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour. (Y9 - 11)
- How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment. (Y9 - 11)

Inclusivity and Accessibility

Pupils with SEND

All pupils, including those with SEND, have a full entitlement to RSE, and having an additional need is never a reason to restrict access to essential learning about relationships, safety, consent and wellbeing.

Research suggests that children and adults with SEND can be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Provision of high-quality, adapted RSE is a critical protective factor.

Teaching and Learning

- Teaching will be personalised through adapted resources, simplified but accurate language, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, visual supports, and highly structured routines for discussion and decision-making.
- Lessons will be paced carefully, use multi-sensory approaches and provide extra processing time.
- Staff will maintain high expectations of dignity, age-appropriate content and respect, ensuring materials reflect diverse families, relationships and identities, including those of young people with SEND.
- As appropriate, planning will be trauma-informed and sensitive to pupils who may have experienced adversity, with clear routes for help-seeking at appropriate points in units. These adaptations support access without lowering ambition or omitting statutory content.

Pupils' Religious and Faith Backgrounds

RSE will respect religious and cultural diversity, uphold pupils' rights to accurate information and safety, and comply with the Equality Act. Teaching will avoid discrimination and protect pupils' dignity.

Principles

- Assume diversity, not uniformity: different pupils of the same faith will interpret teachings differently.
- Meet statutory RSE outcomes while treating faith backgrounds fairly and avoiding discrimination.
- Prioritise pupils' wellbeing, dignity and safeguarding when adapting content.
- Engage fully with parents, pupils and, where appropriate, faith leaders and members of the community when consulting on the curriculum.

Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

Teachers and leaders must balance pupils' rights to access all statutory content with sensitivity to religious and cultural diversity.

When planning lessons, Fir Vale Academy will:

- **Offer neutral, balanced coverage:** RSE should be delivered in a balanced and neutral way. This is especially important where religious and cultural perspectives mean that pupils may have strong beliefs about some content. Teachers will present accurate faith viewpoints alongside secular and other perspectives, so pupils see a balanced picture.
- **Use inclusive imagery and language:** ensure visuals show religious and cultural diversity and avoid metaphors that may confuse pupils with mobility needs or ASD.
- **Manage discussions carefully:** deliver content in an objective way and use ground rules and clear boundaries to manage pupil discussion.
- **Map objectives to need:** teachers start from the required learning outcomes and identify where faith perspectives are most likely to be relevant (e.g. family, marriage, contraception, gender).
- **Build in alternatives:** consider additional consultation with parents and pupils to ensure sensitive delivery where appropriate.
- **Consider faith perspectives:** build in opportunities to reflect on RSE objectives through the lens of faith teachings when appropriate and helpful.

- **Employ distancing techniques:** use stories, role-play, third-person scenarios or case studies to explore sensitive issues safely.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Fir Vale Academy is committed to regularly reviewing and improving the quality and effectiveness of its Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) provision. The Academy monitors the impact of the curriculum to ensure that it remains relevant, age-appropriate, inclusive and responsive to the needs of students.

The effectiveness of RSHE is evaluated through:

- Student voice activities and feedback.
- Curriculum review and evaluation.
- Lesson observations and quality assurance activities.
- Feedback from staff, parents and carers.
- Analysis of safeguarding, attendance and behaviour trends where appropriate.

The outcomes of monitoring and evaluation activities are used to inform future curriculum development, staff training and the ongoing review of this policy.

Complaints

Any complaints about the Relationships and Sex Education programme should be made in accordance with the academy's usual complaints procedure.

Approval and Review Date

- This policy is approved by the School Improvement Board.
- It is reviewed **annually**, or sooner if national guidance changes or it is otherwise appropriate to make amendments.
- The RSHE Lead is responsible for co-ordinating the review process.
- The policyholder is the Vice Principal for PDBA.