

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Introduction

The purpose of Relationships and Sex Education is to enable pupils 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 and sex education will only use teaching and materials which are appropriate to the age and the religious background of the pupils receiving it.

Parental, staff and student involvement regarding the policy

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. This will help to limit the risk of any formal complaints.

Sheffield Springs Academy will engage students when updating the policy, through a meaningful student voice process.

Parental right to withdraw children

The Relationship and Sex Education Policy 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 the relationships education.

In considering such a request, the school uses the following process:

- The Assistant Principal should 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 Assistant Principal should 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).

- Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. safeguarding concerns), the school should 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 should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.
- For the vast majority of pupils with SEND, their SEND should not be a consideration in deciding whether to grant a parental request. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Assistant Principal will want to take a pupil's SEND into account when making this decision.

If a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Teaching and Learning Objectives

The Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum is age-appropriate, inclusive, and aligned with statutory guidance, covering key themes such as consent, healthy relationships, sexuality, and personal safety across Years 7-11. It is delivered by specialist and non-specialist teachers (non-specialists receiving CPD) and adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND, while respecting diverse religious backgrounds and complying with equality law.

The RSE curriculum is structured progressively across Key Stages 3 and 4:

Year 7

- *Positive relationships and reducing risks:* Pupils explore friendship dynamics, peer pressure, and bullying.
- *Sexuality and mental health:* Introduction to sexuality and media representations of mental wellbeing.
- *Puberty and consent:* Pupils learn about physical changes, legal aspects of sex and sexting, and FGM.

Year 8

- *Drugs and influences:* Understanding how substances and social pressures affect relationships.
- *Sexuality and stereotypes:* Exploration of identity, prejudice, and healthy relationships.
- *Intimacy and risks:* Discussions on intimacy without sex, unprotected sex, and consent.

Year 9

- *Gangs and unhealthy relationships:* Risks of exploitation, gambling, and county lines.
- *Family and marriage:* Types of families, homelessness, and forced marriage.
- *Intimate relationships:* Consent, body image, pornography, contraception, and STIs.
- *Personal safety:* Sexting consequences, manipulation, and lifestyle choices.

Year 10



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- *Mental health and wellbeing:* Recognising concerns, reframing thinking, and emotional resilience.
- *Healthy relationships:* Online risks, legal implications of consent, and victim blaming.

Year 11

- Delivered through assemblies and character days, focusing on career readiness, faith perspectives, self-esteem, and relationship boundaries.

RSE is delivered by trained PSHE staff, and external specialists (e.g., inspirational speakers during Character Days).

RSE is also delivered through PSHE lessons (once every two weeks), assemblies, form sessions and themed Character Days using interactive methods including discussions, scenarios, and multimedia.

Monitoring and evaluation:

- Lessons are planned by the PSHE lead, with staff able to adapt to the needs of their classes. This is reviewed by the PSHE lead.
- Pupil voice surveys and staff feedback inform adjustments.
- SLT and PSHE lead conduct lesson observations/book looks and curriculum audits.

Teaching materials are carefully planned to ensure they are inclusive and respectful of all faiths, fostering a learning environment that values diversity and promotes understanding. When addressing sensitive topics such as sexuality or contraception, the curriculum presents balanced perspectives that include faith-based viewpoints, allowing pupils to explore a range of beliefs and experiences. Throughout these discussions, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own personal values and beliefs while gaining a clear understanding of the legal and ethical standards that underpin respectful and informed relationships.

To ensure that all pupils can access and engage with the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum, lessons are carefully differentiated to meet a range of learning needs. This includes the use of visual aids, simplified language, and scaffolded tasks that support understanding and participation. The content is designed to be inclusive, with scenarios that reflect diverse identities and lived experiences, helping pupils to see themselves and others represented in the curriculum. Teaching materials are selected to avoid stereotypes and actively promote equality, fostering a respectful and supportive learning environment for every student.

Complaints

Any complaints about the relationships and sex education programme should be made in accordance with the school's usual complaints procedure.

Policy Review Date

This policy will next be reviewed September 2026 by the Assistant Principal and Safeguarding governor.