



Grace Academy

Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Policy Reference:	GA-SP022
Version:	V0.6
Status	Operational
Authors	S. Bartlett
Applicable to	All Academies
Checked by	D. Boden & J. Wood
Valid From	December 2015
Review Date	December 2018

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1. Introduction

What is RSE?

This Policy covers our Academy's approach to Relationship and Sex Education (RSE).

"It is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of marriage for 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 orientation or sexual activity..." DfE (2000)

"Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health." (Supplementary Guidance, 2014). Some aspects are taught in Science, and others are taught as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE).

We recognise that the prime responsibility for educating children about sexuality and relationships rests with parents (in this policy "parents" means all those having parental responsibility for a child). The Academy's RSE is designed to be complementary and supportive of this parental role.

RSE provides accurate **information** about the body, reproduction, sex and sexual health. It also gives young people essential **skills** for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline. Good quality RSE promotes the core values of respect, love and care. It provides opportunities for young people to reflect on their own **attitudes values and beliefs** and those of their peers and others.

RSE Elements. RSE has 3 main elements: (DfE, Sex & Relationship Guidance 2000)

1. Attitudes and Values

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations;
- Learning the value of family life, marriage, and stable and loving relationships for 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.

2. Personal and Social Skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- Managing conflict;
- Learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

3. Knowledge and Understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate ages;

- 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.

Why is RSE important?

Ofsted state that *“Lack of high-quality, age-appropriate sex and relationships education in more than a third of schools is a concern as it may leave children and young people vulnerable to inappropriate sexual behaviours and sexual exploitation. This is because they have not been taught the correct language or developed the confidence to describe unwanted behaviours or know where to go for help”* (2013)

Young people report that sex and relationship education was *“too little, too late and too biological”* – Ofsted reinforced this in their 2013 *Not Yet Good Enough* report.

“Research demonstrates that good, comprehensive sex and relationship education does not make young people more likely to enter into sexual activity. Indeed, it can help them learn the reasons for, and the benefits to be gained from, delaying such activity” (DfE Sex & Relationship Guidance 2000).

For further information – see “SRE – the evidence” from the Sex Education Forum.

RSE aims to contribute to behaviour change, including reducing unprotected and unwanted sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual offences such as assault and abuse.

2. Statutory Duty of Schools

All schools must have an up-to-date RSE Policy which is made available for inspection and to parents. This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees.

The Principal must ensure that any RSE is provided in a way that ensures pupils:

- *learn the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children, &*
- *they are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate having regard to the age and the religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned”* (Learning and Skills Act, 2000)

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any RSE provided which fall outside of the statutory curriculum (contained in National Curriculum Science). Parents are invited to express their views through the Academy on this Policy and RSE Programme to help inform future practice.

RSE plays a vital part in meeting our Academy’s safeguarding obligations. Schools have a statutory responsibility under the Children’s Act to promote student’s well-being and under the Education Act (1996) to prepare children and young people for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

How does RSE link to other curriculum requirements?

State-funded schools must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society
- Prepares pupils at school for the opportunities, responsibilities, experiences of adult life (DfE 2013)

How does RSE relate to other statutory duties the school must fulfil?

Safeguarding

State-funded schools have responsibilities for safeguarding and a legal duty to promote pupil well-being. (Education and Inspections Act 2006 section 38). RSE helps young people understand the difference between safe and abusive relationships and equips them with the skills to get help if needed. Updated guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2014a) includes a section about being alert to signs that young girls may be at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), also set-out and defined within our Child Protection Policy.

Equality & Diversity

The Equality Act 2010 covers the way the curriculum is delivered, as schools and other education providers must ensure issues are taught in a way that does not subject students to discrimination. We work to ensure RSE provision is inclusive of all students and consistent with equalities duties.

3. Grace Academy's Relationship and Sex Education Programme

The RSE programme will help students develop healthy self-esteem and moral responsibility towards themselves and others. If young people feel good about themselves they are more likely to take care of themselves, think positively about others and engage in non-exploitative, caring relationships.

The RSE programme will cover more than just the biology and fundamentals of reproduction. It will teach about relationships, love and care, and the significance of marriage and stable relationships. Students will explore the benefits for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure. Students will learn about the risks and responsibilities of sexual activity, sex and the law, sexual consent, exploitation and abuse. Online risks from pornography and "sexting" will be covered at age-appropriate stages.

Students' views are taken on an ongoing basis throughout the RSE programme as part of ongoing feedback and evaluation.

Our Values

RSE is linked with the Grace Academy Ethos "Building Healthy Relationships" programme, and provision will be consistent with the values and Christian ethos of the Academy.

It is impossible for education to be "values-free" and exploring morals and values is a key dimension of RSE. The programme is consistent with our values of Grace, Respect, Integrity, Potential and Excellence and underpinned by our Christian ethos. The RSE programme will aim to promote those values of respect and dignity for human life. It is a holistic approach and aims to help young people develop their own set of moral values.

Aims

The objectives of the Academy's RSE programme are to:

- (a) explore what students know, understand, think and feel, and to identify their needs;
- (b) encourage unembarrassed acceptance of sexuality by using appropriate words for all parts of the body and encouraging positive attitudes to all bodily functions;
- (c) create an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without embarrassment;
- (d) counteract misleading myths and misconceptions;
- (e) provide reassurance that change and variation in development (physical, emotional, social) is normal and promote healthy body image;
- (f) learn to respect each other as individuals and to encourage boys and girls to understand one another and discuss stereotypes;
- (g) encourage a sense of healthy self-esteem as the foundation for forming positive relationships;
- (h) explore the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships. This includes; friendship, family relationships, romantic relationships, and sexual relationships.
- (i) promote the value of loving, long-term committed relationships and the place of intimacy within them;
- (j) appreciate the value of family life and associated responsibilities;
- (k) help students understand a range of views and religious influences about sex and relationships in society;
- (l) help students to know their rights and responsibilities;
- (m) promote personal safety and self-esteem so that students are able to delay early sexual activity, resist unwanted touch or advances, and can communicate about such matters and seek advice;
- (n) develop a growing understanding of risk and safety (both online and offline) and the motivation and skills to keep themselves safe;
- (o) be aware of sources of help and to acquire the skills and confidence to use them;
- (p) be aware of the law on sexual behaviour and sexual consent.

Provision of RSE at Grace Academy

The RSE programme will be co-ordinated across Academies by a specialist member of staff and will be carried out in a variety of different ways, by different specialists as well as teachers.

1. The "Building Healthy Relationships" Ethos programme as part of a broad & balanced curriculum
2. The taught National Curriculum Science Programme of Study
3. Pastoral support & intervention for vulnerable students
4. School nurse services, dependent on NHS capacity
5. Provision of appropriate information through leaflets & display of posters

In order to help students make intelligent, informed choices, establish a healthy lifestyle and build up a system of values, the teaching methods used are as important as the content of the lesson. Active student participation is encouraged in order to learn from others and to help them use appropriate language in ways which are understood by others. Teaching methods will be relevant to key stages, levels of

development and age-appropriate. All staff, whether directly involved in the RSE Programme or not, will support the Academy's approach & ethos in relation to RSE.

4. Pastoral Support

The Academy is committed to the promotion of student welfare. Staff endeavour to make themselves approachable and to provide caring and sensitive pastoral support. This may be on an individual basis or through the Academy tutorial and pastoral system. Where appropriate, students are referred to the school nurse or external agencies.

Care must be taken, however, in counselling and advice to individual students, particularly with regard to their sexual behaviour, and must not trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. Safeguarding procedures should be followed as set out in Section 9 below and as per the Safeguarding Policy.

5. Sensitive Issues

Avoiding sensitive or controversial issues does not make them go away and leaves students confused and at risk. All official documentation is in favour of the discussion of topics such as puberty, contraception, abortion, safer sex, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections within the RSE Programme.

a) Puberty & Menstruation

As children reach puberty they will know and understand that they will change and develop, and have the confidence in managing the physical and emotional changes. The programme should also include preparation for menstruation. The Academy should make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls cope with menstruation and requests for sanitary protection.

b) Contraception

Teachers may not give personal, individual advice on contraception to those under 16 years for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. Teachers must advise students to seek advice from parents, GPs and/or appropriate trained staff or healthcare professionals such as the School Nurse. Different types of contraceptive methods will be dealt with together with information about agencies offering help and advice.

c) Abortion

Abortion can be an emotive issue and that any teaching should present a balanced view which respects a range of religious beliefs. Teaching should offer the opportunity to explore the facts, the law regarding abortion, dilemmas, as well as an opportunity to discuss the issues surrounding it, to enable students to learn and understand more about abortion. One of the aims of the RSE programme is to reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancies through appropriate information on contraception and delaying sexual activity.

d) Safer Sex and HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Students need to know the difference between HIV and AIDS, modes of transmission and risky behaviours. These topics are touched on in parts of the curriculum. Young people need to be aware of the risks of contracting an STI and how to prevent it. The emphasis will be on prevention of infections through delaying sexual activity and teaching the reasons for safer sex. Students will be given information on diagnosis and treatment.

e) Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation and sexual identity, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them.

f) Technology & RSE

Children and young people are growing up in a sexualised culture where technology and social media are important and have created more opportunity for sharing personal information. “Sexting” and other self-made images and messages of a sexual nature, raise particular issues of safety, privacy, peer influence and personal responsibility and this will be addressed in the RSE programme. Awareness will also be raised about the negative effects of media influences and pornography and students signposted to external organisations offering further support.

6. Discussions about Sex and Relationships Raised Outside of the Planned Programme

The teaching of apparently unrelated topics may occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour. Provided that such a discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it will not necessarily form part of the Academy RSE programme.

In such cases, particularly since they may involve students whose parents have withdrawn them from RSE, teachers must balance giving proper attention to relevant issues with the need to respect students' and parents' views and wishes.

The Academy expects that teachers will draw upon their professional judgement and common sense to deal effectively with such occurrences and that they will be familiar with this policy and act accordingly.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Assessment

Ofsted (Aug 2015) states that in an outstanding school:

- *“Pupils can explain accurately and confidently how to keep themselves healthy. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and are confident in staying safe from abuse and exploitation.*
- *Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online and of the dangers of inappropriate use of mobile technology and social networking sites.*
- *Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development equips them to be thoughtful, caring and active citizens in school and in wider society.”*

Working towards these aims, the “Building Healthy Relationships” programme is regularly evaluated by the RSE Co-ordinator and Ethos Assistant Principals. The views of students and staff who deliver the programme are used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements are open to external assessment by Ofsted. Students’ knowledge, skills & attitudes are primarily assessed through student self-assessment.

8. External Visitors

External visitors may be used to help enhance the RSE programme such as school nurses, peer educators, and theatre-in-education companies. Where they are used, they have been selected due to the right skills and experience to make a unique contribution and add value. Visitors will be required to conform to this policy statement and the Christian ethos of the Academy.

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with individual students, outside the classroom. When working within the classroom they are also bound by the school's Safeguarding Policies. Outside the classroom situation, they can exercise their own professional judgement maintaining the pupil's best interests at all times.

9. Confidentiality and Safeguarding

The classroom is never a confidential place to talk, and that remains true in sex and relationships education. Students must be reminded that lessons are not a place to discuss their personal experiences and issues through the establishment of ground rules. Any visitor to the classroom is bound by the Academy's Safeguarding policy, regardless of whether they, or their organisation, has a different policy; visitors will be made aware of this.

Staff cannot offer or guarantee students unconditional confidentiality. Staff should follow the Safeguarding Policy in the event of disclosures, and report if a child under the age of 16 is having or considering having sex. If there is evidence of abuse, the Academy's child protection procedure should be adhered to, ensuring that students are informed of sources of confidential help.

If confidentiality has to be broken, the student should be informed first and then supported, as appropriate.

Students should be encouraged to talk to their parents and given support to do so. It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the Academy should be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. Where younger students are involved this will be grounds for serious concern and child protection issues will need to be addressed.

All staff, visitors and members of the school community have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of our students.

10. Provision of Sexual Health Services on Site

Opportunities may be provided for students to access confidential information and advice on-site through the drop-in service provided by the NHS school nurse. The extent to which the school nurse contributes to RSE will depend on capacity and local resources. This service is restricted to:

- advice about personal safety, healthy relationships and delaying sexual activity;
- chlamydia and pregnancy testing on-site;
- contraceptive advice;
- advice, information and prevention of STIs;
- advice, information and signposting about emergency contraception and terminations.

The Academy policy does not permit the C-card scheme (free condom scheme) on-site, instead students may be signposted by the nurse to other services in the local area, if appropriate.

11. References for Developing the Relationship and Sex Education Policy

This policy has been written with reference to guidance from relevant government documentation.

- Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, reference 150066 (2015)
- Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) for the 21st Century (Supplementary Guidance) (2014)
- Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (DfEE 0116/2000)
- Education Act 1996
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)

12. Review of this Policy

The policy will be reviewed every three years.