Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Policy Information	
Policy Owner	**ACE Schools Executive Head Teacher**
Issue Version	**3.0**
Approving Committee	**ACE Schools SLT**
Adopted Date	**June 2021**
Review Cycle	**Biennial**
Last Review Date	**September 2026**
Next Review Date	**September 2028**

Adoption of the Policy

This Policy has been adopted and reviewed by the Trustees of Transforming Futures Trust

Signed:



Executive Head Teacher **Date:** 23/9/26

Version No	Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	February 2021	Creation
2.0	October 2023	2. Statutory Requirements. Guidance link updated
2.0	November 2023	Sent to CPG to review and approve 01.11.23

2.0	November 2023	CPG approved 08.11.23
3.0	**September 2026**	**Updated to reflect new DfE RSE requirements**

1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at ACE Schools are to:

- Provide a trauma informed framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Positively prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Signpost where access to professionals, agencies and support is available to pupils

2. Statutory requirements

This policy reflects the latest Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, including revisions effective from September 2026, and will be reviewed regularly to ensure ongoing compliance with national requirements.

Primary academy schools must provide relationships education to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work Act 2017.

Academies do not have to follow the National Curriculum but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including requirements to teach science which would include the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum.

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

At ACE Schools we teach RSE as set out in this policy. This policy is associated with the PSHE Programme of Study.Secondary academy schools must provide relationships and sex education (RSE) to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work Act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – the PSHE Department Team pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance and attended training offered by the PSHE Network, Jigsaw Educationand the DfE

2. Staff consultation – staff delivering PSHE were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations

3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were asked to complete a survey to express their views and were given the opportunity to attend a meeting about the policy

4. Pupil consultation – through focused time in PSHE lessons, the PSHE department investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE

5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with trustees and ratified

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

Our curriculum map is set out as per Appendix 1; this may be adapted by settings where necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, pupils and staff, considering a trauma informed approach and the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and do not seek inappropriate answers online.

Primary sex education will focus on:

- Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings
- How a baby is conceived and born

For more information about our curriculum, see our curriculum map in Appendix 1.

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum and other aspects, such as religious views, are included in the Humanities curriculum.

Jigsaw has been selected as the school's PSHE and RSHE programme because it provides a progressive, age-appropriate and fully planned curriculum that supports pupils' personal development, emotional wellbeing, safeguarding and preparation for life in modern Britain. The programme is fully aligned with Department for Education statutory RSHE requirements and ensures comprehensive coverage of all required learning outcomes.

In our Primary Settings:

Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me

- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

In our Secondary Settings:

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

In all of our settings:

These areas of learning are taught within a framework of trauma informed practice which is sensitive to the context of the lives of our pupils. Inclusive representations of family life are used, taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Trustees

The trustees will approve the RSE policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE (see section 8). Part of this responsibility is delegated to the Head of PSHE.

7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE with a sensitive, trauma informed approach
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils

- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Head of PSHE and the Headteacher.

7.4 Pupils

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

8. Parents' right to withdraw

In our Primary Settings:

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

In our Secondary Settings

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

9. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The Head of PSHE will, where appropriate, invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Head of PSHE through:

- Learning walks and drop ins

- Book scrutiny
- Analysis of pupil progress data
- Subject leader peer review
- Surveying staff, pupils and parents

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers through our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the Head of PSHE biannually who will report to Head Teacher any changes needed. If changes are required the revised policy will be approved by trustees.

Appendix 1: Curriculum map

The order of Jigsaw stays the same each year, with pupils revisiting the same six themes at an age-appropriate level.

Term 1: **Being Me in My World** – Developing self-awareness, responsibility, belonging and positive participation in school and society.

Term 2: **Celebrating Difference** – Understanding diversity, promoting inclusion and challenging prejudice, stereotyping and bullying.

Term 3: **Dreams and Goals** – Building aspirations, resilience and skills to achieve personal goals and overcome challenges.

Term 4: **Healthy Me** – Learning how to make healthy, safe and informed choices for physical and mental wellbeing.

Term 5: **Relationships** – Developing respectful, healthy and supportive relationships with family, friends and others.

Term 6: **Changing Me** – Understanding growth, puberty, relationships and the changes that occur as we develop and mature.

While RSHE is planned through a progressive curriculum, the school recognises that pupils may sometimes require learning in response to emerging issues, events or identified needs. Where appropriate, staff will adapt the curriculum to provide timely and relevant learning opportunities that support pupils' wellbeing, safety and understanding of current issues, while remaining consistent with the aims of the RSHE curriculum.

Appendix 2: **Jigsaw 3-11 RSHE Mapping to DfE Statutory Guidance (2026) - Summary**

This demonstrates how the **Jigsaw 3-11 PSHE programme** meets the requirements of the 2026 **DfE Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) statutory guidance**. It maps statutory outcomes across six recurring curriculum units: *Being Me in My World, Celebrating Difference, Dreams and Goals, Healthy Me, Relationships,* and *Changing Me*.

The Jigsaw 3-11 programme provides comprehensive coverage of all statutory **Relationships Education** and **Health Education** outcomes required by the DfE. Coverage is carefully sequenced from Year 1 to Year 6, enabling pupils to develop knowledge, skills and understanding progressively across relationships, wellbeing, online safety, personal safety, physical health and growing up.

Relationships Education

The curriculum ensures that by the end of primary school pupils understand:

Families and Relationships

- The importance of families in providing love, security and stability.
- That families can be diverse and may look different from their own.
- The characteristics of healthy family relationships, including commitment, care and support.
- The significance of marriage and civil partnerships.
- How to seek help if family relationships make them feel unsafe or unhappy.

Friendships

- How to build and maintain healthy friendships.
- Qualities such as kindness, honesty, trust, loyalty and respect.
- How to manage conflict constructively.
- How to recognise unhealthy friendships and seek support.
- Understanding loneliness and inclusion.

Respectful Relationships

- Respecting differences in beliefs, backgrounds and preferences.
- The importance of boundaries and consent.
- Effective communication and conflict resolution.
- Self-respect, self-esteem and identity.
- Bullying, stereotyping and discrimination, including strategies for seeking help.

Online Relationships and Safety

- Safe and respectful online behaviour.
- Risks associated with sharing personal information.
- Recognising harmful online content and contact.
- Understanding age restrictions on social media and online services.
- How to report concerns and access support.

Keeping Safe

- Personal boundaries and body autonomy.
- Privacy, secrets and appropriate relationships.
- Identifying trusted adults.
- Recognising abuse and unsafe situations.
- Knowing how and where to seek help for themselves and others.

Health Education

The programme supports pupils to develop knowledge and skills related to physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Pupils learn:

- A wide range of emotions and how to manage them.
- That everyone experiences worries and challenges.
- Positive strategies for maintaining wellbeing.
- The effects of loneliness, bullying, loss and bereavement.
- How and when to access support for mental health concerns.

Online Wellbeing

Pupils develop understanding of:

- Positive and negative impacts of internet use.
- Responsible online behaviour.
- Screen time and digital balance.
- Online bullying, misinformation and harmful content.
- Privacy, consent and digital rights.

Physical Health

Children learn about:

- Benefits of exercise and active lifestyles.
- Healthy eating and nutrition.

- Sleep, hygiene and dental health.
- Illness prevention and healthy routines.
- Physical changes associated with growth and development.

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Vaping

The curriculum covers:

- Risks associated with smoking, vaping, alcohol and drugs.
- The effects of nicotine addiction.
- Making informed and safe health choices.

Personal Safety and First Aid

Pupils learn:

- Hazard awareness and risk management.
- Road, rail and water safety.
- How to contact emergency services.
- Basic first aid concepts and responding to emergencies.

Growing and Changing

The programme teaches:

- Human growth and development.
- Puberty and the physical and emotional changes associated with adolescence.
- Correct anatomical vocabulary.

- Menstruation and body changes in an age-appropriate way.
- Respect for personal boundaries and bodily privacy.

Sex Education

Sex education is **non-statutory in primary schools**, although DfE guidance recommends teaching age-appropriate content in Years 5 and 6, particularly linked to the National Curriculum science requirements around human development, conception and birth. Parents should be consulted and retain the right to request withdrawal from non-statutory sex education.

Appendix 2: **Jigsaw 11-16 RSHE Mapping to DfE Statutory Guidance (2025) - Summary**

This document demonstrates how the **Jigsaw 11-16 PSHE programme** fully meets the requirements of the **DfE Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) statutory guidance** for secondary-aged pupils. The curriculum is delivered through six recurring themes: *Being Me in My World, Celebrating Difference, Dreams and Goals, Healthy Me, Relationships,* and *Changing Me*, using a spiral curriculum that revisits key themes with increasing depth and complexity.

The Jigsaw 11-16 programme provides comprehensive coverage of all statutory secondary RSHE requirements. It equips young people with the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to build healthy relationships, stay safe online and offline, maintain physical and mental wellbeing, make informed choices about sexual health, and prepare for adult life. Coverage is progressive and age-appropriate across Years 7-11, ensuring that pupils revisit key themes as their maturity and understanding develop.

Relationships and Sex Education

Families and Stable Relationships

Pupils learn about:

- Different types of committed and stable relationships.
- The importance of relationships in supporting wellbeing and raising children.
- Marriage and civil partnerships, including their legal rights and protections.

- The myth of "common-law marriage".
- Forced marriage and the law regarding marriage under 18.
- How families change through separation, birth, death and new relationships.
- Parenting responsibilities and the importance of early childhood development.
- How to recognise unsafe relationships and seek support.

Respectful Relationships

The curriculum develops understanding of:

- Characteristics of healthy relationships, including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, tolerance and consent.
- Managing conflict and relationship endings appropriately.
- Self-respect, self-esteem and independence.
- Communication skills and respectful behaviour.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Bullying, discrimination and prejudice.
- The impact of stereotypes, including those based on sex, gender, race, religion, disability and sexual orientation.
- The influence of power imbalances within relationships.
- The role of consent and ethical decision-making in relationships.
- Harmful influences such as pornography, misogyny and online extremist communities.

Online Safety and Awareness

Students are taught:

- Rights and responsibilities online.

- Safe use of personal information and privacy settings.
- Risks associated with social media, including fake profiles and AI-generated content.
- Deepfakes and how to identify them.
- Online scams, sextortion and exploitation.
- The dangers of sharing images and personal information.
- How algorithms, advertising and data collection operate online.
- The impact of misinformation, conspiracy theories and harmful online content.
- How artificial intelligence and chatbots can create risks.
- How to report concerns and access support.

Being Safe

Pupils learn about:

- Boundaries and consent in relationships, including romantic and sexual relationships.
- Recognising pressure, coercion and manipulation.
- Assessing whether relationships, adults or information sources are trustworthy.
- Personal safety in public and online spaces.
- Sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Domestic abuse and coercive control.
- Grooming, exploitation and criminal behaviour.
- Forced marriage, FGM, virginity testing and hymenoplasty.
- The law relating to sexual offences.
- The risks associated with pornography and harmful sexual behaviours.

- How to seek support for themselves or others.

Intimate and Sexual Relationships

The programme provides age-appropriate education about:

- Healthy sexual relationships.
- The age of consent and legal responsibilities.
- Sexual consent and capacity to consent.
- Sexual health and wellbeing.
- Contraception and pregnancy choices.
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.
- Risk reduction and safer sex.
- Where to access confidential sexual health services.
- Recognising misinformation and accessing medically accurate advice.

Health and Wellbeing Education

Mental Wellbeing

Students develop understanding of:

- Emotional literacy and accurate communication of feelings.
- Managing stress, anxiety and low mood.
- Mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression.
- Protective factors including exercise, sleep, volunteering and social connection.
- Loneliness, resilience and coping strategies.

- The relationship between substance use and mental health.
- Gambling-related harms and addiction.
- Seeking help and support for mental health concerns.

Online Wellbeing

Pupils explore:

- Healthy and unhealthy online behaviours.
- Excessive screen use and digital wellbeing.
- Online comparison, body image and self-esteem.
- Online bullying, harassment and abuse.
- Gambling and gaming-related risks.
- Misinformation and manipulation.
- Harmful content relating to self-harm, suicide and violence.
- Safe reporting and support pathways.

Physical Health and Healthy Lifestyles

The curriculum covers:

- Benefits of exercise and physical activity.
- Healthy lifestyles and weight management.
- Sleep and its impact on health and learning.
- Serious physical health conditions.
- Organ, blood and stem cell donation.

- The links between physical health and emotional wellbeing.

Healthy Eating

Pupils learn about:

- Balanced nutrition.
- Links between poor diet and ill health.
- Obesity and cardiovascular disease.
- Dental health.
- The impact of alcohol on diet and weight.
- Long-term health consequences of unhealthy eating habits.

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Vaping

Students are taught:

- The law relating to drugs.
- Risks of illegal substances and counterfeit drugs.
- Harms associated with smoking and vaping.
- Alcohol-related risks and harm reduction.
- Drug and alcohol dependency.
- Risks associated with misuse of prescribed medication.
- Links between substance misuse and mental health difficulties.

Health Protection and Healthcare

The programme includes:

- Personal hygiene and infection prevention.
- Vaccinations and immunisation.
- Dental health and sleep hygiene.
- Self-care and managing minor illnesses.
- Navigating health services including GPs, pharmacies, A&E and sexual health clinics.
- Medical consent and Gillick competence.
- Taking responsibility for personal health and wellbeing.

Personal Safety

Students learn:

- Risk management in increasingly independent situations.
- Peer influence and risk-taking behaviours.
- Knife crime awareness and the law.
- Grooming and exploitation.
- Trusted adults and support networks.
- Social and emotional skills that promote safety and positive decision-making.

Basic First Aid

Pupils develop knowledge of:

- Common injuries and first aid responses.

- CPR and life-saving interventions.
- The purpose and use of defibrillators.
- Emergency response skills.

Developing Bodies

Students learn about:

- Physical and emotional changes during adolescence.
- Puberty and brain development.
- Menstrual and gynaecological health.
- Fertility, reproductive health and menopause.
- When and how to seek medical advice about reproductive and sexual health concerns.

Appendix 3: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	