



Highams Park Academy Trust

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

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1. Introduction This policy covers our school's approach to Relationships and Sex Education and the way that this is delivered at Highams Park School for students. Appendix 1 outlines the programme of study within Citizenship/ PSHE/ Critical Minds. It should be recognised that Relationships and Sex Education is not isolated to Citizenship/ PSHE/ Critical Minds and is part of the wider development of the student and throughout the school involves other staff, in particular the school safeguarding lead and the pastoral staff.

2. Terminology

RSE - Relationship and Sex Education

LGBT+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender +

SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disability

PSED – Public Sector Equality Duty

3. Aims

The aims of Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and this policy are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- To recognise that relationships and the understanding of diverse relationships, takes place throughout the curriculum
- Prepare students for physical and emotional changes, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of healthy minds and healthy bodies
- Promote inclusivity and foster good relations between students and promote understanding and respect for all in our community <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>
- Create a positive and respectful culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Critically explore current issues in society relating to RSE and help students develop the knowledge and personal skills to keep safe
- Assist students with the emotional literacy in order to describe themselves, their bodies and their sexuality
- To recognise that RSE is part of the wider development of a student's education
- To teach about relationships, love, care and the responsibilities of future parenthood as well as sexual relationships
- Ensure young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships
- Understand the difference between safe and abusive sexual relationships and equip students to get help if they need it

4. Definition of RSE

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, 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, more, that it normalises sexual activity as part of human relationships.

5. Statutory Requirements

Secondary Academies have to follow the National Curriculum and, are obliged to teach RSE. Academies are required by their funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996. At Highams Park School we teach RSE as legally required as set out in this policy.

The RSE policy supports and complements the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy,
- ICT Acceptable User Policy,
- Bullying and Harassment Policy,
- SEND Policy
- Whole School Literacy Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- AI Policy

Documents that inform the school's RSE policy include:

- o Education Act (1996) as amended by the children's wellbeing and school's act 2026
- o Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- o Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- o Equality Act (2010),
- o Supplementary Guidance RSE for the 21st century (2014)
- o Keeping children safe in education – Statutory safeguarding guidance (2026)
- o Children and Social Work Act (2017)

6. Rationale and ethos

Highams Park School is committed to underpinning its provision of Relationships and Sex Education with its core values of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience. We endeavour to constantly explore and develop these dispositions in how students understand and manage their relationships and ensure they are as well-equipped intellectually and emotionally as possible, before entering a romantic or sexual relationship.

Every young person should leave school prepared to take their place in a rapidly changing and challenging world and this includes sex and relationships. RSE is essential to the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all students and helps young people make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives with confidence and independence. Effective RSE does not encourage earlier sexual experimentation. Studies consistently show that clear, honest and objective access to information about sex means young people choose to wait longer before having sex. Highams Park school is committed to supporting students to learn how to manage their feelings and emotions in a healthy way. We want students to develop the skills for life long success in building and sustaining healthy personal relationships and thus promote happiness, wellbeing and sense of life fulfilment.

We view the partnership of home and school as vital in providing the context in which students at Highams Park School are able to fully understand the way that relationships develop. The support provided by parents and carers for young people to fully comprehend relationships and sex education is vital to a high-quality delivery of Sex and Relationships Education. Disabled and LGBT+ students can be

victimised both in and out of school and we believe that an inclusive RSE approach can play an important role in the safeguarding of children's basic human rights and equally support parents and carers. RSE helps the school fulfil its schools aims. The aims are:

- All members of the school community feel safe
- There is mutual respect amongst all
- Self-discipline is expected
- Students are responsible for themselves and others
- Self-confidence is nurtured
- The achievements of all are celebrated and promoted without discrimination
- There is a positive attitude towards everyone regardless of their personal characteristics
- Students are encouraged to achieve their very best and to become lifelong learners
- Everyone is encouraged to become active global citizens who are responsible for their environment.

We ensure RSE is inclusive and meets the needs of all our students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by placing equalities at the heart of the delivery of RSE. The delivery of RSE is underpinned by the belief that students with recognised disabilities learn in a multitude of different ways and that RSE lessons are opportunities for SEND students to thrive. It is also underpinned by the belief that every student may be disabled (SEND) and not recognised at that moment, as disabilities can exist but not be recognised. In addition, students can become disabled during their life, including at school. Therefore, an inclusive experience of education is the aim of RSE and its delivery at Highams Park School and by teaching RSE in this way we create an environment where all relationships, including sexual relationships, of disabled people are respected. Recognising that Black and SEND students are more likely to be excluded than other students and that a fully inclusive RSE is part of an equalities approach which seeks to address this issue.

We ensure RSE fosters race, gender and LGBT+ equality by recognising that all relationships and sexual relationships are usual, common and part of everyday life experiences and that this is respected in the environment created in the classroom and in the school as a whole. Through the delivery, resources, content and teaching of RSE race, gender and LGBT+ equality is promoted. This is then extended further to events such as Black History Month. Through a non-discriminatory approach to all equalities we ensure that gender and LGBT+ equality is promoted. We believe that a fully inclusive RSE programme of study and a whole school approach helps foster good mental health and well-being and benefits all within our school community.

The intended outcomes of our programme are that students will:

- **know and understand** that relationships, sex, sexual relationships, puberty, menopause and changes to the body and mind are part of life's experiences. That a relationship is built on mutual trust and respect. That relationships, body parts and family life will be varied and is part of human Neurodiversity. That adults play an important role in a child's development during puberty and adolescence. How the law protects young people from



exploitation and how the law impacts upon their life through choices they make. That consent is crucial to a relationship.

- **understand they have a right** to be treated equally under the law and to be fully included in the RSE programme of study. To be treated and educated in a non-discriminatory environment. To free sanitary products. To feel safe and able to express themselves in a respectful manner about themselves and others.
- **understand they have a responsibility** to take their own health and well-being, including their relationships, seriously and are responsible for their choices and actions. To conduct themselves appropriately and treat others respectfully. To comply with school rules and expectations including those in RSE lessons.

Develop the skills of:

- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- Assertiveness
- Seeking help and support when required
- Informed decision-making
- Self-respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and maximising a lifestyle
- Managing conflict
- Discussion and group work
- Reflection and self-assessment
- emotional literacy and evaluative skills
- Communication, including how to manage changing relationships and emotions

7. Roles and responsibilities

The RSE programme will be led and taught by the Co-ordinator of Citizenship/ PSHE/ Critical Minds. It will be supported by the whole school community, including staff, students, trustees and parents and carers.

The Trustees

The Trustees via the Academy's Effectiveness subcommittee approve the RSE policy and hold the School Principal to account for its implementation

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school and for managing parental requests to withdraw students from non-statutory/non-Science components of RSE

Staff

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to address this with the Principal. Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students with SEND
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from non-statutory/non-Science components of RSE

Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, behave with dignity and treat others with respect and sensitivity

8. Curriculum design

Our RSE programme is an integral part of our whole school PSHE education provision and will, as a minimum, cover:

- Puberty
- Menstruation
- Menopause
- Body parts and body changes
- Healthy Relationships
- Consent
- Conception and contraception
- Sexually-transmitted infections
- Anonymous questions
- Signposting services such as local health centres, services and the Medical Welfare Officer

Our RSE programme is inclusive of all students and all abilities. We will ensure RSE is matched to the needs of our students by understanding the complex needs of all students and using a variety of teaching strategies to meet those needs. Our RSE programme will be planned and delivered through Citizenship/ PSHE and Critical Minds lessons, except for year 9 and year 10 which will receive delivery through two by ten-minute registration sessions per week, drop-down sessions and cross-curricular provision.

Our RSE programme will be taught through a range of teaching methods and interactive activities, including:

- Group and paired work
- Questioning
- Card sorts

- Use of ICT
- Use of film
- Articles
- Books

Lessons will be differentiated by activities and a range of formative assessments methods. This will complement the belief that all students learn in a variety of ways and therefore will be assessed in a number of ways to ensure students have access and ownership over the RSE learning process. High quality resources will support our RSE provision and will be regularly reviewed by the Co-Ordinator of Citizenship/ PSHE/ Critical Minds. Selected resources, such as use of ICT, books and film clips will be used which support and promote understanding within a values context and underpin the delivery of RSE.

9. Safe and Effective practice

We will ensure a safe learning environment by establishing ground rules for lessons in RSE. Teachers and students will agree ground rules by discussing and agreeing in the first lesson, what rules are needed for a safe and mutually respectful learning environment. This will include the roles and responsibilities of the teacher. Distancing techniques such as giving advice to peers and role play are used because they enable students to depersonalise themselves from the situation and remove the emotional attachment to an issue. Students' questions will be answered by the teacher.

Sensitive issues will be handled by the teacher through a range of strategies which enable a safe and secure learning environment for example using the phrase 'someone I know' in order to avoid naming people. Students will be able to raise questions anonymously through lessons where 'anonymous questions' are asked and then answered by the teacher. Any questions which are difficult to answer will be deferred. We recognise that RSE will raise controversial issues. The aim of the safe practice is to enable an open, honest learning environment, in which discussion is not shut down, and is explored fully in a respectful manner. All staff teaching RSE will be supported by training to keep up to date with knowledge and any changes.

10. Safeguarding

Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue and teachers are expected to follow the school's safeguarding procedures to support both themselves and the students. Teachers will consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and in his /her absence their deputy where they believe a child protection issue has arisen.

Visitors and external agencies which support the delivery of RSE will be required to follow the school safeguard protocols and procedures. The protocol for inviting visitors into lessons will be followed.

11. Policy Development (Engaging Stake Holders)

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

1. Review – a member of staff pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.

2. Staff consultation – a number of staff including the leadership team were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties will be invited to view the policy via the school's website and comments will be considered.
4. Student consultation – we investigated what students say they want from their RSE by talking to groups of students in teaching classes.
5. Ratification – once amendments are made, the policy will be shared with trustees to proceed to ratification.

12. Parents role and right to withdraw

Parents are key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. Their important role is recognised by Highams Park School and we seek to work in close partnership with parents. However, as a school we acknowledge that many children rely solely on school for RSE as some parents expect the school to be the main provider.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE, as indicated in Appendix 1. Parents should be aware that schools are legally required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Relationships and sex topics can arise incidentally in other subjects and it is not possible to withdraw students from those relatively limited and often unforeseen student discussions.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Principal. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The School Lead will discuss the request with parents before taking appropriate action. This may include in exceptional circumstances not granting the request. Requests can be granted up to and until three terms before a child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education, the school will make arrangements to provide that student with sex education. Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from RSE.

A parent's choice to withdraw their son or daughter from RSE does not affect the child's entitlement to access confidential; health services at the school or elsewhere.

13. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Citizenship/ PSHE/ Critical Minds Co-Ordinator through teacher planning scrutinies and learning walks.

Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RSE through reflections of lessons and evaluations as well as an assessment of this RSE policy. Students development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. Students will also have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lessons as part of good quality teaching practice. Student voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities for example through anonymous questions and identifying what next steps are required.

This policy will be monitored and equalities impact assessed in regards to the Equality Act 2010. It will be assessed in relation to both staff and students, as well as school trustees.

The policy will be reviewed by the Assistance Principal and the Citizenship/ PSHE/ Critical Minds Co-ordinator on an annual basis. At every review the policy will be approved by Trustees and the Principal.

Appendix 1 RSE overview and scheme of work * lessons which are not part of science curriculum and/or lessons only on relationships

Year 7	Lesson title	Learning Outcomes
Survive and Thrive Week 4 Week 5 Week 6	1 hour lesson weekly How do people change as they get older?	To understand that people go through different stages in life, and their responsibilities and needs change as they get older - To recognise the different stages of a person's life from birth through to old age - To understand the needs and responsibilities of the different stages of life, and how they change
	How will puberty affect me?	To recognise the physical and emotional changes that take place in puberty, and how to manage them - To know about male and female body parts, and identify that emotional and physical changes take place during puberty - Consider how to manage changes as and when they occur
	How can I look after myself as a teenager?	To recognise the need for personal hygiene and its link to self- confidence and self-respect, which links to building positive relationships. To recognise the different ways, we need to keep ourselves clean, and why we need to do this. To learn how to keep ourselves clean- including mind, teeth, armpits, genitalia and diet.



Conflict Resolution		
Week 1	What is a Relationship?	Consider what we mean by 'relationship' and the range of relationships you can have.
Week 2	What is Conflict?	Reflect on the causes of conflict in relationships and develop solutions
Week 3	How can emotions affect our Relationships?	Consider how my emotions will affect my Relationship
Week 4	Communication	To understand how to communicate effectively
Week 5	Misunderstandings	To understand how misunderstanding can lead to conflict.
Week 6	Friends and Family Conflict	Offer some solutions to the causes of family/friendship conflict
Week 7	Conflict and Violence	To evaluate if violence is necessary for conflict resolution.
Risks		
Week 1	Emergencies	To consider how to act appropriately in an emergency. British Red Cross - First Aid workshop
Happiness		
Week 1	Happiness	To consider what qualities we need to achieve a good life.
Week 2	Can things make us Happy?	Consider the problems and benefits of great Wealth.
Week 3	Consumerism and Happiness	To question the reasons why some people for happiness
Week		How to increase satisfaction in life and



4	Drugs for Happiness?	to understand the benefits of delayed Gratification
Week 5	Satisfaction	How to increase satisfaction in life and to understand the benefits of delayed gratification

Year 8	Lesson title	Learning Outcomes
Sex and Relationships	1 hour lesson weekly	
Week 1	Friendships	To understand how to develop strong and genuine friendships
Week 2	Relationship Pressures	To explore the reasons why some people your age wants a romantic partner, including relationship pressures.
Week 3	The Role of Marriage	To consider attitudes to sex and marriage and consider pupils own attitudes. To understand key words such as cohabiting, civil partnership and divorce.
Week 4	What is an Abusive Relationship?	To understand healthy and unhealthy behaviours in relationships. To consider the different forms abuse can take.
Week 5	Internet Safety	Identify risks that use of the internet poses – cyberbullying, suicide, privacy, vulnerability (and future work prospects) Where to find help
Risks		
Week 1	Keep Safe – Out and About	To consider how to stay safe when not with parents/ teachers.



Week 5	How can I be safe on the internet?	Identify risks that use of the internet poses –cyberbullying, privacy, vulnerability (and future work prospects)
Mental health and Body Image		
Week 1	What is mental health?	To draw out preconceptions about mental health; Generate class definition of mental illness/ health Problem
Week 2	How common are mental health problems?	To consider the range of mental health issues and how common they can be; what causes these issues – link to internet, media and social media.
Week 3	Is the image of people in the media realistic?	Consider why there is a lack of understanding.
Week 4	Practical Ways to boosting your selfconfidence	To understand the external influences on body image. How to improve my body Image.
Week 5		
Week 6	What are eating Disorders?	Think about the level of exposure they have to media ideals and what that ideal is. Consider impact of social media on the image and confidence young people have within themselves
Week 7	Men and Body image	Make link that an eating disorder is a mental health problem. Understand the types of eating disorders there are and the symptoms of these To understand the causes of eating disorders in males

Year 9	Lesson title	Learning Outcomes
Relationships and Sex	2 X 20-minute registration sessions weekly	
Week 1	Puberty	To understand how our bodies change as we become adults
Week 2	Reproduction	The anatomy of reproductive systems and how conception can occur.
Week 3	Contraception	Different methods of contraception, their pros and cons.
Week 4	Sexually Transmitted Infections and Diseases (STIs/ STDs)	What is sexually transmitted diseases and infections, how to avoid them and how to access treatment.
Week 5	Consent	What is consent? What does the law say about consent? How to protect yourself and others.
		Cross- curricular – Science/ Biology lessons in year 7, 10 and 11
Knife Crime		
Week 1	Local Crime	To evaluate what role the individual can play in taking responsibility in making society safe.
Week 2	Knife Crime	To understand why carrying a knife is a crime.
Week 3	Knife Crime Laws	To understand the laws associated with knives
Week 4	Knife Possession	To understand why people, carry knives.
Week 5	County Lines	To understand what County Lines are and how they relate to knife crime
Week 6	Rehabilitation	To understand how rehabilitation works for knife crime
Week 7	Knife Crime Scenarios	To evaluate how best to deal with knife crime scenario



Week 8	Knife Safety Drop-Down session- Knife Crime Lesson with PC Katie	To understand first aid assistance and Knife Safety.
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Year 10	Lesson title	Learning Outcomes
Being Human	2 X 20-minute registration sessions weekly	
Lesson 1	Family	To explore how the concept of family has changed over time.
Lesson 2	What is a nuclear family?	To understand what makes a happy and healthy family
Lesson 3	Puberty and Adulthood	To question different theories about what adulthood means.
Lesson 4	Childhood vs Adulthood	To understand the laws associated with age in the UK
Lesson 5	Rights of the Child	To learn the legal rights children should have internationally.
Lesson 6	Entering Adulthood	To understand what makes someone an adult and to reflect on our hopes for adulthood
Lesson 7	Criminal Responsibility	To understand and evaluate the age of criminal responsibility in England
Lesson 8	Love and Friendship	To be able to recognise different types of love and what is healthy love behaviour
Lesson 9	Consent, Respect and Laws	

		To understand legal information on consent and need for respect in relationships
Identity		
Lesson 8	What is sexual identity?	To understand key terms and laws relating to sexual identity.
Lesson 10	Stigmas and Discrimination	To appreciate the problems some people, face because of their identity
Human Rights		
Lesson 5	Denial of Healthcare	Identify why children are denied access to healthcare
Lesson 8	Child Trafficking and Exploitation	To identify signs and consequences of child exploitation and the prevention strategies taking place.
Lesson 10	Child Marriage	To understand the legal marriage age and identify the laws associated with child marriage.

Year 11	Lesson Title	Learning Outcomes
Sex and Fertility	2 X 20-minute registration sessions weekly	



Lesson 1	Fertility	To recognise why fertility is important and how our choices can impact our fertility. Identify the range of emotions that people experience when trying to conceive.
Lesson 2	Love and Reproduction	What is the reproductive and psychological purpose of love and sex?
Lesson 3	Assisted Reproduction	Understand the types of assisted reproduction methods that can be used.
Lesson 4	Pregnancy	To understand key facts about pregnancy and birth.
Lesson 5	Parenthood	To examine the pros and cons of becoming a parent. Explain how different forms of contraception work.
Lesson 6	Contraceptive Considerations	To identify the many considerations people, need to make when selecting contraception that suits their needs.
Lesson 7	Impact of pornography	To recognise the underlying attitudes of pornography and the impact they can have on relationships and society. Identify the steps to ensure a safe online relationship.
Lesson 8	Sexting	To recognise the differing perspectives around sexting and its associated risks.
Lesson 9	Sexual Violence & Abuse	To understand the many elements of sexual violence, abuse, and consent, and identify ways to decrease its prevalence in society.
Lesson 10	Female Genital mutilation	To understand the laws, myths and facts surrounding female genital mutilation
Lesson 12	Sexual Consent	To examine the legal definition of sexual consent and the impact of non-sexual consent. Identify how they can reduce sexual violence in society.



Lesson 13	Consent Scenarios	Evaluate whether these scenarios are consensual and how to ask for sexual consent practically.
Technology and Social Media Lesson 5 Lesson 6 Lesson 7 Lesson 8	What are the dangers of social media? Algorithm Social Self Reflection Why is pornography so dangerous?	- To reinforce that students must be mindful of social media dangers, and to be able to identify what the dangers are. AI and Deep fakes - To understand how your social media algorithm can impact your mindset and behaviour. - To evaluate my relationship to technology and social media. - To explain how desensitisation can ruin healthy sex lives and the long-term impact a growing porn industry has on our society. (Incels and Misogyny)
Mental Health	What is Mental Health? Anxiety Disorder Depression Eating Disorders Insomnia Drugs for Mental Health Suicide Prevention Social Media	To recognise what an eating disorder is and what could trigger negative eating habits To define insomnia and identify its symptoms. Explain possible causes of insomnia To understand how certain drugs can support mental health issues. Describe the factors that contribute towards some people committing suicide and what we can do to aid Prevention. To manage the impact of social media on our mental health



	and Mental Health physical and Mental Health School and Mental Health Revision Timetable	To understand how our physical health can correlate with our mental Health. Identify common school related stressors and explore healthy coping strategies to promote a supportive school attitude. Create a revision timetable
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