



Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Approved by: Mr G Coles, Principal
November 2025

1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our academy are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy and cultivate positive characteristics such as kindness and integrity
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Support with providing our students with an education that allows them to live a life of meaning and purpose alongside embedding the values of integrity, resilience and ambition.

2. Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy, we must provide RSE to all students under section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#). In teaching RSE, we're 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](#).

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At the Wells academy, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

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

- **Review** – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
- **Staff consultation** – all academy staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
- **Family/stakeholder consultation** – families and any interested parties were invited to provide feedback about the policy
- **Student consultation** – we investigated what exactly students want from their RSE
- **Ratification** – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with Trust assurance leads and ratified

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, 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 RSE curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 and 2, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary, in response to emerging data and information to best meet the needs of our students. We have developed the curriculum in consultation with families, students and staff, and taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that students are fully informed and don't seek answers online. We will share all curriculum materials with families upon request.

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE-related topics will be covered in personal development lessons. Some elements of RSE will also be delivered in Science lessons. Resources will be adapted to ensure they are meeting the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs.

During the delivery of RSE we will make sure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of manageable size
- The required content is communicated to students clearly, in a carefully sequenced way and within a planned scheme of work
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for students to embed new knowledge, so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations

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

RSE complements several other curriculum subjects. Where appropriate, the academy will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching. The RSE curriculum will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff.

Teachers will make sure that students understand the importance of equality and respect and learn about the law relating to the protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, by the end of their secondary education. The curriculum is designed to focus on students of all gender identities and expressions, and activities will be planned to make sure all are actively involved.

Throughout each year group we will use appropriate material to assist learning, such as:

- Diagrams
- Videos
- Books
- Discussions and practical activities

Teachers will make sure that all students' views are listened to and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively, honestly and appropriately for the age of the students.

The programme will be designed to focus on boys as much as girls, and activities will be planned to make sure both are actively involved.



The academy will make sure that all teaching and materials are appropriate for the ages and needs of the students including any additional needs, such as special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Resources and materials will be closely monitored by the senior leaders overseeing personal development to ensure they are age appropriate and suitable for the target audience.

At all points of delivery of the curriculum, the academy will consult families, and their views will be valued. What will be taught and how will be planned in conjunction with families.

Students will be assessed by feedback to questions in lessons, mini quizzes and discussions.

It is important for secondary students to know what the law says about certain topics covered in RSE, particularly in relation to the law and young people. This will help students identify what is right and wrong, and can provide a foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion. These topics include, but are not limited to:

- Marriage, including forced marriage and civil partnerships
- Consent, including the age of consent
- Domestic abuse, stalking, rape, sexual offences, female genital mutilation (FGM), 'virginity testing' and hymenoplasty
- Sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation, including public sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour
- Online behaviours including image and information sharing (including sexual imagery, youth-produced sexual imagery and including AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes). Students should understand the law about online sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, including grooming and sextortion
- Pornography
- Abortion
- The protected characteristics
- The age of criminal responsibility

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

We may amend our curriculum content to respond to the needs and context of our students, to discuss issues affecting them in an age-appropriate manner. We will inform families of any deviation from our published policy in advance, and share any relevant materials on request.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (i.e. families can include single-parent families, same-sex parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents among other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children, young carers or kinship carers).

Across our academy, we will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property or hate crime.

Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of students will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all students' experiences
- During lessons, makes students feel:
 - Safe and supported
 - Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that students learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:
 - A whole-class setting
 - Small groups or targeted sessions
 - 1-to-1 discussions
 - Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

Use of resources

We **will** consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support students in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our students
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to students' experiences and won't provoke distress

7. Use of external organisations and materials

We will make sure that an agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

The academy remains responsible for what is said to students. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We will:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
 - Are age-appropriate
 - Are in line with students' developmental stage

Comply with:

- This policy
- The [Teachers' Standards](#)
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- The [Education Act 1996](#)
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with

Be clear on:

- What they're going to say
- Their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use
- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people

- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to families
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers
- Share all external materials with families where requested

We won't, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

8. Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

The board of Trustees will approve the RSE policy and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the academy, for sharing resources and materials with families, and for managing requests to withdraw students from components of RSE (see section 9).

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive, high quality and age appropriate for each group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose family wish them to be withdrawn from 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 Principal.
- Modelling positive behaviour and avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and being conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that students may make as a result of the subject content to the academy's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) Sarah Bailey-Wiles
- All staff within the academy will be responsible for the teaching of RSE on a rotation basis.

Students

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

Families' right to withdraw

Families have the right to withdraw their child from the 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 academy 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 Principal.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The Principal will discuss the request with families and take appropriate action.

In exceptional circumstances, for example because of a safeguarding concern or a student's specific vulnerability, the headteacher can refuse a request to withdraw the pupil from sex education.



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

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 Principal will also invite visitors from outside the academy, such as academy nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Samantha Bailey Assistant Principal through:

- Learning walks
- Preparation of resources
- Student voice
- Staff voice
- Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by **Samantha Bailey, Assistant Principal** annually.

At every review, the policy will be approved by **George Coles, Principal**.

Appendix 1: Curriculum map - Relationships and sex education curriculum map

YEAR GROUP	TERM	TOPIC/THEME DETAILS	RESOURCES
Year 7	Autumn	<p>Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships • Different types of relationships • Comparison of positive and negative relationships • Managing influences and peer pressure • Introduction to protected characteristics 	
Year 7	Spring	<p>Health and Well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity, resilience and ambition • British Values • What can impact well-being • Understanding our emotions and what influences them • Mental and emotional health • Support available for mental and physical health • Sexual harassment • Grooming • Female genital mutilation 	
Year 7	Summer	<p>Wider World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what is meant by the term career • Identifying a possible dream career for the future • Self-reflection of interests and skills 	
Year 7	Science lesson	<p>Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About the purpose, importance and different forms of contraception; how and where to access contraception and advice. • That certain infections can be spread through sexual activity and that barrier contraceptives offer some protection against certain sexually transmitted infections (STIs) 	
Year 7	Religious Education	<p>Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That marriage is a legal, social and emotional commitment that should be entered into freely, and never forced upon someone through threat or coercion 	

YEAR GROUP	TERM	TOPIC/THEME DETAILS	RESOURCES
Year 8	Autumn	Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of support in relationships • How the media portrays and impacts relationships • The law around consent, ways to give and withdraw consent • Developing the understanding of protected characteristics 	
Year 8	Spring	Health and Well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity, resilience and ambition • Building on the understanding of British Values • Home and school life balance • Language and stigma around mental health • Sexual exploitation • Female genital mutilation (FGM) • Gambling and how to manage influences from others • Puberty 	
Year 8	Summer	Wider World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options after post 16 including sixth form, college, technical qualifications, and apprenticeships • Introduction to higher education • Life skills • Employability skills 	
Year 9	Autumn	Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of trust • Roles and responsibilities of individuals within the family • Nature and importance of stable long-term relationships • Readiness for sexual intimacy and contraception • Managing influences from others • Prejudice based language 	

YEAR GROUP	TERM	TOPIC/THEME DETAILS	RESOURCES
Year 9	Spring	Health and Well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity, resilience and ambition • Building on the understanding of British Values • Home and school life balance, focusing on sleep and exercise • Domestic violence • Honor based violence • Female genital mutilation (FGM) • Self-confidence and self-esteem • Influences from the media 	
Year 9	Summer	Wider World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying students' own personal brand • Working with the National Careers Service • Support with picking GCSE options • Next step options for higher education • Understanding of the labour market information and the skills required 	
Year 10	Autumn 1	Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Lifestyle • Consent • Sexual Harrassemtn • Sexual Violence • Sexual imaging • Marriage, civil partnership and forced marriage • Parenting and adoption 	
Year 10	Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health • Gambling • Online well being • Drugs and knives • Drugs alcohol and vapes 	
Year 10	Spring 1	RE	
Year 10	Spring 2	Careers & IT	

YEAR GROUP	TERM	TOPIC/THEME DETAILS	RESOURCES
Year 11	Autumn 1	Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Lifestyle • Consent • Sexual Harassment • Sexual Violence • Sexual imaging • Marriage, civil partnership and forced marriage • Parenting and adoption 	
Year 11	Autumn 2	RE	
Year 11	Spring 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health • Gambling • Online well being • Drugs and knives • Alcohol and vapes 	
Year 11	Spring 2	Careers & IT	



Appendix 2: By the end of secondary academy students should know

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there are different types of committed, stable relationships • How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children • Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony • That ‘common-law marriage’ is a myth, and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children • That forced marriage and marriage before the age of 18 are illegal • How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships. • The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child’s life for brain development. • How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when students are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About the characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, students should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships • How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Students should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal • The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Students should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others • What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs • The practical steps students can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict • The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help • Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration • The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Students should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care and attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Students should understand that just because someone says 'yes' to doing something that doesn't automatically make it ethically okay • How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Students should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice • How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others • How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others • How some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called 'involuntary celibates' (incels) or online influencers

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime (even if the photo is of themselves or someone who has consented, and even if the photo was created by that child and/or using AI). That there are potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating these images. That sharing indecent images of people over 18 without their consent is also a crime • How to seek support. They should also understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared • What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online • About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them • That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons • Where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Students should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamourise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong • That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice • How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns • That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. That this can affect people who see pornographic content accidentally, as well as those who see it deliberately. That pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online • That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (for example, to enable targeted advertising) • That criminals can operate online scams, such as using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion • That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. That it is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk

Being safe

- How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent
- That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others
- How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others if needed
- How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. About ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. That there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. About the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and they should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions
- What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it
- That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language, attention or touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting
- About concepts and laws relating to:
 - Sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault
 - Harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language
 - Domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour
 - Harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation
 - Forced marriage
 - Female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty
- That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed
- That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury
- That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death
- That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful
- How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour, or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive • The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex • About sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, such as the law, their faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent • That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing • That some sexual behaviours can be harmful • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision making • That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Students should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help • How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) • About the use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma • About the prevalence of STIs, the short and long-term impact they can have on those who contract them, and key facts about treatment • How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour • How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms • How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment



Appendix 3: Family Form - Withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY FAMILY			
Name of child		Class	
Name of Family		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the academy to consider			
Family signature			
TO BE COMPLETED BY THE ACADEMY			
Agreed actions from discussion with family			