



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Issue No	Author/ Owner	Date Written	Approved by Governors on	Comments
1	MS	May 2021	7 July 2021	
1.1	MS	October 2021	20 October 2021	Appendix B amended
1.2	MS	June 2024	3 July 2024	Minor amendments, pending major updates once revised government guidelines issued.
1.3	CM	April 2026	June 2026	Updated in line with new guidance for September 2026

1. AIMS OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

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

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- 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, and cultivate positive characteristics such as kindness and integrity
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships

The RSE curriculum reflects the values of our school community: to be kind, curious and ambitious.

2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

As a secondary academy, we must provide RSE to all pupils under 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.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 404 to 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010

- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (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

1. POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This policy has been developed in consultation with parents/carers. The consultation and policy development process involves the following steps:

1. **Review** – all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance has been reviewed and this updated policy reflects this guidance
2. **Parent/stakeholder consultation** – parents/carers and any interested parties are invited to provide feedback on the policy. We recognise the importance of working closely with parents and wider community and this may involve questionnaires, focus groups or consultations as well as opportunities to view sample teaching resources.
3. **Ratification** – once any amendments are made, the policy is shared with governors and ratified

2. DEFINITION

- RSE supports 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.

3. CURRICULUM

The RSE curriculum is set out in appendix 1 of the DfE guidance. We may amend our curriculum content to respond to the needs and context of our pupils, to discuss issues affecting them in an age-appropriate manner. Curriculum materials will be shared with parents/carers on request

6. DELIVERY AND INCLUSIVITY

RSE is part of our Personal Development curriculum. Time is allocated within the key stage 3 philosophy and religion curriculum to deliver specific RSE topics. In key stage 4, RSE is delivered through discrete lessons in the SMSC programme. Some aspects of online safety are delivered through the computing curriculum in key stage 3 and the reproductive system is taught in science in both key stage 3 and 4. Pupils are taught in mixed sex and mixed ability groups.

The overall planning and delivery of the RSE programme will be co-ordinated by the Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) in conjunction with the PSHE lead and the Subject Lead for Philosophy and Religion.

Teaching of RSE will ensure that;

Core knowledge is communicated effectively, in a carefully sequenced way and within a planned scheme of work

Lessons will include sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge, so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations.

Lessons will include a range of teaching methods and interactive activities, including class discussions, video clips, worksheets, discussions of case studies.

Teachers utilise high quality resources will support our RSE provision and will be regularly reviewed by the Deputy Headteacher (curriculum) and whole school lead for PSHE. These resources will be reviewed each year to ensure they are aligned to statutory guidance and support pupils to apply their knowledge in different contexts and settings. Resources will be age appropriate and evidence based, using credible sources. Resources will be sensitive to pupils' experiences. We will provide examples of resources when we engage parents for feedback on our policy.

Lessons will be scaffolded to ensure that all students are able to access the curriculum in line with the Equalities Act 2010. In some cases, Backwell School might deem it appropriate for some students to have the content delivered to them by a SEND specialist in learning support. This will be done on a case by case basis and might involve a mix of one-to-one support and classroom delivery if this is in the best interest of the student.

Where appropriate, we might put in place additional support for pupils with protected characteristics as outlined by the Equalities Act 2010 (which mean that they are potentially at greater risk). This might mean adding or changing content of lessons to reflect the needs of these pupils.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships, including:

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

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

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

Teachers will make sure that all pupils' 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 pupils.

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

Parents / carers will be regularly updated on what is being delivered in the RSE curriculum via the school newsletter.

It is important for secondary pupils to know what the law says about certain topics covered in RSE, particularly in relation to the law and young people. This will help pupils 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). Pupils 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

We may amend our curriculum content to respond to the needs and context of our pupils, to discuss issues affecting them in an age-appropriate manner.

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).

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.

Teachers will ensure a safe learning environment by

- Setting out clear ground rules within the classroom.
- using a range of distancing techniques to allow students to discuss topics in a more detached manner.
- answering questions in an honest and factual manner where appropriate.
- being given the opportunity to raise questions anonymously.

- informing students about other opportunities to get support outside of the classroom, including, but not limited to, their tutor, student support, and reputable online website designed to offer support.

Teachers will be 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 safeguarding or child protection issue. In which case, the schools safeguarding procedures will be followed.

In order to make sure that content is appropriate for each year group, the Deputy Head (Curriculum) and/or PSHE Lead will consult with pastoral leads within the school. This will mean that when appropriate pastoral leads can make sure that the staff delivering the content are aware of any issues that might affect individual pupils. It also means that the curriculum will meet the individual needs of each year group.

7. USE OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND MATERIALS

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

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 pupils' 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 parents and carers
 - 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
 - Inform all external organisations that the school is legally obliged to share all content with parents and carers

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

- Work with agencies who don't allow their material to be shared with parents and carers

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 The governing board

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

8.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for making sure that RSE is taught consistently across the school, for sharing all resources and materials with parents and carers, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from components of RSE (see section 9). These responsibilities will be delegated to the Deputy Headteacher (curriculum)

8.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a way that is sensitive, high-quality and appropriate for each year group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the components of RSE
- 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 pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- 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 headteacher.

8.4 Pupils

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

9. PARENTS' RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

- Parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the pupil turns 16. After this point, if the pupil wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.
- Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)
- A copy of any withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action and provide the parents/carers with their decision in writing.
- In exceptional circumstances, for example because of a safeguarding concern or a pupil's specific vulnerability, the headteacher can refuse a request to withdraw the pupil from sex education.
- Alternative schoolwork will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

10. TRAINING

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

The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

11. MONITORING

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team, PSHE lead and Subject Lead for Philosophy and Religion. Pupil voice will be used to inform school self-evaluation of RSE.

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher every three years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

12. CURRICULUM CONTENT

See Appendix A of DfE document

[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#)

