



Leigh Academy  
**BEXLEY**

# **Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education Policy**



**LEIGH**  
Academies Trust

**2025/2026**

**Review Date: September 2026**



## Mission, Vision, Values and Ethos

### Our Vision Statement:

At Leigh Academy Bexley, we believe in providing our young people with an extraordinary education; one that unlocks curiosity, ignites ambition and forges a social conscience, enabling our students to have an impact on the world around them. We are proud to be a truly comprehensive academy; an academy where all students are valued, supported and inspired. For students to thrive, we need to ensure that every student and staff member is invested in our community, that everyone is included and respected. As such we place inclusivity at the heart of our decision-making.

Our desire to create an extraordinary academy is built from our core values – Politeness, Respect, Kindness, Courage, Ambition and Resilience. We believe that if our students and staff demonstrate these values, they will be truly extraordinary individuals with the wisdom to make the right choices.

### Our Mission:

**“Having the wisdom to make the right choices”**

### Our Values and Ethos:

At Leigh Academy Bexley, our values are the cornerstone of everything we do.

#### Politeness

Behaviour that is respectful and considerate of other people.

#### Respect

Due regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others.

#### Kindness

The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.

#### Courage

The ability to do something that frightens one; bravery.

#### Ambition

A strong desire to do or achieve something. Desire and determination to achieve success.

#### Resilience

The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

Policy Review Dates		
Date	Description	
May 2024	To be confirmed, once the Central Government reviews the Statutory RSHE Guidance and there is a decision made over the previous Government's consultation on RSHE <a href="#">here</a>	2024/25
May 2024	Awaiting update on the draft RSHE statutory guidance <a href="#">here</a>	2024/25
July 2024	Addition of parents'/carers' rights to request right to withdraw from part or all of RSE lessons.	2024/25
November 2024	Policy reviewed with minor formatting changes and updating of job titles. Awaiting outcome of Government RSE Consultation.	2024/25
July 2025	The Department published <a href="#">revised RSHE guidance</a> , which will come into force on 1st September 2026. LABex Policy has been updated to reflect this.	2025/26

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## **1. Aims**

Leigh Academy Bexley is aware that children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. The aim of RSE is therefore, to give young people the information they need to support them to develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds.

The aim of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) at Leigh Academy Bexley is to complement our values of politeness, respect, kindness, courage, ambition and resilience. In our teaching, we will:

- 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.
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships. Recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and when to report issues to keep them safe online.
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies, within the law, be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives in the future, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs.

## **2. Statutory Requirements**

We continue to use the DfEE (now DfE) definition of sex and relationships education; 'It is the lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health' (DfEE 'Sex and Relationship Guidance', 2000). The current terminology has been changed from 'Sex and Relationships Education' to 'Relationships and Sex Education' in recognition of the foundational importance of positive and healthy relationships to the understanding of sex education. This change in terminology is reflected in the Government's most recent guidance (Department for Education, "Policy Statement: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education" March 2017) outlining the statutory duty on schools to provide this aspect of the curriculum.

As a secondary academy we must provide RSE to all students 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](#).

At Leigh Academy Bexley we teach RSE as set out in this policy. Current regulations and guidance from the Department for Education state that the RSE policy complements the following documents that inform Leigh Academy Bexley's RSE policy:

- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory safeguarding guidance

## **3. Policy Development**

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

1. Review – a member of staff or working group researched, collated and refined all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.
2. Parent consultation – parents and any interested parties were consulted through a survey and were then invited to attend a meeting about the policy.
3. Staff consultation – all academy staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
4. Student consultation – through our student council, composed of representation from each year group, we investigated what exactly students want from their RSE lessons.
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with Governors and ratified.

#### **4. Definition**

This document uses 'RSE' to include both relationships education and relationships and sex education. This policy covers our academy's approach to relationships and sex education as set out in the Department for Education Statutory Guidance for RSE in Secondary schools 2020.

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**

We have developed the RSE curriculum in consultation with parents, students and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

Our RSE Programme will be planned based on; the PSHE Association Schemes of Work, our academy created resources and through the lessons from the Medway Public Health Directorate. All our PSHE resources are designed with the new Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 RSE and PSHE Framework in mind. Lessons will include a wide range of activities and high quality resources to promote understanding. Students will be given opportunities to discuss and reflect on work and we will use a variety of different assessment methods to gauge student progress and understanding.

We will ensure a safe learning environment by ensuring that teachers and students agree to ground rules before the delivery of RSE. These are referred to before every lesson to remind students each and every time of the high expectations for successful delivery of lessons. Students will be taught to and expected to use distancing techniques which depersonalise the situations under discussion. These are used because they enable students to explore issues safely because they are not speaking or acting as themselves. Students' questions will be answered by the class teacher. In the event of a student not feeling confident enough to ask a question in class, students will be able to ask questions via the class question box, which will then be addressed by the teacher in an anonymous manner in the following lesson. Sensitive issues will be handled by teachers with care and with the support of the Academy's small college model and Designated Safeguarding Leads.

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. In the case this occurs, teachers will consult with the appropriate member of the academy Safeguarding Team and follow procedures as stated in the Academy Safeguarding Policy which can be found on the Academy website. Visitors and external agencies which support the delivery of RSE will be required to present DBS checks and will be required to

read our Academy Child Protection Policy. The protocol for inviting visitors into lessons is overseen by the PSHE Subject Lead and we only use agencies and charities whose work with schools has been monitored and quality assured beforehand.

Our curriculum booklet is set out as per Appendix 1 which we may need to adapt as and when necessary.

## **6. Delivery of RSE**

The RSE Programme has been designed by the PSHE Subject Lead and is delivered in scheduled weekly lessons by the PSHE team. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the Science curriculum. All year groups, 7-13 have one PSHE lesson every week and ideas and concepts are reinforced via our tutor programme. Our curriculum is delivered through 3 themes that are explored throughout the year for each year group: Health and Wellbeing, Relationships, and Living in the wider world. It is taught as a spiral curriculum and as a result, the students will revisit and build upon prior knowledge and learning.

Our RSE programme is an integral part of our whole Academy education provision and has been designed alongside the Global Citizenship curriculum and links with our curriculum models, adding further weight to the breadth of work that has been undertaken throughout the Academy.

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

- Healthy relationships, including friendships and intimate relationships;
- Families;
- Growing and changing, including puberty;
- Personal hygiene;
- Changing feelings;
- Becoming more independent;
- Keeping safe and consent;
- Developing self-esteem and confidence

We acknowledge that high-quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching can help students prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life as well as promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of students both at school and in society. RSE will be set in the context of a wider whole-school approach to supporting students to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school. The curriculum on relationships and sex will complement and be supported by the Academy's wider policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, anti-bullying and safeguarding. RSE will sit within the context of the Academy's broader ethos and approach to developing students socially, morally, spiritually and culturally; and its pastoral care system.

The curriculum on health education will similarly complement, and be supported by the Academy's education on healthy lifestyles through physical education, science and its extra-curricular activity. The curriculum has been designed in close collaboration with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education programmes complement each other and do not duplicate content covered in National Curriculum subjects such as Global Citizenship, Science, Computing and PE.

Effective teaching will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to students, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme of lessons.

Teaching will include sufficient well-chosen opportunities and contexts for students to practise applying and embedding new knowledge so that it can be used skilfully and confidently in real life situations. There will

be opportunities using this spiral curriculum for prior learning to be addressed and interleaved into all topic areas, embedding the teaching and learning philosophies that underpin our academy's teaching ethos.

As far as is appropriate, young people with special educational needs follow the same RSE programme as all other students. Careful consideration is given concerning the level of differentiation needed, and in some cases the content or delivery will be adapted. Learning Support Assistants work with individual students where required, sometimes on a one to one basis. It is the academy's policy not to withdraw young people with special educational needs from RSE to catch up on other national curriculum subjects, as we believe that these aspects of personal and social development are as important as academic achievement.

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

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1 The Governing Board**

The Governing Board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

### **7.2 The Principal**

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE (see section 8).

### **7.3 The PSHE Subject Lead**

The PSHE Subject Lead is responsible for the design of the RSE curriculum, ensuring that it covers the statutory requirements. They will also ensure CPD opportunities are available for staff throughout the academic year.

### **7.4 PSHE Teachers and Post-16 Tutors**

Tutors are responsible for:

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

### **7.5 Deputy Head of College (Assistant Principal) with responsibility for Personal Development**

The Deputy Head of College (Assistant Principal) with responsibility for Personal Development, including the Head of Sixth Form are expected to monitor the delivery of the PSHE curriculum through scheduled learning walks, helping to support the PSHE Subject Lead.



## 7.6 Students

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

## 8. Parents' Right Request to Withdraw

Parents/carers will be informed about the policy through email, along with the RSE curriculum plan and a Google Form to allow for parent feedback. The policy will be available to parents through the Academy website. Parents/carers can request to view the curriculum and also can request to view the resources, discuss any aspects of the curriculum and the lessons with the teacher in charge of the RSE curriculum, in the first instance. These requests are to be made to Mrs S Wilson at [Sarah.Wilson@bexley.latrust.org.uk](mailto:Sarah.Wilson@bexley.latrust.org.uk).

We are committed to working with parents and carers by collating all responses from the Google Form and inviting Parents/carers to an RSE Parent Information Evening. We work closely with parents/carers to ensure that they are fully aware of what is being taught and provide additional resources and support through the Academy website.

We will notify parents/carers when Relationships and Sex Education will be taught, by email. Parents/carers will continue to have a right to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE, other than those which are part of the science curriculum, in secondary schools which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, should be granted up to three terms before their child turns 16. At this point, if the child themselves wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements for this to happen in one of the three terms before the child turns 16 - the legal age of sexual consent. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at primary or secondary as we believe the contents of these subjects – such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing by letter/email addressed to the Principal. The details required can be found in Appendix 4 of this policy. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The Deputy Head of College (Assistant Principal) in charge of RSE will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action. Where students are withdrawn from sex education, schools should document the process and will have to 'ensure that the student receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.' (Department for Education, "Policy Statement: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education" March 2017).

## 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 in every module. The Staff Bulletin is also used as a means to support our staff in the delivery of the RSE programme. Drop-in sessions are also available for all staff in every module.

The PSHE Subject Lead will also invite visitors from outside the academy, 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 Deputy Head of College (Assistant Principal) in charge of RSE through:

Learning walks which will take place throughout each module. Our Deputy Head of College (Assistant Principal) with responsibility for Personal Development will assist the PSHE Subject Lead and conduct reviews that focus on the delivery of the sessions and the progress that is made by all students.

Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RSE through staff surveys, as well as regular meetings and training sessions for form tutors and those delivering aspects of RSE to students to ensure that consistent messages are taught across the Academy. RSE will be regularly discussed at staff and Governors' meetings. Policies, Curriculum and external agencies will be audited at least yearly. Students will have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lessons and will complete student voice surveys and questionnaires which will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities for the future.

This policy will be reviewed by the Deputy Head of College (Assistant Principal) in charge of RSE in September 2026. This will ensure that the policy is up to date and fully relevant to the provision of Statutory RSE at Leigh Academy Bexley. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing body and the Principal.

## Appendix 1: Curriculum Map

### [RSE Curriculum](#)

## Appendix 2: Secondary relationships and sex education curriculum content

Topic	Curriculum Content
Families	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.</li><li>2. How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing and their importance for bringing up children.</li><li>3. 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.</li><li>4. That 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.</li><li>5. That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.<sup>1</sup></li><li>6. How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.</li><li>7. The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development. .</li><li>8. How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.</li></ol>

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<sup>1</sup> [Age of Marriage Act 2023](#)

Respectful relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils 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.</li> <li>2. How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal.</li> <li>3. 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. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others.</li> <li>4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs.</li> <li>5. The practical steps pupils 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.</li> <li>6. 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.</li> <li>7. Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration.</li> <li>8. The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok.</li> <li>9. How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice.</li> <li>10. 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.</li> <li>11. 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.</li> <li>12. Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss 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.</li> </ol>
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Online safety and awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.</li> <li>2. Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues.</li> <li>3. The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online.</li> <li>4. Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images.</li> <li>5. That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should 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. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime.</li> <li>6. 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.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>7. 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.</li> <li>8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong.</li> <li>9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.</li> <li>10. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.</li> <li>11. 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. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it.</li> <li>12. How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.</li> </ol>
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<sup>2</sup> For example, see [Report Remove](#)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising).</li> <li>14. That criminals can operate online scams, for example 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.</li> <li>15. 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. 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.</li> </ol>
Being safe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 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.</li> <li>2. 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.</li> <li>3. 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.</li> <li>4. How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand 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. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions.</li> <li>5. 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.</li> <li>6. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting.</li> <li>7. The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault.</li> <li>8. The concepts and laws relating to 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.</li> </ol>

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|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>10. That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed.</li> <li>11. The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation.</li> <li>12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.</li> <li>13. The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible.</li> <li>14. 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.</li> <li>15. 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.</li> <li>16. 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.</li> </ol> |
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<sup>3</sup> [The Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) recognised children who see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse, and are related to either the victim of the abusive behaviour, or the perpetrator, as victims of domestic abuse in their own right (part 1 section 3). [The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory guidance](#) is designed to support statutory and non-statutory bodies working with victims of domestic abuse, including children.

<p>Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive.</li> <li>2. 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.</li> <li>3. 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, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent.</li> <li>4. 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.</li> <li>5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.</li> <li>6. 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 decisionmaking.</li> <li>7. That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils 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.</li> <li>8. How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). 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</li> <li>9. The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.</li> <li>10. How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour.</li> <li>11. How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms.</li> <li>12. 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.</li> </ol>
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<p>The Law updated July 2025 for 1st September 2026</p>	<p>It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.</p> <p>Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• marriage</li> <li>• consent, including the age of consent</li> <li>• violence against women and girls</li> <li>• online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)</li> <li>• pornography</li> <li>• abortion</li> <li>• sexuality</li> <li>• gender identity</li> <li>• substance misuse</li> <li>• violence and exploitation by gangs</li> <li>• extremism and radicalisation</li> <li>• criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)</li> <li>• hate crime</li> <li>• female genital mutilation (FGM)</li> </ul>
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### Appendix 3: Secondary health and wellbeing curriculum content

<p>Mental wellbeing</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.</li> <li>2. The benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness.</li> <li>3. That happiness is linked to being connected to others. Pupils should be supported to understand what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel unhappy, while recognising that loneliness can be for most people an inevitable part of life at times and is not something to be ashamed of.</li> <li>4. That worrying and feeling down are normal, can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal.</li> <li>5. Characteristics of common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression), including carefully-presented factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental health conditions. This should not be discussed in a way that encourages normal feelings to be labelled as mental health conditions.</li> <li>6. How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall</li> </ol>
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	<p>wellbeing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding how to overcome anxiety or other barriers to participating in fun, enjoyable or rewarding activities – that it's possible to overcome those barriers using coping strategies, and that finding the courage to participate in activities which initially feel challenging may decrease anxiety over time rather than increasing it.</li> <li>That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others.</li> <li>That the co-occurrence of alcohol/drug use and poor mental health is common and that the relationship is bi-directional: mental health problems can increase the risk of alcohol/drug use, and alcohol/drug use can trigger mental health problems or exacerbate existing ones. That stopping smoking can improve people's mental health and decrease anxiety.</li> </ol>
Wellbeing online	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>About the benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing.</li> <li>The similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image); how people may curate a specific image of their life online; the impact that an over-reliance on online relationships, including relationships formed through social media, can have.</li> <li>How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.</li> <li>The risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt.</li> <li>How advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online, understanding the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation online, including conspiracy theories.</li> <li>The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online.</li> <li>The serious risks of viewing online content that promotes self-harm, suicide or violence, including how to safely report this material and how to access support after viewing it.</li> </ol>
Physical health and fitness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The characteristics of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill-health, including cardiovascular ill-health.</li> <li>Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions.</li> <li>That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress.</li> <li>The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.</li> </ol>
Healthy eating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease.</li> <li>The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.</li> <li>The impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain.</li> </ol>

<p>Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The facts about which drugs are illegal, the risks of taking illegal drugs, including the increased risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the potential health harms, including the link to poor mental health.</li> <li>2. The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.</li> <li>3. The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption. What constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England. Understanding how to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol.</li> <li>4. The physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency.</li> <li>5. The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines.</li> <li>6. The facts about the multiple serious harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.</li> <li>7. The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit.</li> </ol>
<p>Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal hygiene, germs and how they are spread, including bacteria and viruses, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.</li> <li>2. Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth, reducing consumption of sugar-containing food and drinks, and regular check-ups at the dentist.</li> <li>3. How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals.</li> <li>4. The importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.</li> <li>5. The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination, immunisation and antimicrobial resistance. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils.</li> <li>6. The importance of sufficient good-quality sleep for good health, the importance of screen-free time before bed and removing phones from the bedroom, and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.</li> <li>7. The importance of healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy, including the importance of pre-conception health, including taking folic acid. The importance of pelvic floor health. Information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and how to access care and support.</li> <li>8. How to navigate their local healthcare system: what a GP is; when to use A&amp;E / minor injuries; accessing sexual health and family planning clinics; the role of local pharmacies; and how to seek help via local third sector partners which may have specialist services.</li> <li>9. The concept of Gillick competence. That the legal age of medical consent is 16. That before this, a child's parents will have responsibility for consenting to medical treatment on their behalf unless they are Gillick competent to take this decision for themselves. Pupils should understand the circumstances in which someone over 16 may not be deemed to have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment.</li> </ol>

Personal safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around roads, railways – including level crossings - and water (including the water safety code), and in unfamiliar social or work settings (for example the first time a young person goes on holiday without their parents).</li> <li>2. How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media.</li> <li>3. How to develop key social and emotional skills that will increase pupils' safety from involvement in conflict and violence. These include skills to support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making, as well as skills to recognise and manage peer pressure.</li> <li>4. Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about violence and/or knife crime.</li> <li>5. The law as it relates to knives and violence. Content and examples should relate to the local context and avoid using fear as an educational tool. Children should be taught that carrying weapons is uncommon, and should not be scared into the perception that many young people are carrying knives (which can lead to the misconception that they need to carry a knife too).</li> <li>6. The risks and signs that they may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help where there is a concern.</li> </ol>
Basic first aid	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments.</li> <li>2. Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>3. The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.</li> </ol>
Developing bodies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.</li> <li>2. The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development.</li> <li>3. About menstrual and gynaecological health, including: what is an average period; period problems such as premenstrual syndrome; heavy menstrual bleeding; endometriosis; and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). When to seek help from healthcare professionals.</li> <li>4. The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.</li> </ol>

<sup>4</sup> Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation is usually best taught after 12 years old.

#### **Appendix 4: Parent/carers guidance for written letter/email addressed to the Principal regarding withdrawal from sex education within RSE**

Information to be included:

- Name(s) of child/children
- Tutor Group/College
- Name of parent/carers
- Reason for request to withdraw child from sex education within relationships and sex education.
- Any other information you would like the academy to consider.

Academy representatives will record the agreed actions from discussion with parents/carers.