

King's Academy Ringmer 'A Journey to Excellence'

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Date reviewed: July 2025

Review date: July 2026

This relationships and sex education policy covers King's Academy Ringmer's approach to teaching relationships and sex education (RSE). It has been reviewed and shared with groups from the whole school community, including students, parents/carers, staff and school governors.

It will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if the RSE curriculum is amended, such as in response to emerging themes, changing student needs, or the introduction of new legislation and guidance.

Parents will be informed about the policy through RSE consultation events and can access a copy by following a link from the school website. Should a hard-copy of the document be required, the school will be happy to provide this upon request and will also work with any parents who require the policy in an alternative format to meet their individual needs and ensure equitable accessibility for all.

The importance of Relationships and Sex Education

Foreword by the Secretary of State, 2021

Today's 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.

This is why we have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools, as well as making Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools. The key decisions on these subjects have been informed by a thorough engagement process, including a public call for evidence that received over 23,000 responses from parents, young people, schools and experts and a public consultation where over 40,000 people contacted the Department for Education.

The depth and breadth of views is clear, and there are understandable and legitimate areas of contention. Our guiding principles have been that all of the compulsory subject content must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents while always with the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law.

The most effective RSE is a collaboration between school and home. We aim to involve parents and carers as much as possible. This will include parental surveys, regular email communication before RSE is delivered in the classroom and the occasional evening workshop.

All lesson plans will be available to view through the school's website.

Parents are always welcome to contact the Head of Faculty for Humanities and PSHE by phone or email: sarah.pillar@kingsacademies.uk

The right to withdraw - DfE guidance

Parents have a right to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE 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.

Values, aims and objectives:

Relationships and sex education (RSE) is delivered to complement the wider ethos, values and principles of our school. Our school's overarching aims and objectives for students is **'to have well-rounded individuals who strive to be the best academically and personally'**. RSE is underpinned by a clear set of embedded values and principles that complement the school ethos and permeate through the teaching practice, resources and classroom management of RSE lessons. These values and principles should:

- ✓ Be accurate and factual
- ✓ Be positively inclusive in terms of gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, religion or belief, or other life-experience, particularly HIV status and pregnancy
- ✓ Include the development of character skills to support healthy and safe relationships, and ensure comfortable communication
- ✓ Promote a critical awareness of the different attitudes and views on sex and relationships within society, including peer norms and those portrayed in the media
- ✓ Provide opportunities for reflection in order to nurture personal values based on mutual respect and care.
- ✓ Be part of a spiral curriculum that is delivered in every year group in the school, *reflecting the age and level of the learner*
- ✓ Ensure children and young people are clearly informed of their rights, such as how they can access confidential advice and help within the boundaries of safeguarding
- ✓ Be relevant and meet the needs of children and young people, and actively involve them as participants, advocates and evaluators in developing good quality provision
- ✓ Be delivered by competent and confident teachers
- ✓ Be provided within a safe, democratic and empowering learning environment, based on the principle that prejudice, discrimination and bullying are not tolerated

The RSE curriculum has been planned following yearly student surveys provided by East Sussex County Council. This is the 'My Health My School' survey which asks students to reflect anonymously on eight themes, including sexual health (for years 9-11) and social, emotional and mental health for all year groups. This ensures the needs of all students can be met through the delivery of an age and stage appropriate curriculum. The curriculum addresses traditional and emerging issues, and relevant challenges as identified by students.

Some elements of the RSE curriculum are a statutory requirement to teach, to meet September 2021 statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education and the Equalities Act, 2010. It is important to teach RSE through a 'spiral curriculum'. This means that students will gain knowledge, develop values and acquire skills gradually by re-visiting core themes to build on prior learning. This developmental approach helps students to make informed decisions. RSE will support the school's commitment to safeguard its students through a curriculum

that prepares them to live safely in the modern world.

The Curriculum

By the end of secondary school:

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

Families

Students should know

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- what marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- how to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Students should know

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice).
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs.
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

Online and media

Students should know

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
- the impact of viewing harmful content.
- that specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

Being safe

Students should know

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Students should know

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.
- 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.
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, 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) and the importance of and facts about testing.
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.

- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

More specifically,

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION AT KING'S ACADEMY RINGMER					
YEAR 7					
What happens at puberty? Consolidation of KS2 learning	Gender - why are there sometimes stereotypes about gender?	What is female genital mutilation? How could you give advice and help in tricky situations like this?	How to stop other people being a bully	How to recognise and respond to online bullying	
YEAR 8					
The HPV vaccine - what is it and why is it important?	How does romance differ from friendship?	Gender - why are there sometimes stereotypes about gender?	What is marriage? Why is it different from living together? What types of marriage are there?	What is sexting? What does the law say about it? Why is it a problem?	What top 10 tips would you give to other young people?
YEAR 9					
What does 'consent' mean in a relationship? Can you tell if consent has been given?	What does the law say about sexual relationships	What are the benefits and disadvantages of various forms of contraception, including abstinence and natural family planning?	How do people use condoms effectively?	Where can you get help and advice? Confidentiality	
YEAR 10					
How does the media affect body image?	Gender - why are there sometimes stereotypes about gender?	Healthy relationships	What are the effects of pornography	How do people use condoms effectively?	What you can do when contraception fails - options

YEAR 11				
How and why you should examine your breasts and testicles	Managing and recognising unhealthy behaviour in a relationship	What is sexual harassment?	What you can do when contraception fails - options	Parenthood

The RSE programme is led by Sarah Pillar, Head of Faculty for Humanities and PSHE and taught in discrete, timetabled lessons. All staff involved in the delivery of RSE have received specialist training to ensure that students receive clear and consistent approaches to RSE throughout their time at King's Academy Ringmer.

Distancing techniques, such as the use of characters, within RSE avoids students feeling under pressure to participate or disclose information beyond that which is appropriate or feels comfortable. This strategy makes RSE more accessible to students who may have experienced unhealthy relationships and/or abuse, reducing barriers to learning. All students are aware of agreed 'ground rules' to ensure that they feel safe to participate in the lessons. These include

Do not disclose information about yourself or others.

Do not mock other peoples' opinions.

Use the correct language.

Students are frequently provided with an opportunity to ask questions in an open setting, and will also be provided with an opportunity to raise questions without being identified, through the use of post-it notes. Teachers will answer questions as fully as they feel appropriate, based on the age and level of the class. Staff are trained in how to deal with 'awkward' questions.

Every lesson provides a list of websites where students can get further advice. All students have access to the Childline number and website.

If a student discloses to a teacher or any other member of staff as a result of the RSE programme then that member of staff will follow the school's safeguarding policy

Assessment is carried out in a variety of ways. In most lessons' students are asked to identify their prior knowledge and then add to it at the end of the topic. They may use mini whiteboards or traffic-light cards to show what they have learnt in a lesson. They may be asked to provide advice for a character on the topic being taught. Lastly, they may be asked to answer some more formal questions through a Google form as an independent learning task.