



Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

Date First Published	September 2021
Last Approved	September 2024
Version	6
Cycle	Annual
Date Approved by Trust Board	September 2024
Review Date	September 2025

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Changes to this edition

- Updated guidance on how RHSE curriculum materials should be available to be shared with parents on request. See Section 4 and Section 5.

1. Introduction

Minerva Learning Trust 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.

2. Aims

The aim of RSHE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage, civil partnership, or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships, consent and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

The Trust's RSHE policy will provide clear progression from what is taught in primary in Relationships Education (Appendix 1) and Secondary (Appendix 2). We will build on the foundation of RE and, as students grow up, at the appropriate time extend teaching to include intimate relationships. Alongside being taught about intimate relationships, students will also be taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult.

Teaching of RSHE in our schools will enable students:

- to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful;
- to understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect and to understand that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing;
- to believe they can achieve goals and that to achieve those goals they must stick at the tasks despite the challenges they may face;
- to be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health, and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way;
- to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual, and physical abuse and violence including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for themselves or others at risk;
- to recognise risks, harmful content, and contact, and how and when to report issues to keep them safe online;

- to, 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.

3. Links to other documents

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. The regulations also make Health Education compulsory in Schools.

This policy was developed in response to:

- [Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)
- [Behaviour in schools - advice for headteachers and school staff](#)
- [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#)
- [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#)
- [Alternative provision](#)
- [Mental health and behaviour in schools](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying](#)
- [Cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)
- [Advice for parents and carers on cyber bullying](#)
- [Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools](#)
- [National Citizen Service: guidance for schools and colleges](#)

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2021) 'Teaching about relationships, sex and health'
- DfE (2019) 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education'
- DfE (2015) 'National curriculum in England: science programmes of study'

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust/School policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality Objectives
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Pupil Confidentiality Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Technology Acceptable Terms of Use Agreement
- Personal Development Policy

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Trust

The Trustees will:

- Monitor the implementation of the policy across all Schools within the Trust
- Monitor pupil progress to ensure that pupils achieve expected outcomes;
- Ensure that Schools are resourced in such a way that the Trust fulfils its legal obligations.

4.2 The Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body will ensure:

- All pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes;
- The subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned;
- That the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- That the subjects are resourced in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations.
- Parental consultation has taken place

4.3 Headteacher

The Headteacher/Head of School will ensure that:

- All staff are informed of the policy and the responsibilities included within the policy;
- All teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support subjects;
- The subjects are staffed and timetabled in a way to ensure the Trust and the School fulfils their legal obligations;
- The teaching of RSHE is monitored to ensure that it is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- The school works with parents/carers when planning and delivering RSHE to pupils.

- Clear information and opportunities for consultation are provided to parents/carers on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education is made clear.

4.4 Staff

All staff will ensure that:

- Ground rules are negotiated with the group before embarking on lessons of a sensitive nature so that both the staff and pupils can work together in a supportive atmosphere in which all members can speak with confidence and without fear of embarrassment, anxiety, or breach of confidentiality;
- All students are offered the opportunity to explore ideas, situations, and feelings in an atmosphere of confidence and support;
- At all times teaching will take place in the context of an explicit moral framework;
- All points of view they may express during the teaching of RSHE are unbiased;
- The teaching of RSHE is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- The emphasis of teaching RSHE will always be the importance and understanding of personal relationships and the right of the individual to make informed choices;
- Issues of stereotyping, sexual equality, harassment, rights, and legislation underpin the teaching of RSHE;
- Where appropriate they direct pupils to seek advice and support from an appropriate agency or individual. It is inappropriate for staff to give students personal advice on matters such as contraception;
- Where a student has embarked on a course of action likely to place them at risk, the member of staff will ensure that the student is aware of the implications of their behaviour. The member of staff should refer any potential concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4.5 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) will ensure that:

- Advice and consultation for safeguarding-related subjects in the RSHE curriculum is available.
- Knowledge and awareness of safeguarding issues are promoted amongst staff.
- They are an appropriate point of contact for staff who have concerns about the welfare of a pupil that have arisen through the teaching of RSHE.

4.6 Parents/Carers

The Trust acknowledge the key role that parents/carers play in the development of their children's understanding about relationships. Parents are the first educators of their children.

They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.

All Parents/Carers will be:

- Given every opportunity to provide feedback on the RSHE curriculum through consultation
- Given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education and RSHE;
- Have the right to request and access all of the materials (worksheets, schemes of work, PowerPoint, media links) which are used to teach the RSHE in schools.
- Encouraged to participate in the development of Relationships Education and RSHE;
- Able to discuss any concerns directly with the school.

5. Delivery of the programme

The Trust acknowledges that high-quality, evidence-based, and age-appropriate teaching can help pupils prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life as well as promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils both at school and in society.

RSHE will be set in the context of a wider whole-school approach to supporting pupils to be safe, happy, and prepared for life beyond school. The curriculum on relationships and sex will complement and be supported by the Trust and School wider policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, anti-bullying, and safeguarding. RSHE will sit within the context of the Trust and School's broader ethos and approach to developing pupils socially, morally, spiritually, and culturally; and its pastoral care system.

The curriculum on health education will similarly complement, and be supported by, the Trust and School's education on healthy lifestyles through physical education, food technology, science and its sport, extra-curricular activity, and school food.

All schools within the Trust will deliver the content set out in Appendices 1 and 2, the delivery of which will be set out in a school level RSHE policy and cover the following statutory requirements, for which the school will complete a consultation with all parents/carers:

- A definition of RSHE, the policies aims and how these are consistent with the school's ethos and values
- Details of the content and delivery of RSHE – what, how and when it will be delivered and how it will be made accessible to all pupils
- Roles and responsibilities for co-ordinating the delivery of RSHE in the School and how staff will be supported through regular and effective training
- How parents, carers, pupils, and staff have been consulted on RSHE provision and their involvement in developing/reviewing the policy
- How the delivery and quality of RSHE will be monitored and evaluated in the school
- An explanation of the parents/carers right to withdraw their child from sex education
- The date by which the policy will be renewed and who will approve it

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

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

The lead teacher in each school will work closely 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 citizenship, science, computing, and PE. They should also ensure that the materials used to teach the curriculum are organised in a manner which can easily be shared with parents when requested following the latest government guidance (October 2023). Copyright legislation does not prevent such materials being requested and shared with parents.

All pupils are expected to learn about LGBTQ+ content, and parents do not have a statutory right to withdraw their children from lessons that include LGBTQ+ content.

The curriculum will be designed to focus on pupils of all gender identities and expressions and activities will be planned to ensure all are actively involved.

6. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education will be accessible for all pupils. High quality teaching is differentiated and personalised, this is the starting point to ensure accessibility for all pupils. Schools will also be mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes as set out in the SEND code of practice, when preparing these subjects for pupils with SEND.

The Trust is aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education can also be a priority for some pupils, for example some with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs or learning disabilities.

For some pupils there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meeting the specific needs of children at different development stages.

7. Right to be excused from sex education

The schools understand that parents' role in the development of their children's understanding about relationships, sex and health is vital and will, therefore, engage parents as far as possible in their children's learning. This will include providing parents with frequent opportunities to understand and ask questions about the school's approach to RSHE.

All secondary schools and primary schools who teaching optional sex education must consult closely with parents when reviewing the content of the school's RSHE curriculum and will be given regular opportunities to voice their opinions and concerns. The school will use the views of parents to inform decisions made about the curriculum content and delivery; however, parents will not be granted a 'veto' on curriculum content, and all final decisions will be the schools to make.

When in consultation with parents, the school will provide:

- The curriculum content, including what will be taught and when.
- Examples of the resources the school intends to use to deliver the curriculum.
- Information about parents' right to withdraw their child from non-statutory elements of RSHE.

The school will remain aware that the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum may be of concern to parents. If parents have concerns regarding RSHE, they will contact the school office to arrange a meeting with the headteacher.

DfE guidance states that relationship education is mandatory for all students. However, Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education. Before granting any such request, the Headteacher, or designated person, should discuss the request with the parent and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

Following the discussions, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw their child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16.

After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

The Headteacher will ensure that where a pupil is excused from sex education, the pupil will receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

There is no right to withdraw from relationship education or any other aspect a school's curriculum.

8. Working with external agencies

The Trust is aware that working with external partners will enhance the delivery of RSHE and will support Schools to bring in specialist knowledge and implement different ways of engaging with young people.

Where our Schools use external agencies, they will check the credentials of the visiting organisation and any visitors linked to the agency. Schools will also ensure that the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with the planned programme and the published policy.

Schools will work with external agencies to ensure that the content delivered is age-appropriate and accessible for all pupils.

Any materials that are used as part of the delivery must be approved by school leaders in advance of the session.

The schools will ensure that the visitor is aware of aspects of confidentiality and understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy.

9. Safeguarding, reports of abuse and confidentiality

The Trust recognises that at the heart of RSHE is a focus on keeping children safe and acknowledges the significant role Schools have in preventative education.

In our schools, we will allow children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children will be made aware of the processes to enable them to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This will also include processes when they have a concern about a peer or friend.

In line with the document Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), all staff are aware of what to do if a child tells them that they are being abused or neglected. Staff are also aware of need to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those that need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and children's social care.

A member of staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this is not in the best interests of the child.

The involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads) will ensure that trusted, high quality local resources are engaged, links to the police and other agencies are utilised and the knowledge of the any local issues it may be appropriate to address in lessons.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by nominated senior staff through:

- Monitoring visits
- Planning checks
- Learning walks
- Conversations with the teachers delivering RSHE
- Conversations with the students.

Students' development in RSHE is monitored by staff as part of the internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by members of the Senior Leadership Team annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Board and LGB and the Headteacher. There will also be an opportunity for consultation with parents and carers.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

The Trust will carry out an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that policies, procedures, and practices cater for individuals who share protected characteristics in relation to the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of these assessments is to ensure that policies, procedures, and practices within the organisation are fair to all. If unfairness is highlighted, the assessment will also seek to show how this can be changed and, where it cannot be changed, how it can be improved.

The Trust will monitor the impact of the policy to assess whether there is evidence of a detrimental impact on anyone with a protected characteristic because of the application of this policy. The assessment will include consideration of adaptations or changes which can be made to address any issues identified.

Appendix 1 - Relationships Education Content (Primary)

Families and people who care for me	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security, and stability. • the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives. • that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care for them. • that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up. • that marriage/civil partnership represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong. • about the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships • how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
Caring friendships	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. • the characteristics of healthy friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties. • that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. • that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right. • how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.

Respectful relationships	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs. the conventions of courtesy and manners. the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. 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 those in positions of authority. about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help. what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.
Online relationships	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not. that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous. the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. how information and data is shared and used online.
Being safe	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe. that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact. how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter who they do not know. how to ask for advice or help for self and for others, and to keep trying until they are heard, including having the vocabulary and confidence to report concerns or abuse. where to get advice from e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

Appendix 2 - Relationships and Sex Education Content (Secondary)

The Schools within the Trust will continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary schools (Appendix 1) and in addition, cover the following content by the end of secondary:

Families	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 and civil partnerships are, including their legal status e.g. that marriage and civil partnerships carry 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 the raising of children. • how to: determine whether peers, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationships 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	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (both on and offline) including: trust, respect, honesty, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship. • 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 tolerance and respect to others and others' beliefs, including people in positions of authority. • 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	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply online and offline. • 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 often 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	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment and domestic abuse 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 (on and offline).
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<p>Pupils should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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 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).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • how 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.
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