

Altrincham College

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Date of Approval: **May 2023**

Date for Review: **May 2026**

1. Background

This policy covers Altrincham College's approach to the teaching and delivery of relationships and sex education and we believe that our high quality approach and well-researched methods will be relevant and age appropriate at the time of delivery but also stay with our students for life.

The policy has been written by **Miss Diffley (Assistant Headteacher)**, through consultation with staff, students and parents/carers, and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

We define relationships and sex education in line with government policy:

"Relationships and RSE will be age-appropriate, building knowledge and life skills over time in a way that prepares students for issues they will soon face:

- different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships, dealing with strangers and, at secondary school, intimate relationships;
- how to recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, including self-respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent, and how to manage conflict, and also how to recognise unhealthy relationships;
- how relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health;
- healthy relationships and safety online; and
- factual knowledge, at secondary school, around sex, sexual health and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships."

(www.gov.co.uk)

2. Principles

RSE is **not** about encouraging teenagers to become sexually active nor is it about promoting any particular lifestyle or relationship choice. RSE is about providing students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make safe, healthy and informed relationship choices as young people and in the future as adults. RSE at Altrincham College provides an innovative curriculum fit for the world our young people are living in, the real world and, critically, the virtual world. We believe in empowering our students to understand their bodies, to reflect on their relationship values and to be able to openly discuss relationships and sex with an appropriate, trusted grown up whilst recognising and avoiding the risk of unhealthy, toxic and abusive relationships.

At Altrincham College we are committed to the important role that RSE plays in students' complete education and we aim to build on the RSE programmes covered in Primary School. The theme of resilience underpins all of our RSE lessons and all of our PSHE lessons in the hope that we can build upon each student's sense of self-esteem and self-worth, giving them the skills and strategies to handle what life may throw at them, the ability to say yes or no with confidence and a fundamental knowledge of themselves.

We introduce students to the importance of resilience and being able to say no (consent) from Year 7 and revisit this on a yearly basis, adapted to the age of each year group. We ensure RSE is inclusive and meets the needs of all our students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

3. Aims

The intended and over-arching aims of our programme at Altrincham College are that students will receive an RSE programme which will:

- Be age appropriate and differentiated to the needs of the students including SEN, ASD, visually impaired/hearing impaired students and any other disabilities that require a bespoke curriculum.
- Present information in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner.
- Encourage the development of social skills and strategies, which will reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse.
- Be fully inclusive of all genders, sexual orientations and types of families (LGBTQ+ inclusive).
- Develop a clear understanding of the importance of consent; how to give, withdraw, ask for and recognise consent
- Reinforce the importance of loving relationships, rooted in mutual respect.
- Explore the skills needed for effective parenting and how to assess one's readiness to be a parent.
- To represent all types of families and to explore the different methods for starting a family.
- To ensure that LGBTQ+ and people with disabilities are positively represented in our curriculum.
- Ensure students can identify the qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Allow students to examine the physical and emotional implications of sexual behaviour and to explore the arguments for delaying sexual activity.
- Make students aware how and where to seek help if they are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship (signposting is provided in every student workbook).
- Prepare students for the journey from adolescence to adulthood.
- Provide students with a safe environment to learn about sexual orientation and gender identity, reinforcing the importance of mutual respect and tackling LGBTQ+ misconceptions; homophobia, transphobia, bi-phobia and gender stereotyping.
- Ensure that students have a clear understanding of sexual and reproductive biology, including knowledge of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases
- Ensure students understand the different risks associated with various types of sexual activity and understand how to engage in safe sexual activity by exploring a range of contraception.
- Place paramount importance on online safety and the risks of using social media and the internet for sexual purposes.
- Develop students' understanding of the dangers of pornographic material.

Practice

Legal requirements

Under the Education Act (1993) and the Education Reform Act (1998) all schools are required to maintain a statement of Policy regarding RSE and make it available to parents/carers on request. This policy complies with the DfE Guidance on Sex & Relationships Education and the supplementary guidance Sex & Relationships Education for the 21st Century 2014.

From September 2020 the guidance document '***Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers***'

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>) will become statutory. This document clearly sets out the curriculum content secondary schools must deliver on RSE and Health Education. This document contains information on what schools should do and sets out the legal duties with which schools must comply when teaching Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. Unless otherwise specified, 'school' means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent schools, including academies and free schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained special schools and alternative provision, including PRUs (Pupil Referral Units).

Staff

Course content

Our RSE curriculum is published on the school website and detailed content of the Relationships & Sex curriculum and schemes of work will be made available to parents/carers on request. Our curriculum content will cover the required themes as set out in ***Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers.***

RSE curriculum for SEN students

Where possible, all students will remain with their usual teaching group/class for Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) lessons. Students with SEN, or students who have been identified as likely to need SEMH support with RSE, will either receive the support of a Teaching Assistant/LSA during their RSE lessons, or arrangements will be made for specific students to be withdrawn from RSE lessons to receive a differentiated version of the RSE programme delivered. The SENDCo and Head of PSHE will make the relevant plans at the start of each academic year, in consultation with parents/carers.

Sensitive or Controversial topics

1. During RSE (Relationships & Sex Education) lessons (and at other times) controversial topics may arise. The judgement of individual teachers will decide as to whether the subjects are suitable for class discussion. Teachers will try to answer students' questions honestly, sensitively and in such a way that takes the context into account. In all circumstances, the professional judgement of the teacher must come in to play.
2. If a question is felt to be too explicit, the teacher will acknowledge it and deal with it outside the whole class setting.
3. Teachers will establish a set of ground rules so that young people are aware of parameters, this is available for students in their class booklets to reflect upon every lesson.
4. Students should never be asked to disclose their sexual orientation or personal information about themselves or others and are discouraged from using people's names.
5. Teachers and students will show respect for all genders, sexualities and different types of families.
6. Any concerns that arise about sexual abuse or any other safeguarding issues must be followed up under the school's safeguarding procedures.
7. Where discussions about sexual behaviour arise from apparently unrelated topics, teachers will give attention to relevant issues, again using professional judgement.

8. Informative discussions regarding HIV/AIDS and STIs, covering the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases may, by the very nature of the subject, include discussion of certain sexual acts and practices. Teachers will deal sensitively and objectively with information of this kind, and will always avoid the development of bias and prejudice. Teachers will challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about HIV and STIs.

Organisation and Delivery:

1. Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) is taught in Years 7-11 through RSE and PSHE lessons which take place once every two weeks.
2. All students within the school have equal access to (RSE) Relationships & Sex Education.
3. Identified SEND students will receive a differentiated RSE programme as required (outlined in Section 3 Course Content)
4. Teachers and all those contributing to Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) will work within an agreed framework as set out in this policy.
5. We work with external specialist organisations, consultants and healthcare professionals to ensure our curriculum reflects current best practice. The Head of Department also attends regular PSHE hub and networking meetings to ensure best practice is in place at Altrincham College.

Working with Parents/Carers:

1. Parental support is integral to the success of our RSE curriculum. While we have an educational and legal obligation to provide young people with Relationships & Sex Education we respect the primary role of the parents in educating their children about these matters.
2. Our RSE programme is outlined on the school website and parents/carers are very welcome to explore our RSE curriculum further by requesting to view the teaching materials.
3. Under the Education Act 1993, parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from either part, or all, of the Sex Education provided by the school. However, this does not include aspects of Sex Education covered by the Science National Curriculum. The proviso to the right of parents/carers to withdraw their child is that 15-year-olds will be able to opt into sex education despite the objections of their parents/carers – a right that will apply to students from three terms before they turn 16. Parents/carers with concerns or considering withdrawing their child for RSE should in the first instance contact their child's Head of Year, who will invite them to a meeting to discuss their concerns and reassure them of the health and educational benefits of RSE. In most cases this resolves any concerns, but should parents/carers still wish to withdraw their child from the sex education aspect of RSE then a request should be made in writing to the Headteacher. Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from the relationships aspects of the course.

Confidentiality:

1. Effective RSE should enable and encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are in a sexual relationship or contemplating being so. It is desirable but not always possible that that person should be their parent or carer. The law allows health professionals to see and, in some circumstances, to treat young people confidentially. Part of this process includes counselling and discussion about talking to parents/carers.
2. When a member of staff learns from an under 16-year-old that they are having, or are contemplating having, sexual intercourse or if a student over 16 years is contemplating having sexual intercourse with a student under the age of 16, they must refer the matter

to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will lead on the most appropriate course of action in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

The Role of Health Professions in the Delivery of Relationships and Sex Education:

The school will work with health professionals in the development and implementation of the schools Relationships & Sex Education programme. Any visitors used to help in the delivery of the Relationships & Sex Education programme will be clear about the boundaries of their input and will be aware of the Relationships & Sex Education curriculum, relevant school policies and their work will be planned and agreed in advance.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of this policy will be monitored and evaluated through the normal processes of Departmental Review which apply to all areas of the curriculum. This policy will be reviewed by the Governors annually.

APPENDICES

https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/system/files/2018%20-Writing%20your%20school%E2%80%99s%20relationships%20and%20sex%20education%20%28RSE%29%20policy_0.pdf

Signed by

Chair of Governors:

DATE

Headteacher:

DATE

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher i/c PSHCRE