

# Relationships & Sex Education Policy



**THE LADDER  
SCHOOL**  
Redefining alternative provision



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Member of staff responsible for the policy	[Jordan Crowther]
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Signed by Headteacher	[Charlotte Wilde]
Signed by Chair of Governing Body	[Nicola Walters]

**NEW POLICY**

**DRAFT**



**THE LADDER  
SCHOOL**  
Redefining alternative provision

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## 1. Introduction

**1.1** At The Ladder School, we believe that high-quality Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is essential to the personal development, wellbeing, and future success of all our students. Our RSE curriculum is designed to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to form healthy, respectful relationships and to make informed decisions about their bodies, health, and wellbeing.

As an alternative provision setting, we recognise the unique experiences and challenges our students may face. Our RSE programme is therefore inclusive, adaptive, and sensitive to individual needs, ensuring that every student feels safe, respected, and supported. We aim to foster a learning environment where open, honest discussions can take place, and where students are empowered to ask questions, challenge stereotypes, and develop confidence in their identity and relationships.

This policy is aligned with the latest statutory guidance from the Department for Education and reflects our commitment to safeguarding, equality, and the promotion of fundamental British values. It is delivered in a way that is consistent with our school ethos - high standards, daring to dream, traditional values, success, and personalised support - and is embedded through our PSHE curriculum and wider pastoral care.

**1.2** This policy is linked to the latest guidance produced by the DfE: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

We ensure we are up to date with the most recent legislation and guidance. This includes:

- **Education Act 1996** (legislation underpinning RSE delivery) Education Act 1996 - [legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)
- **Learning and Skills Act 2000** (requires schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students) Learning and Skills Act 2000 - [legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)
- **Equality Act 2010 and Schools Equality Act 2010**: advice for schools – GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))
- **Sex and Relationships Education Guidance** (DfE, 2000) (archived but foundational)
- **Children and Social Work Act 2017** (introduced statutory RSE) Children and Social Work Act 2017 - [legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)
- **Statutory Guidance: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education** (DfE, 2019, updated 2021) Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education – GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))
- **Draft Updated RSHE Guidance for Consultation** (DfE, 2024) (includes age restrictions and new content areas) [Education Hub – GOV.UK](http://Education Hub – GOV.UK)
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)** (updated annually) Keeping children safe in education – GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))
- **Gender Questioning Children: Non-statutory Guidance for Schools in England** (DfE, 2024) (clarifies teaching boundaries on gender identity)
- **PSHE Education Programme of Study: Key Stages 1–5** (PSHE



- Association) (advisory guidance) [pshe-association.org.uk](https://pshe-association.org.uk)
- **The National Curriculum for Science (2015)** (includes statutory content on human reproduction) National curriculum in England: science programmes of study – GOV.UK
- **Subject-specific research and guidance from Ofsted** (including inspection frameworks and thematic reviews) [www.gov.uk/ofsted](https://www.gov.uk/ofsted)
- **Publication of Draft Updated RSHE Guidance for Consultation** (PSHE Association, 2024) [pshe-association.org.uk](https://pshe-association.org.uk)

### 1.3 Definitions:

**Health Education** teaches about physical, mental, emotional and social health. It motivates students to improve and maintain their health, prevent disease, and reduce risky behaviours. Health Education curricula and instruction helps students learn skills they will use to make healthy choices throughout their lifetime.

**Relationship and Sex Education** is defined by The Sex Education Forum, as learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

## 2. The Curriculum Intent

**2.1** Relationships and Sex Education is an opportunity for students to discuss their perceptions of how relationships work and misconceptions about sex, as well as thinking about the importance of choice and consent. Due to the sensitivity of the Sex and Relationship Education, the topics taught are adapted to meet the needs of each student at The Ladder School.

**2.2** As part of the Sex and Relationship Education curriculum students learn about the following topics, but we are agile to respond to contemporary issues and needs. Topics include:

- Consent
- Safe Relationships
- Contraception
- STIs
- LGBTQ+ Relationships
- Online Relationships
- Good Healthy Sex
- Sexual Exploitation
- Transphobia and Homophobia
- Pornography
- Abusive Relationships
- Sexting
- Break Ups
- Puberty
- Periods and Menstruation
- Body Image

- Sexual Violence and Harassment.

### 3. The Curriculum Implementation

**3.1** Effective Sex Relationship Education makes a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by students, if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and well-being. Sex and Relationship Education is taught throughout the PSHCE curriculum and through wider pastoral care. Our PSHCE curriculum is designed by a PSHE specialist, who is also a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. This ensures it is responsive to community issues, and is adapted to meet individual needs.

**3.2** If there are causes for further individual conversations or students feel uncomfortable this can then be discussed immediately and/or monitored by the safeguarding and pastoral teams. If there are any safeguarding concerns the DSL is contacted and a safeguarding call is made. Some parts of sex and relationship education are compulsory, and these topics are also covered as part of the national curriculum for Science.

**3.3** By its very nature, relationships and sex education gives rise to issues that some may consider being sensitive or controversial. When teaching about any sensitive issue, it is important that teachers understand student's prior knowledge. Techniques and starter activities are used to give an insight into students' knowledge, attitudes and possible misconceptions. Ground rules, negotiated between teachers and students, should be used when dealing with sensitive/controversial issues, thus, creating a safe and supportive climate for discussion. The school is committed to the provision of Relationships and Sex Education to all of our students. Our programme aims to respond to the diversity of children's cultures, faiths and family backgrounds.

### 4. The Curriculum Impact

**4.1** Statutory guidance, and further guidance from PSHE Association (<https://pshe-association.org.uk/topics/relationships-sex-education>) states that students should be taught information on the following topics, throughout their time in education:

Families:

- 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:

- 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:

- 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.

#### Staying safe:

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation (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).
- To understand what sexual violence and harassment is and how to report this

#### Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health:

- 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 pressuring 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.



## 5. The Right to Withdraw

**5.1** Government publication states that parents/carers cannot withdraw their child from Health Education or the Relationships Education element of Relationships and Sex Education, because it is important that all children receive this content, covering topics such as friendships and how to stay safe.

**5.2** If parents/carers do not want their child to take part in some or all of the Sex Education lessons delivered at secondary, they can ask that they are withdrawn. The Headteacher will consider this request, discuss it with parents, and will grant this in all but exceptional circumstances, up until three school terms before the young person turns 16.

**5.3** From September 2020, three terms before the young person turns 16 they are able to choose to receive Sex Education if they would like to, and the school will arrange for the child to receive this teaching in one of those three terms (unless there are exceptional circumstances).

**5.4** The Science curriculum in all maintained schools also includes content on human development, including reproduction, which there is no right to withdraw from.

**The school must have regard to the law, and at The Ladder School teaching reflects the law (including the Equality Act 2010). The law applies to relationships, whereby students should clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.**

### Useful link:

Government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>