

# Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)



**THE LADDER**  
**SCHOOL**  
Redefining alternative provision



Date of Creation	June 2024
Date for Review	In accordance with the Trust Policy Schedule
Member of staff responsible for the policy	Georgina Cooke
Date adopted by the Local Governing Body	June 2024
Signed by Headteacher	
Signed by Chair of Governing Body	



## Introduction

As a secondary Academy school we must provide RSHE to all students as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#). In teaching RSHE, 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](#).

This policy has been updated to reflect the Department for Education's statutory guidance "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education" published July 2025, which comes into force on 1 September 2026. The school will complete transition to the updated requirements by that date.

RSHE in The Ladder School has the following main elements:

### Attitudes and Values

- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices.
- Learning the value of family life, stable and healthy relationships, and marriage.
- Learning about the nurture of children.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making.
- Challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour.

### Personal and Social Skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Managing conflict.
- Empowering students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited and exploiter).

## Definitions relating to this Policy

**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 help 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.

## **The Curriculum Intent**

Sex and Relationship 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.

As part of the Sex and Relationship Education curriculum students learn about the following topics: 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 and Body Image, sexual violence and harassment

## **Implementation of the Curriculum**

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 curriculum as part of the Skills Lessons which incorporate the SMSC/PSHE scheme of work. Skills lessons are taught by the designated Learning Coach, and this ensures the topics and lessons can be adapted to meet individual needs.

If there are causes for further individual conversations or students feel uncomfortable this can then be discussed immediately and or monitored through key working sessions. If there are any safeguarding/child protection concerns the DSL is contacted and a safeguarding call is made. Some parts of sex and relationship education are compulsory, as a result, these topics are part of the national curriculum for Science.

RSHE is taught by trained staff across all key stages at The Ladder School, with content sequenced to be age-appropriate and responsive to identified pupil needs.

## **Access to the Curriculum**

The policy aligns with Ofsted expectations on teaching protected characteristics in an age-appropriate way and with Equality Act 2010 duties (EHRC technical guidance).

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 the prior learning students are bringing to the classroom. Techniques such as draw and write or 'first thoughts' 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 Sex Relationship Education to all our students. Our programme aims to respond to the diversity of children's cultures, faiths and family backgrounds.

## Impact of the Curriculum

Students should learn about and understand the following:

### About 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.
- 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 other relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

### About 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.

#### About being online and other forms of 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.

#### How to stay 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 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

#### About 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 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.

## **The Right to Withdraw from Health Education or Relationships Education**

Parents 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.

INSERT: The school will proactively share RSHE curriculum overviews and, on request, make teaching resources available for parents/carers to review. The school will consult parents on substantive policy or curriculum changes ahead of September 2026.

If parents do not want their child to take part in some or all the Sex Education lessons delivered at secondary, they can ask that they are withdrawn. The Principal will consider this request and discuss it with parents, and will grant this in all but exceptional circumstances, up until three school terms before the child turns 16. From September 2020 at this age, the child will be 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).

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

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Governing Board:**

The governing board will hold the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy. The governing board has delegated the approval of this policy to the VP responsible for SMSC & RSHE.



## The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from components of RSHE.

## Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Introducing sensitive topics in a sensitive and generic way to ascertain if there might be any Safeguarding concerns likely to be triggered by the topic.
- Acknowledge and respond to Inclusion Team information about student sensitivity and vulnerabilities with certain topics, making adaptations where necessary and seeking appropriate guidance.
- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE.
- Monitoring progress and understanding.
- Responding to the needs of individual students.
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the components of RSHE.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSHE are encouraged to discuss this with the Head of School. RSHE is taught by all staff amongst all Key Stages at The Ladder School. Staff receive targeted CPD on new/expanded areas (e.g., suicide prevention, online harms, VAWG). The school will monitor DfE announcements on the forthcoming RSHE training grant and take up opportunities where appropriate.

## Students

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

However, staff should consider individual student wishes where adverse responses may occur (e.g. if the child has been a victim of a sexual assault, whether known or not).

## Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. In the build up to specific activities, additional training is given to staff that may be required/asked to deliver RSHE.

The Principal will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE when appropriate and possible.

**The school must have regard to the law, and in this school, teaching reflects the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that**



**students clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.**

**Useful link:**

DfE statutory guidance (updated July 2025; for introduction 1 September 2026):

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

