

Relationships and Sex

Education (RSE) and Health Education



THE LADDER
SCHOOL
Redefining alternative provision



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Member of staff responsible for the policy	G. Cooke
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Signed by Headteacher	
Signed by Chair of Governing Body	

Version Control

Version	Author	Date	Changes Made
1.0	PB	April 2020	First Edition
1.1	RW	May 2020	Changes to present tense
1.2	PB	May 2021	Updated to include references to sexual violence and harassment
1.3	GC	June 2023	Updated links to RSE guidance, assembly session removed and assigned learning coach for skills added.
1.4	GC	January 2026	Full update in line with revised 2025 RSHE statutory guidance and upcoming Sept 2026 requirements (DfE)

Mission Statement

The Ladder School is a safe, well-ordered and caring environment for learning. It delivers high quality education to all its students and supports them to develop their individual potential for growth, self-worth and self-control.

High quality outstanding teaching, and clear and consistent guidance and support facilitates students in succeeding in education. Our broad and balanced academic and vocational curriculum will provide students with access to a broad range of accredited qualifications as well as educational and social experiences, which will address their learning and emotional needs. Our purpose is to support every student to develop their true potential, make positive contributions to their families and find fulfilment in employment.

Values

1. Alternative Provision doesn't mean a dumping ground...it's mainstream with the reasonable adjustments to succeed
2. High standards and high expectations are incredibly important and are the corner stones to a successful school
3. The Ladder School should become the go-to place for educators from across the country to see best practice



4. Good simply isn't good enough
5. Learning is about a journey and there is more than one way to get to the destination
6. Qualifications, manners, respect and opportunity should be the foundations for students that need a second chance.

School Ethos



High Daring to Traditional Success Personalised Standards Dream Values Support

High standards – students are pushed to achieve beyond their potential, and staff work to ensure everything that we do is better than people expect.

Daring to Dream – students at The Ladder School may have been in an educational setting where they lacked aspiration to be successful, at The Ladder School we challenge students to reach their potential and go on to further education and employment.

Traditional Values – some things often get forgotten in education, at The Ladder School we pride ourselves on mutual respect, good manners, making a positive contribution, supporting one another and an orderly, litter free environment.

Success – can come in many virtues, at The Ladder School we celebrate the small steps every day and tell students when they are doing well. We ensure that students can have a successful future.

Personalised Support - all students at The Ladder School have a Learning Coach who guides them, sets them bespoke targets and supports them in making social and academic progress.

Introduction

This policy reflects the latest statutory guidance from the Department for Education, including the revised RSE and Health Education guidance published in **July 2025**, which becomes statutory from **1 September 2026**.

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 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

The RSE curriculum is tailored to students' needs and circumstances. The updated 2025 guidance emphasises **misogyny, harmful online influence, power dynamics, safety, mental health, and online risks**, all of which are embedded throughout the revised curriculum.

Students at The Ladder School will learn about:

- Consent, including power imbalance and age-related dynamics (new 2025 requirement)
- Healthy relationships (online and offline)
- LGBTQ+ relationships
- Contraception and STIs
- Online safety, including pornography, deepfakes, toxic influencers (2025 requirement)
- Sexual exploitation, harassment, and violence
- Body image and puberty
- Managing break-ups and emotional wellbeing
- Safety in public spaces, water, roads, and railways (new 2025 requirement)

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 be made. Some parts of sex and relationship education are compulsory, as a result, these topics are part of the national curriculum for Science.



Access to the Curriculum

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 of our students. Our programme aims to respond to the diversity of children's cultures, faiths and family backgrounds.

Impact of the Curriculum

Students should know:

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.

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 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 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.

If parents 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 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.

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:

Government Guidance

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

