



Connection ● Communication ● Independence ● Aspiration

# **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy**

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### **Outline**

This RSE policy sets out our school approach to teaching learners the knowledge and skills they need to form healthy relationships, stay safe, and understand their changing bodies.

The policy reflects statutory requirements under:

- **Section 80A Education Act 2002** and **Section 403 Education Act 1996**
- **Children and Social Work Act 2017 (s.34)**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **RSHE DfE statutory guidance (published 2025, enforced from September 2026).**

### **Policy Ethos/Aims and Curriculum Intent**

The aim of our RSE curriculum is to enable all learners, including those with complex SEND, to develop the knowledge, skills and values to be safe and well in childhood and in adult life. This includes learning correct anatomical terminology for their body parts, respectful relationships, consent, and how to get help where necessary. It is taught within a spiral, carefully sequenced programme that is age and developmentally stage appropriate. We believe all young people should have access to a comprehensive, thought-provoking learning which focusses on safety, trust, respect and body autonomy.

Our RSE curriculum intends to:

- Provide a safe framework for learning about sensitive topics, including relationships, puberty, consent and growing into adulthood
- Prepare young people for puberty and give them knowledge about sexual development, intimate relationships and safety
- Promote self-respect, body confidence, empathy, and understanding of healthy relationships
- Ensure all young people understand respect, dignity and equality, including LGBT+ inclusion and family diversity and protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010
- Equip young people to navigate online and offline risks, including harmful content and misogynistic attitudes

## **Curriculum Implementation by Pathway**

### **Preformal**

The Preformal pathway focusses on implementing the core foundations of SRE through sensory and experiential experiences, the approach is holistic rather than being delivered through discrete lessons. The emphasis is on developing early communication skills to allow and equip the learner to indicate preference, understand personal space, express boundaries and distinguish safe touch. Learners will be provided with continual opportunities to develop their understanding and skills throughout their daily routines, intensive interaction, modelling, etc.

### **Informal**

The Informal pathway focusses on developing the learner's functional understanding of SRE through focussing on relationships, safety, body awareness and growing up. Learning will be individualised and adapted to a level which is developmentally appropriate to the individual, through a combination of holistic modelling and targeted activities/lessons where appropriate. Learners will access a range of different stimuli such as visual support, social stories, role play, etc. to promote their understanding and ability to implement their skills into real life situations.

### **Semi formal**

RSE is taught within 'My Identity' lessons which incorporate RSE, Citizenship and RE. The curriculum is focussed on providing the learner with the opportunity to develop a better understanding of themselves as an individual and how to engage with others in society. The RSE element of 'My Identity' has a key focus on safety, body change/autonomy, relationships, emotions and developing empathy skills for others. Learners are developing the skills they need for increased independence in adulthood and how to engage appropriately with others. They will be taught anatomically correct vocabulary for body parts and language which seeks to equip them to keep themselves safe from harm. Learning will be adapted to meet the developmental stage and social need of learners, incorporating a combination of discussion, scaffolded exploration and structured tasks. In some cases, this may mean learners are taught more of the Formal offer elements of the RSE curriculum depending on social ability and lived experience.

### **Formal**

RSE is taught within 'My Identity' lessons which incorporate RSE, Citizenship and RE. The curriculum is focussed on developing and promoting skills which will equip the learner to develop their critical understanding of society, and how to be an independent in adult. The RSE element of 'My Identity' will seek to offer comprehensive RSE in line with national curriculum expectations. Puberty, sexual health, contraception and intimate relationships will all be covered in line with individual learner needs and cognitive ability. There will be a key focus on consent, respect, body

autonomy and how this is defined in law – e.g. the legal implications and definitions of sexual harmful behaviour, how to seek support, etc. Learning will be taught in a sensitive manner which seeks to meet our young people where they are at. We aim to provide safe, boundary set spaces for open discussion, clear signposting to relevant support and use of age-appropriate resources which promote informed choices and safety. There will also be a focus on digital literacy and how to navigate the online world in a positive way – e.g. recognising harmful online content, pornography, challenging stereotypes, etc.

## **RSE at Sixth Form**

The Sixth Form Route 3 RSE curriculum develops learners' understanding of healthy, respectful relationships, including friendships, boundaries and appropriate behaviour. It covers personal safety, consent and the ability to seek support, alongside topics such as bullying, peer influence and online safety. Age-appropriate content includes body awareness, puberty, basic sexual health, harassment and legal rights. Learners are supported to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships, manage conflict and make responsible decisions, promoting confidence and independence. Elements are adapted for Route 2 based on need, while Route 1 focuses on building safe, respectful relationships through a thematic approach.

## **Legal and Statutory Framework**

This policy and our RSE curriculum follow the Relationships and Sex education (RSE) and health education statutory guidance set out by the DfE (September, 2026) and associated sections on curriculum content, equality, teaching about the law and openness with parents. We are legally required to deliver Relationships and Sex education to all secondary age young people along with Health education.

## **How we define Relationships Education vs. Sex Education**

Our **Relationships Education** equips learners with the knowledge and skills to form, sustain and evaluate healthy, respectful and safe relationships. It addresses friendships, family and peer relationships, and intimate relationships, including the principles of respect, equality, consent, communication and personal boundaries. Learners are taught to recognise and respond appropriately to unhealthy, abusive or exploitative behaviours, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, coercive control and online harm. Relationships Education is compulsory for all secondary-age learners and is not subject to parental withdrawal.

Our **Sex Education** offer builds on Relationships Education and focuses specifically on human reproduction, sexual health and sexual relationships. The learning includes age-appropriate, factual teaching about puberty, reproductive health, fertility, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, and consent within sexual relationships. The learning will be adapted in line with

individual learner need and is sensitively delivered in way that is medically and legally accurate, inclusive, and underpinned by safeguarding and learner wellbeing.

### **Working with parents and the Right to Withdraw**

We are committed to providing a supportive and holistic approach to the learning and wellbeing of our young people at Redwood. We recognise this approach is strengthened by developing and maintaining excellent working partnerships with our parents/carers, through encouraging openness and curiosity about their child's learning and development. We strongly encourage parents/carers to engage with the curriculum overview on our website and familiarise themselves with this to prepare for any questions their child may have. We welcome an open dialogue about any aspects of the curriculum and are willing to provide clarity and/or further information, including all resources if needed, by contacting Sarah Ashworth-Grimes (My Identity curriculum lead) at school.

Parent/carers may request to withdraw their child from Sex Education but not from Relationships Education or Health Education. Learners may independently opt into Sex Education from age 15 where they are turning 16 within the academic year. In support of our learner's wellbeing, safety and independence we would strongly advise against them being opted out of Sex Education and would seek to engage in supportive discussions about this. If a parent/carer would like to request to withdraw their child from Sex Education then this will be passed to the Headteacher for consideration and a discussion meeting will be arranged.

### **Equality, Inclusion and Religion/Belief**

Our RSE curriculum is delivered in line with the **Equality Act 2010**. This ensures there is no discrimination towards any individual based on any protected characteristics set out in the legislation. It is important to us as a school that all individuals in our Redwood community feel seen, heard and recognised and the curriculum is a large part of how we implement and promote this ethos. Our RSE curriculum includes a range of family structures, including same-sex parents and promotes respect for all sexualities, genders, faiths/religions, etc. Learning will be inclusive and sensitive to faith backgrounds while still meeting statutory RSE obligations.

### **Ground rules and managing sensitive questions**

Clear ground rules regarding appropriate behaviour and sensitive conduct will be set by staff, and where appropriate with the involvement of learners, prior to the commencement of teaching. These include expectations around mutual respect, appropriate language, listening to others without judgement, and maintaining confidentiality. Ground rules are revisited regularly to ensure learners feel safe, supported and able to engage appropriately with the curriculum.

Due to the content of RSE it is expected that sensitive questions may arise and will need to be managed carefully and professionally by staff. Questions will be answered in an age-appropriate, factual and inclusive way, which consider the learner's developmental stage and lived experience. Information shared will remain consistent with the planned curriculum and statutory content, with a commitment to providing 'safe spaces' for all learners to express themselves freely. Where a question is considered too personal or inappropriate to be explored in a whole-class setting, staff will explain this clearly and ensure this is followed up separately with the individual and parents/carers informed if deemed appropriate.

### **Safeguarding and Confidentiality**

We are committed to safeguarding our young people and providing opportunities within the curriculum to support this. Our RSE curriculum supports safeguarding by seeking to help our learners to understand and set boundaries, know where and how to seek help and recognise the various forms of abuse. Staff will manage sensitive questions and issues with a clear focus on providing factual advice. We will be clear from the onset that we may not always be able to provide full confidentiality, however upholding the dignity and wellbeing of the learner will be evident and paramount at all times. This also applies to any learner who may have been withdrawn from Sex Education if they were to disclose a concern or seek advice on issues which may impact on their safety, then the appropriate safeguarding procedures would be followed. Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures will be handled by following our school safeguarding policy.

### **Use of External Agencies**

We may invite health services or specialist external agencies into school to support the delivery of our RSE curriculum. Staff will review and approve all external materials for accuracy, inclusivity and developmental appropriateness prior the session and remain present where appropriate. External visitors will be vetted accordingly in line with our safeguarding policy and work under staff guidance to meet the individual needs of learners.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Our RSE curriculum and this policy will be reviewed annually and approved by the governing body. We are continually reviewing the curriculum and seek to do this via carrying out quality assurance exercises in the form of, but not limited to, lessons observations, learner voice and parental feedback/engagement.

This policy was written by Sarah Ashworth-Grimes (My Identity curriculum co-ordinator) in consultation with all staff and governors.

Approved on: 21/06/26

Review date: June 2027



