



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

St Mark's Church of England Academy

Approved by:	Education Committee	Issued: September 2020; Updated September 2022
Target group:	All employees, consultants and volunteers	
Next review due by:	September 2024	



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1. Aims

As a Church of England Academy, St Mark’s is fully committed to promoting the Church of England’s vision for Relationships and Sex Education (and guidance from our diocese, the Southwark Diocesan Board for Education).

The Church of England’s ‘Vision for Education’ document clearly articulates that good education must promote “life in all its fullness” (John 10:10). The focus on the education and development of the whole child is essential to this, enabling children to learn and grow to become the best that they can be. This vital task must include and go beyond the essential learning outcomes identified in the mandatory curriculum.



“In Church of England schools, and in all schools, we want young people to flourish and to gain every opportunity to live fulfilled lives. For Church schools, RSE is about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, healthy relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It is also about the spiritual and moral aspects of relationships within a context of a Christian vision for the purpose of life.” (Church of England Education Office Response to a Call for Evidence on RSE Curriculum p1)

Church of England schools have at their heart a belief that all children are made in the image of God and loved by God unconditionally. As Christian educators we acknowledge that our role is to help each unique individual to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their personhood: physically, academically, socially, morally, culturally and spiritually. Our aim is that all may flourish and have an abundant life in all its aspects. For this to be achieved our teaching must be relevant and practical.

“Good schools foster confidence, delight and discipline in seeking wisdom, knowledge, truth, understanding, know-how and the skills needed to shape life well.” (Church of England Vision for Education p7)

The relationship and sex education programme at St Mark’s Church of England Academy aims to enable students to:

- Understand the nature of feelings and emotions experienced by themselves and others and the importance of healthy personal relationships.
- Avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or risky behaviour.
- Explore an increasing awareness of their individual and social responsibility before God.
- Communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.
- Question their decisions, judgements and behaviour in a supportive and positive learning environment.
- Know how the law applies to sexual relationships.
- Understand the biological facts related to human growth and development including reproduction and contraception.
- Accept that change is part of the life cycle and be able to adjust to these changes
- Recognise the value of loving and caring relationships.
- Understand the value of family life, the implications of parenthood and the needs of the very young.
- Understand and respect the varied cultural and religious influences on individual sexuality.
- Develop a range of personal skills and qualities e.g. Self-esteem, communication, negotiation, listening skills, empathy, assertiveness which will help students to have fulfilling personal and sexual relationships.
- Challenge sexism and prejudice in society and promote equality of opportunity.



- Be aware of sources of help and advice available within the family, school and community and acquire the skills and confidence to use them.
- Accept their sexuality in a positive way and enjoy relationships based on mutual respect and responsibility, free from abuse.
- Have the knowledge to protect themselves from infection or unwanted pregnancy.
- Have a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure.
- Link relationship and sex education with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol.
- Understand how the law applies to sexual relationships.
- Value their own body and behave within a moral framework.

2. Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy school we must provide RSE to all pupils as per the Department for Education statutory guidance for SRE (2019), section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#) and the Equalities Act 2010.

In teaching RSE, 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](#).

At St Mark's Church of England Academy we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils, parents, the Diocese and governors and approved by the Anthem Trust Education Committee. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – The Anthem Trust Head of Legal reviewed all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance to produce a draft template. This was reviewed by the Anthem Trust Education Executive Team and then approved by the Anthem Trust Education Committee.
2. Governor consultation – all governors were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
4. Parent/Diocese and other stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were consulted
5. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE



6. Ratification – once amendments were made in light of the consultations, the policy was shared with senior Anthem Trust staff and the Local Governing Body and ratified

4. Definition

Our understanding of relationships education

We understand relationships education to be that pertaining to the development of pupils' understanding and ability to have positive, healthy, meaningful and sustained relationships of all kinds.

1. The importance of being in a relationship
2. Healthy relationships and staying safe
3. Respecting others

Our understanding of sex education

We understand sex education to be that pertaining to the development of pupils' understanding of sex, sexual health and human sexuality.

4. Sex
5. Sexual health
6. Conception, contraception and pregnancy (some of which is covered by the science curriculum)
7. Human sexuality

(Church of England Education Office Response to a Call for Evidence on RSE Curriculum p2)

5. Curriculum

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, pupils and staff, Anthem and the SDBE, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE at St Mark's is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media



- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

RSE at St Mark's is:

- Based on the understanding that sex is not only a given fact of human existence but, in Christian belief, a gift from God as part of creation
- Developed and delivered with recognition that parents are key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents and students, consulting them about the content of programmes.
- An integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- Delivered and planned to encourage every student to contribute to our community and to support each individual as they grow and learn.
- Set within the wider school context, supporting family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept as it includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.
- Designed and delivered to encourage students and teachers to share and respect each other's views.
- A place where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place within an atmosphere of mutual respect and shared values.

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

Pupils also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

RSE related topics are also delivered through Enrichment Days. Examples of activities include:

- Guest speakers on Drugs and Alcohol
- Basic First Aid Workshop by St John's Ambulance
- Financial Literacy Workshop by My Bank

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

7. Roles and responsibilities



7.1 The Trust Education Committee

The Trust Education Committee will approve the RSE policy, and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

7.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Principal.

RSE at St Mark's Academy is taught by the Head of PSHE and Citizenship and other designated staff.

7.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity. They are expected to uphold our Academy values of Love, Hope and Trust at all times.

8. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the Principal.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Principal will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

9. Training



Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

Lead staff with the responsibility for teaching most of the RSE also attend training with the Department for Education and the Southwark Diocesan Board for Education.

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 RSE.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Director of Personal Development and the Head of PSHE (Lifeology) and Citizenship through:

- Planning scrutinies
- Learning walks
- Student assessment
- Student and staff feedback surveys and questionnaires

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Education Committee.






































Appendix 1: RSE Curriculum- Big Ideas and Years 7-13 Curriculum Map

The RSE Big Ideas (The 4Cs) that will be taught within PSHE are:

- **Character (Me, Myself and I):** Personal attributes such as resilience, honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, perseverance, belief, trustworthiness, sense of justice, self-respect, self-worth
- **Community (Living Together):** Family relationships, respectful relationships including friendships, respect, tolerance, sexuality
- **Care (Being Safe):** Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health; online and media (internet safety and harms), grooming, sexual exploitation, domestic abuse (including coercive and controlling behaviour), peer to peer abuse, FGM, how to access support, drugs, alcohol and tobacco, basic first aid, youth violence and gangs
- **Comfort (Living Well):** Mental wellbeing, physical health and fitness, healthy eating, health and prevention, changing adolescent body, economic well-being, careers, work

Years 7-13 Curriculum Map from September 2020 onwards

	<i>Year 7</i>	<i>Year 8</i>	<i>Year 9</i>	<i>Year 10</i>	<i>Year 11</i>	<i>Year 12</i>	<i>Year 13</i>
Autumn A	Adjusting to Secondary School / Character Education 	Mental Wellbeing - what could affect your mental wellbeing? 	Healthy Lifestyles & Mental Wellbeing 	Mental wellbeing & your GCSEs 	Drop Down Day: Political engagement and a mock election	What are my options? University and higher education 	Reclaiming your Faith Today: Modern Theology: Black Theology and Feminist Theology 
Autumn B	Stewardship - how can I look after my planet? 	Growing up in Merton - online and the media. 	Discrimination and Prejudice 	Structural Discrimination and Prejudice 	Drop Down Day: Stewardship - Model UN focused on responding to an environmental issue	Employability 	Religion and the Media (RE) 
Spring A	Changing Adolescent Body - Knowing and looking after your body 	Stewardship - Environmental Activism 	Families & Respectful Relationships 	Stewardship - How can citizens enact change in society? 	Drop Down Day: RSE Day focused on: Sexual health	Financial Capability 	Intimate sexual relationships and sexual health 
Spring B	Mental Wellbeing - How to look after your mental wellbeing 	Families & Respectful Relationships (friendships) 	Growing up in Merton - youth violence and gang activity, FGM, grooming. 	Intimate sexual relationships & safe sex 		Intimate sexual relationships and sexual health (RE Focus) 	Leading a healthy lifestyle after leaving home 
Summer A	Growing up in Merton - celebrating the diversity of our community. 	Human Rights & Values in Britain 	Stewardship - Model UN focused on responding to an environmental issue 	Growing up in Merton - Politics and participation in Merton. 		Discrimination and Prejudice 	Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco 
Summer B	Study Skills - preparing for exams 	Financial Capability 	Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco 	Careers - What do I want to do? 		Extremism and the Media 	
Enrichment	Basic First Aid - A workshop from St John's	Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco (A speaker?)	Financial Literacy-				



Appendix 2: Topical breakdown- RSE Expectations

Here's a breakdown of what our students will cover (as well as them continuing to develop knowledge on the topics they're expected to study at primary school). These are the expectations set by the Department for Education.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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

Source

These expectations are set out in the Department for Education's [guidance for schools on relationships education, RSE and health education](#).

Appendix 3: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	