



Ark Acton
Academy

Relationships & Sex Education Policy
2022-23

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the Ark Acton Academy RSE curriculum & how it is delivered. It is a working document, providing guidance and information on all aspects of RSE (with the Character & PSHE Programme) and aims to provide a secure framework within which staff can work.

Date of last review:		Author:	Head of Character
Date of next review:	July 2023	Owner:	Principal
Type of policy:	<input type="checkbox"/> Network-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tailored by school	Approval:	
School:	Ark Acton Academy	Key Contact Name:	Nickael Briggs
Key Contact Email:	nbriggs@arkacton.org	Key Contact Phone:	0208 161 8233

ARK MODEL

Component	Element
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership & Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates <input type="checkbox"/> Our People	Curriculum

Contents:

Introduction

1. What is RSE?
2. Why should RSE be taught?
3. The RSE Curriculum
 - a. Sensitive Content
 - b. KS3 RSE Content
 - c. KS4 RSE Content
 - d. RSE Resources
4. Monitoring the RSE Curriculum
5. Withdrawal from the RSE Curriculum

Introduction

Relationships and Sex Education at Ark Schools

We firmly believe that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) delivered via the curriculum, the school environment and the school ethos is an essential part of a child's development. Not only does it provide information, it helps children develop their skills and form positive beliefs, values and attitudes. It is our belief that effective RSE has a positive impact on self-esteem and enables our students to have a positive view of relationships, sexuality and sex and embeds a culture of both personal and mutual acceptance and respect. It is important that the RSE programme recognises that there may be different cultural or faith-based views relating to this area of the curriculum. Therefore, it is essential that what is taught reflects the diverse society in which we live, which includes LGBT, and that all children have access to age appropriate information free from stereotyping or discrimination.

1. What is RSE?

What is Relationships & Sex Education?

RSE equips young people with the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It will enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It also includes knowledge and understanding of contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It includes acquiring knowledge about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. RSE will help young people understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

What are the aims and objectives of our RSE Programme?

Our knowledge-based RSE curriculum will ensure:

- Pupils have strong relationship skills
- Pupils are prepared for puberty and have good knowledge of their own bodies
- Pupils develop self-worth and self-efficacy
- Pupils know the qualities and behaviours relating to different types of positive relationships
- Pupils recognise unhealthy relationships
- Pupils recognise and challenge media stereotypes
- Pupils have knowledge of prejudice and its negative effects
- Pupils can evaluate expectations for romantic relationships
- Pupils have knowledge about consent, and how to seek and assertively communicate consent
- Pupils can seek help and advice
- Pupils know how to express their feelings
- Pupils know how to make informed choices that reduce risk
- Pupils know about basic forms of contraception, e.g. condom and pill

All Relationship & Sex Education will show recognition and understanding of: -

- Age of pupils
- The diversity of cultural influence that exist in society and the world
- The influence of religious beliefs

In addition, our RSE curriculum will promote:

- Self-Respect
- Respect and tolerance towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, feelings, views and sexuality
- Honesty and openness
- An awareness of the way others feel
- Mutual support and co-operation
- Acceptance of the responsibility for and the consequences of personal actions
- The right of people to hold their own views, within the boundaries of respect for the rights of others
- The right not to be abused by or taken advantage of by other people
- The right to accurate information about sex and relationship issues

2. Why should RSE be taught?

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

Secretary of State 2019

Under the Education Act 2002/Academies Act 2010 all schools must provide a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which:

- *promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and*
- *prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.*

RSE is also set within a wider legislative context:

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education

Department for Education 2019

The law in relation to RSE states:

Schools are required to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Further guidance is available for schools in The Equality Act 2010 and school's advice. The DfE guidance states that schools should pay particular attention to the Public sector equality duty (PSED).

Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects.

As a secondary academy school, we must provide RSE to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.

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 Ark Acton Academy we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. The RSE Curriculum

RSE education is taught through a thematic model, revisiting themes, whilst increasing the challenge, broadening the scope and deepening pupils' thinking. It is not a set of topics that can be delivered or learned in isolation from the **wider curriculum**.

- Our **Science** curriculum includes basic human biology and is statutory in maintained schools. This includes teaching pupils about conception and contraception.
- Our **PSHE** and character programme will explore what lifestyle choices young people may wish to make, and having made those choices what language, strategies and skills they need to stay healthy and safe. Our three core themes are: Health & wellbeing, Living in the wider world and Relationships. The RSE curriculum will be delivered through our Relationships theme.
- Our **Religious Education** curriculum will explore the views of religious and secular groups on matters such as abortion and same-sex relationships.

The RSE curriculum content is based on the revised *National Curriculum Outcomes for Key stage 3-5*, *PSHE Association Guidance for PSHE Programme of Study July 2019*, and best practice from *Ealing Grid for Learning*.

The content has been selected so that throughout the curriculum pupils explore our core themes of health & wellbeing, living in the wider world and consider all aspects of relationships and what affects them. Our RSE curriculum also provides many opportunities for pupils to explore their own and others attitudes, values and opinions on a variety of issues.

In Key Stage 3 pupils will learn how to build positive relationships, self-worth, romance and friendships (including online) and relationship boundaries. They will explore how good relationships can promote mental well-being, how to manage their feelings positively and how to manage changing relationships. They will learn the law relating to sexual behaviour, how to develop skills of assertiveness in order to resist peer pressure and stereotyping, how to access sources of advice and support and when and where to get help, such as from a sexual health clinic.

In Key stage 4, pupils will learn to recognise the influences and pressures around sexual behaviour and how to respond appropriately and confidently seeking professional health advice where necessary. They will learn how HIV and other STIs affect the body, how different forms of contraception work, the risk of early sexual activity and the link with use of alcohol. Discussions around moral issues such as abortion, contraception and the age of consent are all considered.

Technology: As part of RSE it is important that pupils recognise ways they could put themselves at risk through the use of technology. These can include risks to their emotional and physical wellbeing and safety and their personal reputation. It is important to explore the risks, the law as it pertains to the sharing and downloading of images and information and safe ways of sharing personal information, social networking, online dating and sharing images.

Diversity and Inclusion: We are a non-selective mainstream secondary school. In any class we may have pupils from a wide variety of cultures and/or with a wide variety of faiths. These cultures and faiths often hold strong views about sexual behaviour. Our schemes of work, and the teachers delivering them, are sensitive to these views and are trained to support our pupils. We ensure our pupils have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

Equality: Ark Acton, like all public institutions, has specific responsibilities in relation to equality and protected characteristic groups. Our RSE provision caters for all pupils and is respectful of how pupils choose to identify themselves, understanding that depending on their age and maturity, their sexual orientation and gender identity that may be 'emerging'. This means that Relationships and Sex education is sensitive to the different needs of individual pupils and will evolve and adapt over time.

RSE Sensitive Content

The RSE curriculum does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It teaches young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity.

Safer Sex

All pupils will develop knowledge about safer sex. Sexual health remains important to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This will be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment. Teachers will use strategies such as setting ground rules with the class to help manage sensitive discussion and using question boxes to allow pupils to raise issues anonymously.

Contraception

Britain has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in western Europe. A major part of the Government's strategy to reduce unintended teenage pregnancy is to teach teenagers, through the RSE curriculum, about the different types of contraception and give them knowledge of where to access it; this is equally relevant to boys and girls. The average age of first sex is 16, but teachers need to be aware that some pupils younger than 16 will be sexually active.

The DfE guidance states that schools ought also to ensure that pupils have 'the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available'. If the young person asks to visit a sexual health service during school time then the school needs to consider this carefully and follow its own policy and procedures, which have been agreed by governors.

HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and sexual health

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, remain one of the strongest causes of illness due to infectious disease among young people. STIs can cause long-term fertility problems, long-term illness or even death. The age group most at risk of being diagnosed with an STI are young people aged 16-24. Pupils need to be aware of the risks of contracting an STI and how to prevent it. Although the emphasis in RSE will be on preventing infection by abstaining from or delaying sexual activity and on teaching the reasons for safer sex, pupils also need to know about the diagnosis and treatment of STIs.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Pupils will be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. All pupils will feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Sexual orientation and gender identity will be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner. When teaching about these topics, our teachers recognise that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. Therefore, our curriculum uses equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same sex relationships. This is integrated appropriately into the RSE curriculum under the 'identity and relationships' unit, rather than addressed separately or in only one lesson.

Consent

Key aspects of the law relating to sex will be taught which include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy. It is important to emphasise that students will be taught factual information and obtain knowledge of the law surrounding consent.

Grooming, Child Sexual Exploitation & Domestic Abuse

Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, will be addressed sensitively and clearly. The unit will include the physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM). Pupils will be taught where to find support and have knowledge that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM. As well as addressing this in the context of the law, pupils will be taught to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk.

Abortion

The purpose of relationship and sex education is in preparing pupils 'for the responsibilities and challenges of adult life' and abortion is an aspect of this. For example, over 50% of teenage pregnancies ended in abortion in 2005. It is important, therefore, that as one aspect of a secondary relationship and sex education programme young people are aware of the choices that would be available in the event of an unplanned pregnancy, with abortion discussed as one of these choices. Teachers will provide factual information about abortion and the law as it relates to abortion. Pupils will also explore the differing religious, cultural and moral attitudes towards abortion.

Family life and cultural diversity

Pupils will be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children. However, the guidance recognises that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage and that '*teaching needs to be sensitive so as not to stigmatise children on the basis of their home circumstances*'.

It is important for schools to understand the broad range of experiences that children and young people have of family life, to be sensitive to them and to ensure that they are reflected in displays and teaching activities. For example, an activity about the family and who we look like in our family may be very difficult for an adopted child. A happy and caring family life can happen in a wide variety of settings. Equally any form of 'family' can be a source of oppression. The broad range of experiences that children and young people have of family life may include one or more of the following:

- living in nuclear or extended family groupings
- living in single parent families
- living with an adoptive family
- living with lesbian, gay or bisexual parents/carers
- living as refugees
- living in poverty and deprivation
- living in a family in which they are the main carer
- living with siblings or relatives other than parents
- living between two homes
- living in foster homes
- living in residential homes
- living in a home where there is domestic violence
- living with parents/carers/relatives/siblings who for example, are abusive, have mental illness or have learning difficulties

Gender issues

It may be necessary to create opportunities for single gender group work to address the different needs of girls and young women and boys and young men.

What will my child learn about through KS3 RSE?

<i>Relationships</i>	<i>Relationships</i>	<i>Keeping safe</i>	<i>Health & Well being</i>	<i>Fertile Q's</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to develop self-worth and self-efficacy • about qualities and behaviours relating to different types of positive healthy relationships • how to demonstrate positive behaviours in healthy relationships • how to recognise unhealthy relationships including forced marriage and honour-based violence • how to recognise and challenge media stereotypes • how to evaluate expectations for romantic relationships • about consent, and how to seek and assertively communicate • about the law in relation to consent • about gender identity, transphobia and gender-based discrimination • how to recognise and challenge homophobia and biphobia • about gender identity and sexual orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about different types of families and parenting, including single parents, same sex parents, blended families, adoption and fostering • how to manage relationship and family changes, including relationship breakdown, separation and divorce • that the legal and moral duty is with the seeker of consent • about human reproduction and conception • about varying methods of contraception which prevent spread of STIs • CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) • about forming new partnerships and developing relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to effectively communicate about consent in relationships • about the risks of 'sexting' and how to manage requests or pressure to send an image • about basic forms of contraception, e.g. condom and pill • how to access support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to manage physical and emotional changes during puberty • how to develop self-worth and confidence • about personal hygiene • how to recognise and respond to inappropriate and unwanted contact • about FGM and how to access help and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways does knowledge of self-worth, romance and friendships (including online) help us to build healthy relationships? • In what ways does having an understanding and definition of a respectful relationship help us make better decisions in our personal life? • In what ways does knowledge of discrimination help us to make positive relationship decisions? • In what ways does knowledge of diversity, prejudice and bullying help us to make positive relationship decisions? • How does an understanding of gender identity, consent, and contraception help me to be assertive and protect myself?

What will my child learn about through KS4 RSE?

<i>Relationships</i>	<i>Relationships</i>	<i>Keeping safe</i>	<i>Health & Well being</i>	<i>Fertile Q's</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about relationship values and the role of pleasure in relationships • about myths, assumptions, misconceptions and social norms about sex, gender and relationships • about the opportunities and risks of forming and conducting relationships online • how to manage the impact of the media and pornography on sexual attitudes, expectations and behaviours • about the ethical and legal implications in relation to consent, including manipulation, coercion, and capacity to consent • how to recognise and respond to pressure, coercion and exploitation, including reporting and accessing appropriate support • how to recognise and challenge victim blaming • about asexuality, abstinence and celibacy • about various forms of relationship abuse • about unhealthy, exploitative and abusive relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about core values and emotions • about gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation • how to communicate assertively • how to communicate wants and needs • about various forms of relationship abuse • challenges in seeking support • about different types of families and changing family structures • how to evaluate readiness for parenthood and positive parenting qualities • about fertility, including how it varies and changes • about pregnancy, birth and miscarriage • about unplanned pregnancy options, including abortion • about adoption and fostering • how to manage change, loss, grief and bereavement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to challenge harassment and stalking, including online • how to handle unwanted attention, including online • about 'honour based' violence and forced marriage and how to safely access support • how to access support in abusive relationships and how to overcome challenges in seeking support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the importance of screening and how to perform self-examination • about registering with and accessing doctors, sexual health clinics, opticians and other health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does knowledge of a healthy relationship allow me to recognise features of unhealthy relationships? • How will knowing my personal values and being assertive support communication in relationships? • How will knowledge about positive family relationships allow me to recognise different types of families and changing family structures?

RSE Resources

RSE resources are chosen and checked for

- Age appropriateness
- Accuracy
- Inclusivity
- Positive, healthy, unbiased messages

Our RSE resources are accessible to staff and parents (upon request). Our SEND department adapt resources for our most vulnerable pupils to ensure that they are tailored to meet the individual need of that particular pupil.

Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced, knowledgeable visitors from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE in school. Our school has a code of practice for using visitors to support the delivery of PSHE:

- Visitors are invited into school because of the particular expertise or contribution they are able to make
- All visitors are familiar with and understand the school's RSE policy and work within it
- All input to PSHE lessons are part of a planned curriculum and negotiated and agreed with staff in advance
- All visitors are supervised/supported by a member of staff at all times
- The input of visitors is monitored and evaluated by staff and pupils to inform future planning

RSE Class Groups

RSE is delivered as part of our PSHE curriculum and pupils in KS4 and KS5 are taught sessions weekly by their form tutor. Students in KS3 are taught PSHE once a week as part of the main school timetable. All pupils will learn the same content, however on the rare occasion it may be appropriate to provide opportunities for pupils to discuss matters further in single sex groups or individually.

4. Monitoring the RSE curriculum

RSE will be assessed as part of the wider PSHE curriculum.

Nickael Briggs is the member of staff who monitors the implementation of Relationships Education, this monitoring is done through book scrutiny, lesson observations, pupil conferencing sessions and staff focus groups.

Training:

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

The Principal may also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or the health improvement team, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

Specific issues that may arise during the delivery of the RSE curriculum:

Safeguarding Children Statement

RSE may bring about disclosures of safeguarding children issues and all staff are clear with the procedures for reporting any concern and how to respond to the child when a disclosure is made.

Confidentiality statement

For any personal disclosure, that is not a safeguarding issue, a child's confidentiality is maintained by the teacher or member of staff concerned as a general rule.

However, if this person believes that the child is at risk or in danger, they will report this to the DSL in the same way as any safeguarding concern.

For issues about confidentiality and pupils wishing to access sexual health advice, refer to the school's confidentiality policy.

Sexually explicit questions

Our school will:

- Answer only those questions that relate directly to the agreed curriculum/lesson
- Make it clear, through ground rules, that nobody should ask personal questions
- Be prepared to modify the curriculum if a certain question recurs (perhaps because of media coverage)
- Use a question box (a box in the classroom that pupils can 'post' written questions)
- Allow individual staff to use their professional judgement as to answering questions in front of the whole class or individually
- Encourage pupils to ask their parents/carers any question outside the planned curriculum
- Make provision for questions about sex, reproduction and puberty to be answered individually, as they arise, outside the planned curriculum

Developing the curriculum

From September 2020 the DfE will require schools to consult with parents when developing or reviewing their RSE policies. The aim of this is to inform decision making about when or how content is covered. Consultation is an important process in helping schools to decide on how to proceed. However, this does not give parents a right of veto on any aspect of the RSE curriculum – the decision on what will be delivered rests with the school.

5. Withdrawal from the RSE Programme

We recognise that parents will be concerned about information that is provided to their children on relationships and sex, so it is therefore essential that parents are provided with as much information as possible (see the curriculum description above). It is also imperative parents have an opportunity to ask questions in a forum in which they feel comfortable. They can choose to contact the relevant Head of Year by email or arrange an appointment to speak on the phone or meet at school.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory 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 and addressed to the Principal.

If you withdraw your child from sex education lessons, the school cannot guarantee that your child will not hear about the content of lessons from other pupils e.g. in the playground, walking home from school. By withdrawing children from sex education lessons, they may seek the information from elsewhere e.g. friends, siblings, the internet. These sources of information are often incorrect and unreliable and can expose children to information which is not appropriate for their age.

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. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from PSHE/RSE lessons they need to write to the relevant head of year at the beginning of the academic year so that alternative provision can be made. Requests need to be made in writing.

Where requests are granted, a written record of any children who have been withdrawn will be retained as part of their educational record and all relevant teachers will be informed.

In the event of a child being withdrawn from a lesson, that child must stay in school and will be assigned to another class until that specific lesson is over.