



ALTRINCHAM GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR BOYS (AGSB)

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Nominated Lead member of Staff:	HM
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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy has been written with reference to the following documents:

- *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance*, DfEE, 0116/2000
- *Sex and relationships education (SRE) for the 21st century* Brook, PSHE Association and Sex Education Forum, 2014
- *Policy Statement: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education*, DfE, 2017
- *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education*, DfE Draft for consultation, July 2018
- *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education in England, Government consultation response*, DfE, Feb 2019
- *Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education*. DfE, June 2019
- *Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum*, DfE, Sept 2020
- *Draft Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health education*, DfE, May 2024
- *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education*. DfE, July 2025
- *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*, AGSB
- *Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy*, AGSB

The policy should be read alongside these documents, and also guidelines from the PSHE Association.

1.2 This policy, together with its accompanying procedures and guidance, covers the school's approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and applies to all the students, staff, health professionals, visiting speakers and support workers who are involved in the delivery of RSE within the school together with parents, governors and the school community. The policy has been approved by AGSB Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Head Teacher and the Governing Body and is made available to parents and the wider school community through the school website.

2. What is Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)?

Relationships and sex education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It is about understanding the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It involves acquiring knowledge and understanding, developing personal and social skills and forming positive and respectful beliefs, values and attitudes.

3. Statement of Intent, Principles and Values Framework of RSE

AGSB believes that RSE should:

- adopt a whole-school approach;
- be both culturally appropriate and inclusive of all pupils;
- ensure that young people's views are actively sought and listened to;
- be made relevant to pupils at each stage in their development and maturity;
- be inclusive of difference: gender identity; sexual orientation; disability; diversity; ethnicity; culture; age; religion or belief or other life experience;

- promote equality in relationships, recognise and challenge gender inequality and reflect the different needs and experiences of all students;
- help pupils understand a range of views and beliefs about relationships and sex in society including some of the mixed messages about gender, sex and sexuality from different sources including the media;
- encourage pupils and teachers to share and respect each other's views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure.
- recognise that parents are the key people in teaching their children about relationships, sex and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents and pupils, consulting them about the content of programmes of study.
- recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

RSE contributes to:

- a positive ethos and environment for learning;
- safeguarding pupils (*Keeping Children Safe in Education*, DfE, 2025) promoting their emotional wellbeing, and improving their ability to achieve in school;
- a better understanding of diversity and inclusion, a reduction in gender-based and homophobic prejudice, bullying and violence and an understanding of the difference between consenting and exploitative relationships;
- helping pupils keep themselves safe from harm, both on and offline, enjoy their relationships and build confidence in accessing services if they need help and advice;
- reducing early sexual activity, teenage conceptions, sexually transmitted infections, sexual exploitation and abuse.

Adapted from *Sex and relationships education (SRE) for the 21st century*, 2014

4. The main elements and intended outcomes of RSE

Relationships and Sex Education has three main elements and the intended outcomes of the RSE programme for our pupils are:

Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral considerations;
- learning the value and significance of family life, marriage and stable and loving relationships for 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.

Personal and Social Skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice;
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- managing conflict;
- learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.

Knowledge and Understanding

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay;
- understanding how the law applies to sexual relationships;
- understanding the responsibilities of parenthood.

(Sex and Relationship Education Guidance, DfEE, 0116/2000)

5. How is RSE taught at AGSB?

5.1 Factual elements of RSE are taught as part of the Science National Curriculum and lessons are delivered by staff within the science department. At key stages 3 and 4 this includes teaching about reproduction in humans, the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycles, gametes, fertilisation, gestation, birth and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV/AIDS.

These factual elements are also revisited and addressed within RSE / Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) at KS3. In these sessions emphasis is placed upon addressing the pupils' questions and concerns raised by the biological and psychological facts and changes, for example exploring the effect of puberty upon friendships and managing feelings and emotions associated with those experiences.

Some issues relevant to RSE, and perspectives upon those issues, are also explored within the subject of Philosophy and Ethics (P&E). In P&E we look at gender stereotypes; challenging discrimination with regard to same sex relationships; homophobia; sexism and misogyny. P&E teaching is concerned with the development of critical thinking skills which are needed to make informed and rational decisions (see *Attitudes and Values* section 4).

5.2 Other aspects of RSE are embedded within the wider framework and context of PSHE at KS3 and KS4. RSE lessons are delivered as part of a planned PSHE programme of study in each year group and cover a wide range of topics such as healthy and unhealthy relationships; equality; respect; gender identity; rights; consent; sexting; grooming; responsibilities to others; male sexual / reproductive health e.g. testicular and prostate cancer; negotiation and communication skills; accessing services and support.

5.3 The PSHE team deliver RSE lessons with support from the Head of PSHE, other specialists and/or professionals where appropriate. Some teachers may need support and/or training to overcome any anxieties or embarrassment to deliver the programme sensitively and effectively. The personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers should not influence the teaching of relationships and sex education within the PSHE framework. More experienced or specialist teachers will support staff who may be uncomfortable with, or lack confidence in, teaching certain aspects of the curriculum. The Head of PSHE will assist with the planning or delivery of lessons as required.

Staff are supported in their teaching by detailed schemes of work which are available on Office 365. The RSE programme is taught through a range of teaching methods and interactive activities. Teaching materials, images and resources used to support the teaching of RSE are designed to be appropriate and differentiated in order to take into account the needs, age, emotional maturity, religious and cultural backgrounds of the pupils. High quality resources (approved by the PSHE Association) are used to support the provision and are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Strategies are employed during lessons to allow time for review and reflection so that pupils are able to consolidate their own learning. Assessment is carried out at the end of selected modules and involves teacher, pupil and peer assessment and evaluation of knowledge and understanding, personal and social skills and attitudes to demonstrate progress made.

5.4 Teachers and all those contributing to the teaching of RSE will be expected to work within the principles and values framework as set out in this policy.

“Pupils should understand the importance of equality and respect and learn about the law relating to the protected characteristics by the end of their secondary education. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sex.”

(Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, DfE, July 2025).

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some pupils may find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons, ground rules and clear parameters should be established for the group. When pupils ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly and factually, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development or maturity of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

5.5. Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which develops an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a student making a disclosure. If a pupil makes a personal disclosure, it should be made clear to the student that the teacher cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. The teacher should refer the matter to Head of Year; Head of PSHE or the Head/deputy head for Safeguarding as is appropriate. If a teacher has concerns about a pupil, or feels that the student is ‘vulnerable’ or ‘at risk’, then he/she should follow the school’s safeguarding procedures. (See *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*, AGSB).

5.6 The delivery of the RSE programme is monitored and evaluated by the Head of PSHE. In order to maintain relevance and quality of the programme the Head of PSHE works closely with the pastoral heads of year and the senior leadership team to listen to, identify and respond to the student voice and the specific needs or requirements for each year group / key stage.

6. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We will ensure that Relationships and sex education (RSE) is inclusive and meets the needs of all our students to ensure accessibility. RSE aims to support all pupils in helping to understand their physical and emotional development and in enabling them to make positive choices and decisions about their lives. RSE teaching will ensure that lesson content is delivered to all pupils in a sensitive, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate manner. The PSHE teaching team delivering RSE work closely with the Inclusion team in order to ensure that all students can access the curriculum.

“Schools should be aware that pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable than their peers to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual abuse, exploitation and violence, bullying and other issues. RSHE can be particularly important for these pupils, particularly those with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities.”

(Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, DfE, July, 2025)

Some pupils may need support and guidance to develop skills to reduce the risks of possible exploitation and to develop an understanding of what sorts of behaviour are acceptable and appropriate. AGSB aims to “...welcome, nurture and empower pupils with SEND and to support them fully as they make the transition into adult life.” (*SEND Policy, AGSB*)

7. Sexuality and Gender

The RSHE programme of study ensures that the needs of all pupils are met in a sensitive and respectful manner and that teaching is delivered with reference to the law. Our school teaches the facts of biological sex and the law regarding the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. We recognise that the concept of gender identity is a matter of significant public debate; therefore, the school takes a neutral stance and does not teach gender identity as a factual reality. We remain committed to an environment where every pupil is treated with dignity and where bullying is never tolerated.

8. Working with Parents and the rights of Parents

8.1 The teaching of certain aspects of relationships and sex education may be of concern to some parents. They may need to be made aware that the RSE education programme is intended to complement and support their role as parents/carers. Parents may need to be reassured that effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. The aim of RSE is to teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.

A letter is sent out to parents/carers from the Head of PSHE prior to the commencement of RSE lessons in years 7 and 8 detailing the purpose and proposed content of lessons; the approach used to deliver the programme; the possible concerns of parents and how to address those concerns and the right of withdrawal from lessons. In addition, there is an opportunity for parents to view the materials and resources used in the teaching of RSE and PSHE during Open Evening.

8.2 Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE, up to and until three terms before the child turns sixteen. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents are required to outline their reasons for withdrawal in a written request as such applications have to be formally recorded by the Head teacher. Before granting any such request the Head teacher or Head of PSHE will discuss the request with the parent and, as appropriate, with the pupil, to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed and updated every twelve months to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of students, staff and parents and that it is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance. The next review date will be February 2027.