



"one community; individual minds; creating futures"

Larkmead School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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1. Aims

Our school is a member of the Vale Academy Trust (“the Trust”).

Like all secondary schools in the Trust, we are committed to our students’ academic, cultural, emotional and moral development and to preparing them for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. We believe that an important part of this development and preparation, therefore, is the provision of age-appropriate Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for all our students. The specific aims of RSE at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

2. Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy school in England we must provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to have proper regard to [Government regulations and guidance](#), issued by the Secretary of State for Education, as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

In common with all secondary schools in the Trust we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students, parents and carers. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – led by a member of Trust staff, a working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – a selection of school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/carer consultation – parents from all key stages were invited to read a draft of this policy and make comments and ask questions
4. Student consultation – we investigated what exactly students want from their RSE
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, this policy was shared with the Trust's Board of Directors and ratified

4. Definition of RSE

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, 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.

5. Curriculum

Our curriculum objectives are set out as per Appendix 1.

We have developed our curriculum in consultation with parents, students and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that students are fully informed and do not seek answers from inappropriate websites, social media, or other inappropriate places.

RSE is not an isolated subject: it permeates the ethos of each school, the curriculum and the pastoral system. RSE is also informed by the daily behaviour of school staff as role models.

All subjects, but particularly Science, English, PE, Art, Drama and the Humanities, provide a focus for exploring elements of RSE, along with time spent expressly on RSE in lessons on Personal, Social, Health and Citizens, and Personal Development (PSHCE/PD), and in allocated tutor sessions. There will inevitably be plenty of informal opportunities for members of staff to answer student questions and explore issues as they arise on a daily basis.

Each secondary school in the Trust has a co-ordinator of RSE (who may typically be the PSHCE/Personal Development Co-ordinator). This person, working with other relevant staff, will be responsible for the overall planning, formal implementation and review of the RSE curriculum in line with national guidelines.

6. Delivery of RSE

6.1 Structure and staffing

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).

Students also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a staff team who have had specific training and support (see section 7.3).

Each Trust school places a high importance on creating a supportive and secure environment where students can develop the confidence needed to talk, listen and think about relationships, change and sex. In order to do this, teachers will

- Establish clear rules
- Emphasise the importance of mutual respect
- Require no open disclosures in a class setting
- Use distancing techniques
- Where necessary, provide for anonymity so that students can ask the questions they need to ask (e.g. using a question box)

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

For more information about our RSE curriculum objectives, see Appendix 1.

6.2 Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of students will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all students' experiences
- During lessons, makes students feel:
 - Safe and supported
 - Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that students learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:
 - A whole-class setting
 - Small groups or targeted sessions
 - 1-to-1 discussions
 - Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

The Trust's Equality Policy, which applies to all Trust schools, underpins the RSE teaching. RSE can act as a basis for promoting equality between individuals and groups. It necessarily involves an exploration of human and social diversity, and a fostering of self-esteem and self-worth in a learning environment that recognises and respects difference. We work to ensure that RSE is relevant and accessible to all students and is appropriate for all levels of understanding and maturity. RSE will be

respectful of how students choose to identify themselves with regard to their emerging sexual orientation and gender identity.

Furthermore 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, and 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).

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

6.3 Use of resources

We **will** consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support students in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our students
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to students' experiences and won't provoke distress

7. Use of external organisations and materials

We will make sure that an agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

The school remains responsible for what is said to students. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We **will**:

Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:

- Are age-appropriate
- Are in line with students' developmental stage
- Comply with:
 - This policy
 - The [Teachers' Standards](#)
 - The [Equality Act 2010](#)
 - The [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
 - The [Education Act 1996](#)

- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses

- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on:
 - What they're going to say
 - Their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use
- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers

We **won't**, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Trust's Board of Directors

The Trust's Board of Directors will approve the Trust-wide RSE policy templates. The school's Local Governing Body (LGB) will hold the headteacher to account for its implementation locally.

7.2 The Headteacher

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

7.3 Staff

Led by the PSHCE/Personal Development Co-ordinator, staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive and non-judgemental way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students 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 headteacher. However, in order to create a supportive and secure classroom environment, it is best if students know their teacher well. Additionally, not all teachers are best suited to teaching some aspects of the RSE curriculum. So, where appropriate, particular teachers will deliver particular aspects of the RSE curriculum. These teachers will be trained and supported to do this and will draw on a range of teaching methods appropriate to a particular age

group in order to encourage the exploration of attitudes, values and beliefs, and in order to impart information.

All RSE teachers will be clear about the boundaries of confidentiality and about where students can go for further information, advice and support.

7.4 Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

8. Parents - right to withdraw

RSE is an important part of all students' education and it is hoped that all students will participate. However, we acknowledge that, under the Education Act 1993, parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the RSE programme *except* for that part which occurs in the National Science Curriculum 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. Parents need to be aware, however, that RSE can occur at any time, arising naturally from class or from informal discussions. They also need to consider whether they want their child withdrawn from all RSE or just from the parts of RSE that deal explicitly with sexual intercourse and related issues. This is important to note, as parents may still want their children to benefit from crucial discussions about feelings, values and relationships.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 2 of this policy and addressed to the PSHCE/Personal Development Co-ordinator.

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

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

9. Training

Staff selected for RSE delivery receive training and all tutors receive support with PSHCE provision throughout the year. Our school will draw on the expertise of professionals from other agencies, as appropriate.

The school will also use the in-house School Health Nurse and Counselling team or external sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The RSE teaching programme is reviewed regularly, based on the outcome of monitoring and evaluation carried out by each school's PSHCE Coordinator and a working group of staff. Monitoring may be in the form of:

- Student voice conversations and written surveys regarding the teaching content and methods;
- RSE staff voice and surveys regarding the teaching content and methods;
- Planning/training sessions between RSE staff and PSHE coordinator
- Learning walks
- Planning scrutinies

Student development in RSE is monitored by tutors and RSE teachers as part of our internal assessment systems and through day-to-day work by student managers and pastoral teams. It may be evident through:

- Knowledge gained and the understanding of information and issues addressed in RSE;

- Evidence of students' increased sense of responsibility and respectful attitudes towards each other, as monitored by senior pastoral staff;
- A decrease in recorded instances of homophobia, sexual bullying, sexist graffiti and the casual use of derogatory language, particularly with sexual or gender meanings, as monitored by senior pastoral staff.

The information above will support the PSHCE Coordinator, Head of Policy, Directors, Governors and Senior Staff in reviewing this policy every year. Further consultation will be carried out with staff, students and parents where necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the policy as a working document.

Appendix 1: By the end of secondary school students should know

TOPIC	STUDENTS 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	STUDENTS 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)

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
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

Appendix 2: 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	