

## Relationships and Sex education (RSE) policy

### Summary

This policy document is to detail the approach to the teaching of relationships and sex education in our primary and secondary academies.



If you are unsure about the validity of the content of this policy please refer to the Policy Owner.

### ***Please Note: This policy is applicable to All Employees***

Policy owner	<b>Trust Board</b>
Policy holder	<b>Director of Education</b>
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Group Policy Area	Education

### **Approved by**

Consultation Group	<b>Board</b>
Approval Committee	<b>Board</b>
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### **Version Control**

Control No	Change summary	Consultation Group	Effective date
01	Policy aligned with relevant up to date legislation. Additional wording related to accountability.	Board	March 2024

## Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our academies are to:

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

## Statutory requirements

At Eastern Multi Academy Trust our academies teach RSE as set out in this policy.

In our primary academies, we must provide relationships education to all pupils as per section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#). This legislation also requires us to provide RSE to all pupils at our secondary academies.

We do not have to follow the National Curriculum but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including requirements to teach science. This would include the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum at primary level.

In teaching RSE, we're 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](#).

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

At Eastern Multi Academy Trust we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

## **Policy development**

All Eastern Multi Academy Trust academies **must** consult with parents when making changes to your RSE policy and it is good practice to consult with staff and pupils too. The text below is an example of how our academies may do this.

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

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
4. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified”

## **Definition**

RSE 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.

Eastern Multi Academy Trust primary academies do not have to provide sexual relationship education, but may choose to do so to reflect their context and needs of their pupils. This should be reflected in the local academy RSE Policy.

## **Curriculum**

Our overarching curriculum aims are set out as per Appendix 1 but academies may adapt or add to this as and when necessary.

Academies must develop their curriculum in consultation with parents, pupils and staff, 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.

Primary sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, it is up to each academy to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils.

Primary sex education will focus on:

Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings

How a baby is conceived and born

For more information about an academy's curriculum, please see the individual RSE Policy.

## **Inclusivity**

Our academies will teach about these topics in a manner that:

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

They will also:

- Make sure that pupils 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

### **Use of resources**

Our academies will consider whether any resources they plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils
- 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 pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

### **Use of external organisations and materials**

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

We remain responsible for what is said to pupils. 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.

Our academies **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 pupils' 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 they 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

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

Our academies **won't**, under any circumstances:

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

### **Delivery of RSE**

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.

In our primary academies:

Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

For further information on the curriculum content and sequence of learning, please see the individual academy's policy and curriculum documentation.

In our secondary academy:

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 further information on the curriculum content in our secondary academy, please see the individual academy RSE Policy.

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).

Across our trust, 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.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Local Academy Council**

The Academy Council will approve the local RSE policy, and hold the principal to account for its implementation.

### **The Principal**

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

### **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 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.

For those with responsibility for teaching RSE in our academies please see the individual academy policies.

### **Pupils**

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

### **Parents' right to withdraw**

*In our primary academies:*

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE.

Requests for withdrawal should be discussed with and put in writing to the principal. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn.

In our secondary academy:

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.

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.

For further information on actions that a Principal may take, please see the individual academy policies.

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

### **Training**

All Eastern Multi Academy Trust staff responsible for the delivery of RSE must be trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it should be included in each academy's continuing professional development calendar.

The principal may also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE as required.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust education team every 2 years. At every review, the policy will be approved by Trust Board.

Accountability for the implementation of this policy sits with each academy with associated oversight from the Academy Committee.

In addition, a further layer of assurance is provided by the trust executive in the form of the School Improvement Directors and the Director for Education who are responsible for reporting to the trust board and for review of the policy. Safeguarding reviews, academy audits and notes of visit provide a line of sight from the academies as part of the quality assurance process.

Strategic approval remains the responsibility of the trust Board.

For all Eastern Multi Academy Trust primary academies:

**By the end of primary school pupils should know**

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families and people who care about me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability</li><li>• The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives</li><li>• That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care</li><li>• That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up</li><li>• That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong</li><li>• How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed</li></ul>
Caring friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends</li><li>• The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties</li><li>• That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded</li><li>• That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right</li><li>• How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed</li></ul>



TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</li> <li>• The conventions of courtesy and manners</li> <li>• The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness</li> <li>• 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 those in positions of authority</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help</li> <li>• What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive</li> <li>• The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults</li> </ul>
Online relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not</li> <li>• That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous</li> <li>• The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them</li> <li>• How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met</li> <li>• How information and data is shared and used online</li> </ul>

Being safe

- What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)
- About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe
- That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact
- How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know
- How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult
- How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard
- How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so
- Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

For Eastern Multi Academy Trust secondary academies

**Appendix 2: By the end of secondary school pupils should know**

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships</li> <li>• How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into</li> <li>• The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships</li> <li>• The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>
Respectful relationships , including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help</li> <li>• That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control</li> <li>• What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them</li> <li>• What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online</li> <li>• The impact of viewing harmful content</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail</li> <li>• How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online</li> </ul>
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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)</li> </ul>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women</li> <li>• That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others</li> <li>• That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex</li> <li>• The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available</li> <li>• The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment</li> <li>• How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour</li> <li>• How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment</li> </ul>

