



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) POLICY

The Courtyard offers a tailored educational and social provision with a holistic approach. We aim to equip our students with the skills and experiences needed to discover and thrive with increased independence in their next stage of life.

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY STATEMENT

Approval Committee:	Full Governing Body
Review Committee:	Curriculum and Standards
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Statutory?	Yes

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1. Aims and objectives

The aim of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at The Courtyard goes far beyond simply teaching factual knowledge. While accurate information on topics such as anatomy, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is essential, the overarching goal is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values they need to make informed, respectful, and confident choices in real life.

Effective RSE supports students through their physical, emotional, and moral development, helping them to move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. It prepares them to build healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds—including friendships, family relationships, professional relationships, and intimate partnerships. It teaches what makes a good friend, a supportive colleague, and a respectful partner in a committed relationship such as marriage or civil partnership.

The RSE curriculum is designed to:

- Provide a safe framework for exploring sensitive topics and discussing personal attitudes and values.
- Prepare pupils for puberty and help them understand sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- Enable students to develop feelings of self-respect, empathy, and confidence through personal and social skills.
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships.
- Promote understanding and respect for diversity, including LGBTQ+ identities.
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- Support students in recognising and navigating real-life situations involving consent, peer pressure, online safety, and healthy versus unhealthy relationships.
- Empower students to resist pressure to have sex and understand the importance of not pressuring others.
- Help students understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.

- Support mental wellbeing by showing how positive relationships contribute to emotional health and how to identify and respond to unhealthy dynamics.
- Enable students to protect themselves and others from harm, including STIs, coercion, and exploitation.

At The Courtyard, we uphold RSE as an entitlement for all our students. The RSE policy is underpinned by the ethos and values of our school community, ensuring that it reflects our commitment to inclusivity, respect, and the holistic development of every learner. School community to ensure a shared understanding of RSE and the under-pinning values and to deliver an effective programme that meets the needs of our students.

The Courtyard School explores/teaches RSE within the following moral and values framework based on the following principles:

- Respect and tolerance towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, feelings, views and sexuality.
- The right of people to hold their views within the boundaries of respect for the rights of others.
- The acceptance of the responsibility for and the consequences of personal actions.
- The right not to be abused by or taken advantage of by other people.
- The right to accurate information about relationships.
- An awareness of the way another person feels.
- The value of a stable loving relationship.
- Mutual support and co-operation.
- Honesty and openness.
- Self-respect.

2. Statutory requirements

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 Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all students receiving secondary education. The regulations also make Health Education compulsory in Academies.

This policy was developed in response to:

- [Statutory guidance on RSE and health education](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education: for schools and colleges](#)
- [Behaviour and discipline in schools: guidance for headteachers and staff](#)
- [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#)
- [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#)
- [Alternative provision](#)
- [Mental health and behaviour in schools](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying](#)

- [Cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)
- [Advice for parents and carers on cyber bullying](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) *Please note that this guidance was officially withdrawn on 1 September 2022 and its content is now incorporated into the statutory Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.
- [Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools](#)
- [National Citizen Service: guidance for schools and colleges](#)

As a secondary SEN free 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 The Courtyard we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

Further information can be found on our website policies section under 'Funding Agreement' and 'Articles of Association'.

3. Curriculum

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

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, 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 they are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

4. Delivery of RSE

At The Courtyard, we understand that our students may have additional vulnerabilities, placing them at a greater risk of exploitation. In response to this, we are committed to delivering a high-quality, inclusive Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme that supports our students in navigating adolescence safely and responsibly.

We were proud to become an Early Adopter school, embedding the new statutory Health, Relationships, and RSE guidance into our PSHE education curriculum ahead of the national roll-out in September 2020.

Our RSE curriculum is designed to:

- Generate meaningful discussion around health and wellbeing, relationships, and life in the wider world
- Support students' personal, social, moral, and spiritual development
- Equip students with the knowledge, values, and skills they need to make informed, respectful, and safe choices

RSE is an identifiable part of our PSHE curriculum and is delivered through:

- Three focused RSE days per academic year, covering core topics such as anatomy, reproduction, LGBTQ+ identities, consent, healthy relationships, sharing images/pornography, STIs, and contraception
- Specialist workshops from external providers, Brook and Let Me Know (LMK)

In addition to the three RSE days, key RSE and PSHE themes are further reinforced through regular Personal and Social Development (PSD) lessons and Independence lessons. These ongoing sessions provide students with further opportunities to revisit and deepen their understanding of essential topics in a more contextual and applied way.

To support effective delivery and engagement, we have implemented the following improvements:

- Shorter RSE days to increase focus and participation
- Baseline assessments two weeks before Day 1 to enable appropriate group differentiation
- Curriculum re-sequencing to improve topic flow and understanding
- Reintroduction of essential topics (Anatomy, Reproduction, LGBTQ+) to ensure inclusivity and breadth

Measuring Impact

We use a triangulated approach to monitor student progress, combining:

- Quantitative data (quizzes and knowledge checks)
- Qualitative self-assessment (student reflection and confidence rating)
- Qualitative teacher judgment (observations of student engagement and understanding)

Each assessment cycle focuses on three key themes, allowing us to clearly identify gaps and take targeted action. Students are grouped according to baseline results and are moved flexibly between groups after each assessment to ensure differentiated support and maximise progress.

Inclusive and Sensitive Delivery

At The Courtyard, RSE is delivered in the context of family life, with care taken not to stigmatise students based on their home circumstances. We ensure our teaching reflects the

diversity of family structures, including single-parent families, LGBTQ+ families, families headed by grandparents, adoptive or foster families, and families involving looked-after children or young carers.

We are also mindful that some content may be emotionally or sensory-challenging for our students. As such, we approach these topics with sensitivity and flexibility, ensuring all students are supported appropriately.

RSE is about far more than factual knowledge. It aims to empower students with the confidence, empathy, and understanding they need to build healthy relationships and protect their wellbeing, both now and in their future lives.

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

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The governing board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

5.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE.

5.3 Staff

Experienced and trained staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive 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 components of RSE.

5.4 Students

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

How and to whom will the policy be shared and consulted amongst in the Whole School:

Dissemination and consultation/review of policy includes:

- Consultation with wider school community, e.g., NHS nurse allocated to the Courtyard.
- Review of RSE curriculum content with staff and students.
- Student focus groups or school council.
- Consultation with school governors.
- Consultation with parents/carers.

The policy will be available to parents through direct request and available on the website.

Parents and carers have an especially important role to play in supporting PSHE/RSE education.

The Courtyard is confident that the school's programme complements RSE across the school. To enable this, an information session for parents is offered to discuss the RSE programme.

Parents/carers are informed by letter of their right to withdraw their child from RSE lessons and given an overview of the topics the child will be covering. Parents/carers are also reminded that they can have a copy of the school's RSE Policy on request and that they can view any teaching resources being used in the delivery of RSE.

6. Parents' right to withdraw

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 student wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 2 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

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.

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

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there are different types of committed, stable relationships. • How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children. • What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony. • Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into. • The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships. • The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting. <p>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.</p>
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship. • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. • How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs. • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help. • That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control. • What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable. • The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online. • About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online. • Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them. • What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online. • The impact of viewing harmful content. • That specifically sexually explicit material, e.g., pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners. • That sharing and viewing indecent images of children, including those created by children, is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail. • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships. • How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).

TOPIC	PUPILS 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 pupil		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	<i>Include notes from discussions with parents and agreed actions taken. e.g., Joe Bloggs will be taking part in all relationships lessons and during the sex education lessons, he will be working independently on a project in the Year 5 classroom.</i>