



Olive Academies

Olive Academies Trust

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Document control table	
Title	Relationships and Sex Education
Date approved	June 2026
Approved by	OA MAT board (EPS committee)
Date of next review	June 2027
Updates/revisions included as agreed:	This Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy has been reviewed against the Department for Education statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, as in effect from September 2026, and has been reviewed for compliance. The policy meets the requirements of: • The Children and Social Work Act 2017, which makes Relationships Education (primary) and Relationships, Sex and Health Education (secondary) statutory; • The Education Act 1996 (sections 403–407); • The Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty; • The Human Rights Act 1998; and • Relevant safeguarding legislation and guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education. The policy: • Sets out a clear statutory entitlement to Relationships Education, RSE (secondary) and Health Education for all pupils;

- Clearly distinguishes between **statutory content** and any **non-statutory sex education**, including lawful parental rights to withdraw;
- Confirms that **no pupil may be withdrawn from Relationships Education or Health Education**, in line with statutory requirements;
- Describes a transparent and lawful process for managing withdrawal requests, including **consideration of pupil voice** and **decisions being made in the best interests of the child**;
- Ensures RSHE is **inclusive, age appropriate and accessible**, and that it reflects the **protected characteristics** set out in the Equality Act 2010;
- Addresses **safeguarding explicitly**, recognising that RSHE may prompt disclosures and setting out clear responsibilities for staff;
- Includes robust expectations for **staff conduct**, professionalism and impartiality when teaching statutory content;
- Sets clear safeguards for the use of **external agencies and visitors**, including prior checks, supervision, and political impartiality;
- Aligns with the school's wider safeguarding, behaviour, SEND and equality policies.

This policy has been written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and the Trust Board.

Academies to note:

This is an OA policy and should not be amended at local academy level. Should you consider there needs to be a change contact the RSHE leader in the first instance:

Academy	Academy Leader responsible for RSHE	Central Team Leader
OA-Cam	Bronson Forshaw, Deputy Headteacher and SENDCO	Rebecca Mead
OA-HV	Joshua Law, Deputy Headteacher	Rebecca Mead
OA-NV	Tom Boiling, Assistant Headteacher	Rebecca Mead
OA-Sf	Kelly Emms, Head of Academy	Rebecca Mead
OA-Th	Emma Carlisle, Deputy Headteacher	Rebecca Mead
OA-TW	Marey Carew, Assistant Headteacher, Personal Development/ PSHE	Rebecca Mead

Parents and carers may visit the [FAQ page](#) on the government website regarding compulsory relationships education and RSHE.

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1. Aims

The aims of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) 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

We are committed to meeting the needs of our pupils in line with our values and beliefs:

- Conviction – everyone has the capacity to reach their potential;
- Determination – not giving up on those who have not yet experienced consistent success;
- Ambition – all challenges can be overcome with the right support both in education and in life;
- Reflection – learning from experiences and developing a capacity to improve further.

This policy is intrinsically linked to policies on:

- Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Social, emotional, mental health and wellbeing policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- ICT and online safety policy
- Careers policy

Within all these policies there is an emphasis on the creation of a robust contextual safeguarding culture where pupils feel confident reporting concerns and knowing they will be listened to. RSHE covers topics which are likely to raise sensitive issues and feelings amongst pupils – at OA we recognise that it is vital that all staff are trained and skilled in listening to pupils and that there are clear reporting systems in place that are promoted and understood by all.

RSHE forms part of the Trust's preventative safeguarding curriculum and supports the identification and prevention of harmful sexual behaviour, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence.

2. Statutory requirements

As a multi-academy trust which provides primary and secondary education to children and young people, we must provide relationships education to all pupils as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

For primary education, 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 which would include the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum.

For secondary education, we must provide RSHE to all pupils as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

In teaching RSHE, 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](#).

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 OA we teach RSHE in our academies as set out by this policy.

3. Policy development

Guidance from the government is that schools must consult with parents and carers when developing and reviewing policies for RSHE and that it is good practice to consult with staff and pupils too. We are doing this in the following ways:

- Development of the policy across Olive academies – ensuring that all relevant information including national and local guidance is incorporated
- Staff consultation – ensuring all school staff are given an opportunity to review this policy and make recommendations
- Parent and carers consultation – parents and any interested parties are invited to comment on this policy
- Pupil consultation – staff will discuss with pupils what they would value from an RSHE curriculum.

Publication of this policy including the curriculum map on our website and letting parents and carers know that they can view the policy and raise any questions or concerns about the curriculum content on an ongoing basis

Sharing this policy with trustees for approval and Academy Advisory Board members for ratification

We will engage with staff, students, parents and carers and listen to their feedback. This feedback and our experience of having delivered the curriculum will help shape an updated policy for the coming year.

4. Definition

For the purpose of this policy:

- 'RSHE' is used to refer to the overall programme of relationships, sex and health education.
- 'RSE' refers to relationships and sex education and is defined as teaching pupils about developing healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, and helping them to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.

- ‘Health education’ is defined as teaching pupils about how they can make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, and how physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked.

The RSHE curriculum has been developed, and will be monitored and reviewed, in consultation with teachers, pupils and parents, and in accordance with DfE recommendations.

The academy or school will gather the views of teachers, pupils and parents in the following ways:

- Questionnaires
- Meetings
- Letters
- Training sessions

5. Curriculum

Our RSHE curriculum is set out on the website, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and don’t seek answers online.

We will share any curriculum resources and materials with parents and carers on request.

6. Delivery of RSHE

RSHE 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 the wider curriculum.

The trust will make sure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of manageable size
- The required content is communicated to pupils clearly, in a carefully sequenced way and within a planned scheme of work
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge, so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations

Across our primary phase, 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, kind relationships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe

Teaching will support pupils to understand ethical behaviour in relationships, including honesty, accountability, empathy, responsibility, respect for others and the impact of decisions on those around them.

The [guidance](#) recommends that primary schools teach sex education in years 5 and/or 6, in line with content about conception and birth in the science curriculum, but it is not compulsory. It is up to you or your schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of pupils.

Primary sex education will focus on:

- Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings
- How a baby is conceived and born

Where age-appropriate and where there is evidence that pupils may have encountered such content, teaching may include discussion of naked images, online sexual content and pornography in a safeguarding context.

Throughout each year group we will use material to assist learning, such as:

- Diagrams
- Videos
- Books
- Games
- Discussions and practical activities

Teachers will make sure that all pupils' views are listened to and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively, honestly and appropriately for the ages of the pupils.

The programme will be designed to focus on boys as much as girls, and activities will be planned to make sure both are actively involved.

The trust will make sure that all teaching and materials are appropriate for the ages and needs of the pupils including any additional needs, such as special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). All resources and materials will be assessed by the PSHE lead prior to delivery.

At all points of delivery of the curriculum, the academy will consult parents and carers, and their views will be valued. What will be taught and how will be planned in conjunction with parents and carers.

Pupils' knowledge, understanding and progress are assessed informally and sensitively through a range of normal classroom activities, including questioning, discussion, observation and reflective tasks. Teachers use these activities to gauge pupils' understanding, address misconceptions and adapt teaching as needed. Assessment focuses on pupils' engagement, ability to apply learning, and developing confidence to communicate appropriately, rather than on written outcomes or grades. This approach supports a safe and inclusive learning environment and recognises the personal nature of RSE and Health Education.

For more information about our RSHE curriculum, see the curriculum maps on the website.

RSHE for Secondary aged pupils focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships, including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships

- Online safety and awareness - Pupils will develop an understanding of emerging technologies, including generative artificial intelligence, and associated risks such as manipulation, exploitation, misinformation, deepfakes and image-based abuse.
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

RSHE complements several other curriculum subjects. Where appropriate, the academy will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching. The RSHE curriculum will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff.

Teachers will make sure that pupils understand the importance of equality and respect and learn about the law relating to the protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, by the end of their secondary education. The curriculum is designed to be inclusive, and activities will be planned to make sure all are actively involved.

Throughout each year group we will use appropriate materials to assist learning, such as:

- Diagrams
- Videos
- Books
- Games
- Discussions and practical activities

Teachers will make sure that all pupils' views are listened to and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively, honestly and appropriately for the ages of the pupils.

The programme will be designed to focus on boys as much as girls, and activities will be planned to make sure both are actively involved.

Pupils will be taught about the links between sexism, misogyny, harmful gender stereotypes and violence against women and girls, and how respectful relationships contribute to preventing abuse and exploitation.

Pupils will explore the characteristics of positive male role models and positive masculinity, including respect, empathy, responsibility and healthy attitudes towards relationships.

Pupils will learn how online communities, influencers and sub-cultures, including incel ideology, may influence attitudes towards relationships, sexual ethics, women and girls.

The academy will make sure that all teaching and materials are appropriate for the ages and needs of the pupils including any additional needs, such as special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Assessment

Pupils' knowledge, understanding and progress are assessed informally and sensitively through a range of normal classroom activities, including questioning, discussion, observation and reflective tasks. Teachers use these activities to gauge pupils' understanding, address misconceptions and adapt teaching as needed. Assessment focuses on pupils' engagement, ability to apply learning, and

developing confidence to communicate appropriately, rather than on written outcomes or grades. This approach supports a safe and inclusive learning environment and recognises the personal nature of RSE and Health Education.

During the half termly parental consultation meeting parents will be informed of what will be taught, and their views will be valued.

It is important for secondary pupils to know what the law says about certain topics covered in RSE, particularly in relation to the law and young people. This will help pupils identify what is right and wrong and can provide a foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion. These topics include, but are not limited to:

- Marriage, including forced marriage and civil partnerships
- Consent, healthy communication and the impact of power imbalances and coercive behaviours within relationships.
- Domestic abuse, stalking, rape, sexual offences, female genital mutilation (FGM), 'virginity testing' and hymenoplasty
- Sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation, including public sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour, and online behaviours
- Online behaviours including image and information sharing (including sexual imagery, youth-produced sexual imagery and including AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes). Pupils should understand the law about online sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, including grooming and sextortion
- Pornography including online communities, influencers and sub-cultures, including incel ideology, may influence attitudes towards relationships, sexual ethics, women and girls.
- Abortion
- The protected characteristics
- The age of criminal responsibility

For more information about our RSHE curriculum, see the curriculum map on the website.

We may amend our curriculum content to respond to the needs and context of our pupils, to discuss issues affecting them in an age-appropriate manner. We will inform parents and carers of any deviation from our curriculum in advance and share any relevant materials on request.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (i.e. families can include single-parent families, same-sex parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers among other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children, young carers or kinship carers).

Across our academy, we will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property or hate crime.

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 RSHE guidance
- Supporting pupils to apply their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Age-appropriate, given the age and maturity of the pupils
- Evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Able to fit into our curriculum plan
- From credible sources
- Compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

7. Use of external organisations and materials

Our academy will make sure that any agency and any materials used are accurate, appropriate and unbiased and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

Our academy will:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSHE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use are:
 - Age-appropriate
 - 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](#)
- Be clear on:
 - What they are going to say
 - Their position on the issues to be discussed

- Our academies will not, 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
 - Work with agencies who do not allow their material to be shared with parents and carers

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 Trustees

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for ensuring that Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is provided in accordance with statutory requirements and the Trust's values.

Trustees are responsible for:

- Approving the Trust RSHE policy and ensuring it complies with statutory RSHE guidance.
- Ensuring RSHE is appropriately resourced and reflects the needs of pupils in Alternative Provision.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of RSHE provision as part of the Trust's wider oversight of curriculum, safeguarding and pupil wellbeing.
- Ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for parental engagement and withdrawal rights, where applicable.

8.2 Executive Headteachers

Executive Headteachers are responsible for the strategic oversight and consistent implementation of RSHE across their academies.

They will:

- Ensure RSHE is delivered in line with statutory guidance, Trust policy and safeguarding expectations.
- Monitor the quality and impact of RSHE provision across academies and report to the Executive Leaders.
- Ensure RSHE contributes effectively to pupils' personal development, wellbeing and readiness for adult life.

8.3 Academy Advisory Boards

Academy Advisory Boards support and challenge academy leaders in relation to RSHE at local level.

They will:

- Monitor how RSHE is implemented within the academy, including its impact on pupil wellbeing and behaviour.
- Ensure RSHE delivery reflects the needs of the local cohort and Alternative Provision context.
- Support engagement with parents and carers regarding RSHE, including consultation and communication.

- Escalate any concerns regarding RSHE provision or safeguarding to the executive headteacher as appropriate.

8.4 Head of Academy

The Head of Academy is responsible for the operational delivery of RSHE within the academy. They will:

- Ensure RSHE is taught by appropriately trained staff in a safe, inclusive and sensitive manner.
- Implement the RSHE curriculum in line with Trust policy and statutory guidance.
- Ensure RSHE is underpinned by strong safeguarding practice and clear reporting procedures.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of RSHE teaching and learning.
- Respond appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE
- Engage with pupils, parents and carers regarding RSHE provision and respond appropriately to feedback or concerns.

8.5 Staff

Teachers and Tutors are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a way that is sensitive, high-quality and appropriate for each year group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Modelling positive behaviour and avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and being conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the academy's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) [insert DSL name here]
- Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSHE are encouraged to discuss this with the Head of Academy.
- Staff will teach the full statutory RSHE curriculum **in a professional, objective and impartial manner**, and will not promote personal beliefs or opinions that undermine the statutory content or the school's legal duties.
- Recognising that misogynistic attitudes and behaviours may form part of a continuum of harmful sexual behaviour and will be identified, challenged and addressed through safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

8.6 Pupils

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

9. Parents' right to withdraw

Across our primary phase, parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from the sex education components within RSE, which are covered in years five and six.

Sex education is defined as lessons covering sexual intercourse, conception, the stages of pregnancy and birth. It includes the emotional impact of having a baby as well as the physical facts. Sex education does **not** include learning about different types of sexual activity.

Although not compulsory, the statutory guidance recommends that Primary schools do teach Sex Education in years 5 and/or 6 (guidance para 30).

Olive Academies is delivering Sex Education as we believe it is part of high-quality relationships education for children.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 of this policy and addressed to the Head of Academy.

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

Across our secondary phase, parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from the sex education components within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the pupil turns 16. After this point, if the pupil wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this. Before this point, the school will also actively seek and consider the views of the pupil as part of discussions with parents/carers, recognising the pupil's evolving capacity and right to be heard.

Sex Education is defined as:

- Sexual intercourse
- Sexual behaviour (this would include lessons on Sexually Transmitted Infections)

The following topics do not form part of sex education:

- Sexting and sextortion
- Pornography relating to receiving unwanted images and online safety
- Protecting the health of reproductive organs
- FGM
- Consent outside of lessons explicitly about sexual behaviour

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 of this policy and addressed to the Head of Academy

A copy of any withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Head of Academy will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action.

In exceptional circumstances, for example because of a safeguarding concern or a pupil's specific vulnerability, the Head of Academy can refuse a request to withdraw the pupil from sex education.

In all cases, decisions regarding withdrawal will be made in the best interests of the child. This will include careful consideration of the pupil's safeguarding, wellbeing, developmental needs and individual circumstances, alongside the views of the pupil and their parents or carers.

Where a withdrawal request is received, the Head of Academy will:

- Ensure parents are fully informed about the RSHE curriculum and statutory requirements.
- Meet with parents, where appropriate, to discuss the request, clarify which elements are subject to withdrawal and seek to address concerns.
- Consider the best interests, safeguarding and well-being of the pupil at all times.
- Make a record of the request, discussions held and the agreed outcome.
- Put appropriate supervised alternative provision in place for any pupil who is withdrawn, where required.
- Where safeguarding concerns arise, the school's safeguarding duties will take precedence over parental withdrawal requests.

Withdrawal from statutory Health Education or Relationships Education is not permitted.

10. Trust Oversight and Reporting

All withdrawal requests and outcomes will be reported by the Executive Headteacher to the Director of Education in line with trust procedures. This ensures consistent application of the policy across the trust and appropriate support for schools.

The trust maintains a trust-wide process for managing withdrawal requests, including central oversight of requests, guidance for schools and escalation routes where requests are complex, contested or raise safeguarding concerns.

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

11. Training

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

The Head of Academy will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

12. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by the PSHE Lead through activities such as:

- Work scrutinies
- Learning walks
- Lesson observations
- Staff and Pupil Voice

Pupils' development in RSHE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the RSHE Lead, the Trust Data and Curriculum Lead and the Safeguarding Lead.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Board through the EPS Committee

Appendix 1 – Right to Withdraw

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 Academy to consider:			
Parent/Carer signature			

To be completed by the academy	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	
Signed by OA staff member/date	