



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

Relationships and Sex Education & Health Education Policy

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1. Background

This policy covers the Greenwood Academies Trust's (GAT) approach to how we expect our academies to support children's development and understanding around relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). It is developed in line with the expectations of the DfE Statutory Guidance for RSHE (updated and republished in July 2025, for implementation September 2026 [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#)).

GAT requires each academy to have an academy level policy for RSHE in place. The policy at each academy should

- set out the subject content, how and when it will be taught and assessed, and who is responsible for teaching it, including any external providers the school will use.
- differentiate between relationships and sex education (where sex education is taught), so that parents have clear information. Relationships education doesn't involve explaining the detail of different forms of sexual activity but can cover sensitive topics such as sexual violence in order to keep children safe.
- include information about a parent's right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education.
- explain how content will be made accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).
- describe how the subject is monitored and evaluated.
- set out how parents can view curriculum materials.
- explain how teachers will answer questions about topics in sex education that the school does not cover (in primary) or that relates to sex education from which the child has been withdrawn.
- explain how the policy has been produced, who approves the policy, and how and when it will be reviewed and consulted on.

2. Aims of RSHE

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education & Health Education (RSHE) are to

- provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- prepare pupils for puberty and given 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
- support the development of a nurturing and caring community

3. Statutory Requirements and Legislation

Documents that inform the Trust's RSHE policy include

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory safeguarding guidance

4. Definitions

RSHE teaches children and young people how to be safe and healthy. It teaches them how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. RSE involves a combination of sharing information, exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity or lifestyles.

Definitions of each aspect are:

- **Relationships Education:** the focus is on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. 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).
- **Health Education:** the focus is on teaching the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. Teachers should be clear that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.
- **Sex Education:** the focus is on teaching children the facts about puberty (preparing pupils for the changes that adolescence brings) and reproduction (how a baby is conceived and born).

Sex Education is not compulsory in primary schools, although DfE recommends that primaries teach sex education in years 5 and /or 6 in line with science national curriculum content.

Parents have the right to withdraw a pupil from identified sex education lessons up to three months before the 16th birthday of the pupil when the child can choose to opt in.

5. The RSHE Curriculum

The curriculum for RSHE, and how it will be delivered and assessed, is set out by each academy in their policy. GAT expects academies to deliver a curriculum that is aligned to DfE expectations ([Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#)) and may consider any locally agreed RE Syllabus.

The curriculum at each of our academies will consider the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of the academy policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner, so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online inappropriately. The curriculum will be taught in a manner that considers the diversity of pupils in the academy and is sensitive to all pupils' experiences.

Academy policies will also describe how they ensure that all materials used are accurate, age and stage appropriate and unbiased and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

In addition, academies will make appropriate checks with any external agencies used to deliver the RSHE curriculum to make sure their input and any materials used are also aligned to academy policy.

RSHE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSHE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in the Religious Education curriculum and the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural curriculum.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust

The Trust Board approves the trust RSHE policy.

The Trust will monitor the quality and effectiveness of the RSHE policy and curriculum in each academy.

The Academy

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the RSHE policy is up to date, regularly reviewed and consulted on, and available on the academy website.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented and RSHE is taught and assessed consistently across the academy. They are responsible for ensuring teachers are appropriately trained to deliver effectively. They are also responsible for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-science components of Sex Education.

There may be a nominated person for RSHE who has delegated responsibility for the development of the curriculum, training and / or the monitoring of its implementation across the academy.

Academy staff are responsible for

- delivering RSHE in a sensitive way
- modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- monitoring progress
- responding to the needs of individual pupils
- responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the specific and identified non-statutory/non-science components of Sex Education.

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 Principal.

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

7. Safeguarding

Academies must consider how safeguarding and confidentiality protocols support safe and effective RSHE practice.

- Teachers should be aware of the academy confidentiality policy.
- Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue.
- Teachers will consult with the designated safeguarding lead who will follow academy policy for safeguarding.
- Visitors/external agencies which support the delivery of RSHE will be required to adhere to academy safeguarding policies, confidentiality and the RSHE policy.

8. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from a/specific lesson(s) from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSHE.

Requests for withdrawal **from the specific sex education lesson(s) and on the specific date(s)** that can be identified from the curriculum plans shared with parents,

should be put in writing (using the template that can be found at **Appendix 1**) and addressed to the Principal.

The trust would expect the Principal to honour appropriate specific requests for withdrawal, and not permit blanket withdrawal, and in turn meet with parents to discuss these in line with the DfE guidance. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from specific sex education lessons.

Each academy is encouraged to be clear in their curriculum mapping which aspects of learning are 'Relationships Education', 'Sex Education' and 'Health Education' to support parents in decisions over withdrawal.

Appendix 1: Template for Parents to Request Withdrawal

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS

<INSERT ACADEMY NAME>

Withdrawal from Sex Education

Name of Child:

Class:

Name of Parent:

Reason for withdrawing from sex education:

Using the published curriculum plans from the academy website, please identify the specific lesson and date you wish to withdraw your child from:

Any other information you would like the academy to consider:

Parent signature:

Date:

Appendix 2: DfE Statutory Guidance

Parents' right to request withdrawal from sex education

- Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.
- Before granting any request for withdrawal of a child from sex education, it is good practice for the head teacher to discuss the request with parents, and the child if appropriate, to understand the request and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. This is likely to include discussing the benefits of sex education, and any detrimental effects of withdrawal, including social and emotional impacts on the child, and the likelihood that the child will hear their peers' version of what was said in class, which may not be accurate. Schools will want to document this process to ensure a record is kept.
- Where primary schools provide sex education, head teachers must automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from it, other than content that is taught as part of the science curriculum. In secondary, head teachers can refuse a request in exceptional circumstances, for example because of safeguarding concerns or a pupil's specific vulnerability.
- From three terms before the pupil turns 16, a pupil can choose to opt back into sex education even if their parent has requested withdrawal. For example, if a pupil turns 16 during the autumn term, the pupil can opt back into sex education at any time after the start of the previous autumn term. Schools should ensure that pupils know they have this option.
- If a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- **Parents do not have the right to withdraw their pupils from relationships and health education, nor can they be withdrawn from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction.**
- Everyone has relationships with others, and most pupils will develop sexual relationships at some point in their lives. Relationships education should equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to act with kindness and respect in all their relationships as they grow into adulthood, to enjoy their relationships, and to keep themselves and others safe.
- Relationships education will focus on how to form and sustain positive relationships but will also help children identify risks and harms. Relationships education may therefore include topics related to preventing sexual abuse, for example, or avoiding sharing inappropriate material online. This can be done without describing the detail of any sexual activity involved. Similarly, good safeguarding practice requires young people to understand the correct terms for different parts of the body and to be able to confidently use these terms. This can be provided as part of health education in primary, without describing any detail of sexual activity.