

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

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1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school 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, and cultivate positive characteristics such as kindness and integrity, rooted in the Co-op Ways of Being
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

2. Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy, we must provide RSE to all pupils under section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#).

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](#), which is applicable to mainstream and special schools.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 404 to 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (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 Co-op Academy Manchester, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

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

1. Review – a central trust working group reviewed all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Approval – the template policy was approved by the trustees
3. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
4. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents/carers and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
5. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE

4. Definition

For the purpose of this policy:

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.

5. Curriculum

Our RSE curriculum is set out as per Appendices 1 and 2, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents and carers, pupils and staff, and taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs (such as cultural and religious 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 all curriculum materials with parents and carers on request.

Aspects of the curriculum underpinned by law:

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, including the age of consent
- 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
- 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
- Abortion
- The protected characteristics
- The age of criminal responsibility

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

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 published policy 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 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 school, 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.

6. 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). PSHE is taught as a timetabled lesson at KS3 and within tutor time at KS4 level. Resources follow the same GREAT lesson model and delivered with the same expectations as all other subject areas. There is regular communication between the PSHE lead, safeguarding leads and the Special Educational Needs department to ensure the needs of all our students are met.

A Producedural Knowledge rubric is used to guide teachers in tracking student progress and understanding and re-teaching where necessary.

Students will begin to receive sex education in the summer term of year 9 within the *Autonomy and Advocacy* and *Choices and Influences* units, starting with choices around contraception and accessing support. This is then developed through KS4 where students will explore their rights, choices and health.

The school 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; key content is repeated to deepen understanding and support pupils to remember important knowledge
- 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. Knowledge expert sheets, knowledge expert quizzes and mastery tasks are used to support and showcase student understanding.

RSE 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
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

RSE complements several other curriculum subjects. Where appropriate, the school will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching. The RSE 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 focus on pupils of all gender identities and expressions, and activities will be planned to make sure all are actively involved.

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

- Diagrams
- The Talk (a specialist PSHE video platform)
- Texts
- Discussions and case study or scenario application

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 age of the pupils.

The school 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).

The PSHE lead uses the guidance of the PSHE association to evaluate and quality assure the curriculum delivered and materials used.

In line with academy practice, regular drop ins quality assure the delivery of PSHE and RSE. Our assessment structure and the use of student and staff voice allow the quality assurance of curriculum delivery and impact.

6.1 Inclusivity

We 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

We 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

6.2 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 pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age and maturity of the 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

We will make sure that when we consult parents/carers we provide examples of the resources that the school plans to use.

7. Use of external organisations and materials

The use of the Government's Oak Academy Platform alongside our academy subscriptions to The Talk and the PSHE Association complement our curriculum.

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

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 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 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
 - Inform all external organisations that the school is legally obliged to share all content with parents and carers
 - Make available all external materials with parents and carers
- 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
 - Work with agencies who don't allow their material to be shared with parents and carers

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The Trust Board

The Trust Board will approve the RSE policy, and will delegate the responsibility of holding the headteacher to account for its implementation to the relevant Regional Director and CEO.

8.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for making sure that RSE is taught consistently across the school, for making all resources and materials available to parents and carers, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE (see section 9).

8.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a way that is sensitive, high-quality and appropriate for each year group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress by checking on and assessing pupils' understanding of the intended curriculum
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE
- 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 school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) Judith Baldwin.

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.

Cora Brightwell (Head of PSHE / RE)

Angela O'Connor (AVP Personal Development)

Primarily, PSHE is taught by members of the Humanities Department who have regular departmental meetings to allow opportunities to support them in delivery of RSE.

Where staff outside of this faculty are requested to teach PSHE, time is reserved to meet with the PSHE lead to ensure staff are confident in the curriculum content and delivering this in a safe space.

8.4 Pupils

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

9. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from the non-statutory components of sex education 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.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

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

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

Before making a decision, the headteacher will:

- Meet with the parent/carer to discuss the request and explain the reasons for considering refusal.
- Consider the pupil's age, maturity, understanding and individual circumstances.
- Seek advice from relevant staff, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), SENDCo, pastoral staff or external professionals where appropriate.
- Consider any safeguarding concerns, risks of harm, or identified vulnerabilities that may affect the pupil's wellbeing.
- Consider any contextual factors, risk assessments or professional advice.
- Consider whether withdrawal could increase the pupil's vulnerability to harm, exploitation, abuse or unhealthy relationships.
- Keep a written record of the decision-making process and the reasons for the final decision.
- Communicate the decision to the parent/carer in writing and explain how the decision was reached.

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

10. Training

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

The headteacher 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.

Our academy subscribes to The Talk, a specialist PSHE platform which provides specific professional development videos in the delivery of key topics, dealing with sensitive content and ensuring a safe learning environment. The PSHE Association also provides the PSHE lead and the staff who deliver content with detailed staff handbooks and guidance around RSE topics.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Cora Brightwell (Head of PSHE and RE) and Angela O'Connor (AVP Personal Development) through:

- Central control of lesson resources including handouts and slides.
- Learning walks
- Drop ins
- Student Voice

Drop ins are conducted routinely following the academy's process and are recorded on Steplab. This allows the quality assurance of lesson deliveries. PSHE and RSE materials are based on the GREAT lesson model and Teach Like a Champion strategies and so whole academy professional development can be applied to PSHE and RSE.

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems with mastery tasks completed each half term.

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust central team on an annual basis, or when relevant guidance changes. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Board.



Academies Trust

Appendix 1: Curriculum map

Relationships, sex and health education curriculum map

Long term plan

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 7	Independence and Aspirations - focus around self awareness and growing up.	Autonomy and Advocacy- focus around British values and recognising abuse or discrimination	Choices and influences - healthy lifestyle choices	Independence and Aspirations - focusing on decisions around money and types of work	Autonomy and Advocacy - focusing on positive relationships and keeping safe from forced marriage and genital mutilation	Choices and influences- focusing on online relationships and keeping safe over summer
Year 8	Independence and Aspirations - focusing on online reputation and self regulation	Autonomy and Advocacy - focusing on anti-bullying and creating inclusive societies	Choices and influences - focusing on media influences, extreme viewpoints and misogyny	Independence and Aspirations - focusing on looking after money, debt and gambling	Autonomy and Advocacy - focusing on types of relationships and consent	Choices and influences - online relationships, harmful sexual behaviours and supporting others through tough times.

Year 9	Independence and Aspirations - focusing on resilience and neurodiversity	Autonomy and Advocacy - focusing on gender based violence and consent in relationships	Choices and influences - alcohol, peer pressure and being responsible for health	Independence and Aspirations - world of work and earning money	Autonomy and Advocacy - focus on gangs, weapons and criminal justice	Choices and influences - contraception and the harms of pornography
Year 10	Independence and Aspirations - focus on making and looking after money, including online	Autonomy and Advocacy - focus on gambling, coping strategies and men's mental health	Choices and influences - focus on body image, enhancement and self esteem	Independence and Aspirations - focus on online reputation, scams and sharing information	Autonomy and Advocacy - focus on mob mentality and knife crime	Choices and influences - focus on exam stress, influence of the media and the importance of sleep
Year 11	Independence and Aspirations - focus on pregnancy, fertility, health and choices	Autonomy and Advocacy - focus on law around harmful sexual behaviours, healthy intimate relationships and how alcohol can influence our actions	In the lead up to exams, sessions will be responsive to the needs of students and be focused around healthy choices, sleep, dealing with stress and so on.			

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

Relationships and sex education: content to be covered by the end of secondary

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	● That there are different types of committed, stable relationships. This will include reference to: same-sex, single parent, grandparent, kinship, young carers, adoptive and foster families. ● How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their role in bringing up children. ● Why marriage (including arranged marriage) or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections (e.g. to property and pension) that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony. However, approx 40% of marriages end in divorce. ● That ‘common-law marriage’ is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children. ● That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal. This includes where a UK resident travels to another country to be married. ● How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships. ● The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child’s life for brain development. Reference Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. ● How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust. This should include reference to physical, sexual (intrafamilial) and emotional abuse, stalking and harassment, and coercion and control, including financial. <u>Age of Marriage Act 2023</u>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships, including friendships	● The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries and compromise, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. ● How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (with reference to Protected Characteristics), and that everyone is unique and equal. ● The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others. ● What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs. That tolerance is a minimum requirement of British Values, and that embracing and celebrating diversity is inline with Co-op Values. ● The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict. ● The different types of bullying (including racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist and online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help. ● Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration. ● The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok. And that consent on one occasion does not mean consent forever. Understanding the key principles of consent: Freely given, Reversible, Informed, Specific, Clear and with capacity to make decisions ● How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	● How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others. This should include reference to coercion and control. Tracking a person's location (with consent) can be helpful and a safety measure, but could also be a strategy to control. ● How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others. ● Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called "involuntary celibates" (incels) or online influencers.
Online safety and awareness	● Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online. Abuse, trolling and derogatory language are never acceptable. ● Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues. This should include reference to grooming and radicalisation. ● The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online. That there are social media trends which encourage self-harm, suicide, gang affiliation, serious youth violence and other 'challenges' which may be detrimental to physical and/or mental health. ● Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images. That every person has a digital footprint, which retains all online activity (inc viewing, comments and sharing) which may be reviewed by prospective employers and in criminal investigations.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	● That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images , or threatening to share images, of people over 18 without consent is a crime. If a person has been groomed into sharing an indecent image of themselves the blame will sit with the abuser. ● What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online. That platforms and games designed for and aimed at children also pose a risk, as these are used by adult perpetrators, including those looking to groom and/or exploit children. ● About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them. This should include the dangers and consequences of fake news. ● That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal (including physical, sexual and emotional abuse), including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong. This can have a negative impact on self-esteem, body image for both sexes and relationships. ● That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice. ● How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns. This should include specific reference to location tracking. ● That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it. ● How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	● That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising). ● That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion. ● That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk. ● Social media platforms and online games have been designed to be addictive, to keep people on them for longer periods. ‘Rewards’, such as likes or in-game progression/prizes, trigger the release of dopamine in the brain, which makes a person want more of that stimulus. The longer a person stays on a platform/game, the more adverts they are exposed to and the more money the platform owner makes. Screen time has negative effects including: less time outdoors or being active; less sleep; increased anxiety and depression.
Being safe	● How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent. ● That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others. ● How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed. Pupils should develop an understanding of: coercion, control, grooming, radicalisation and exploitation (sexual and criminal). ● How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn’t feel right, and should understand that in some

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions. Pupils should also be aware that their behaviour or presence could be intimidating to others. This should include reference to spiking of drinks. ● What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it. ● That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting. ● The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault. ● The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language. ● The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour. ● That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed. This should include reference to stalking. ● The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation. ● The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage. ● The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible. ● That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death. ● That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful. ● How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	others, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault. <i>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognised children who see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse, and are related to either the victim of the abusive behaviour, or the perpetrator, as victims of domestic abuse in their own right (part 1 section 3). The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory guidance is designed to support statutory and non-statutory bodies working with victims of domestic abuse, including children.</i>
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	● That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive. ● The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex. ● Sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent. That the presence of special needs, and the influence of drugs and/or alcohol can impair a person's capacity for consent. This should include reference to spiking. Key principles for consent: Freely given, Reversible, Informed, Specific, Clear and with capacity to make decisions ● 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. ● That some sexual behaviours can be harmful. ● The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision making. ● That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and 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, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma ● The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	• How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour. • How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms. • How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Secondary health and wellbeing: content to be covered by the end of secondary

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
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Mental wellbeing	● How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary. That the only thing you can actually control is the space inside yourself. ● The benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness. ● That happiness is often linked to being connected to others. Pupils should be supported to understand what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel unhappy, while recognising that loneliness can be for most people an inevitable part of life at times and is not something to be ashamed of. ● That worrying and feeling down are normal, can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal. That challenging events occur in life and developing resilience helps us to keep going. That emotions can be linked to physiological factors including hormone production/balance, and other chemicals such as drug withdrawal. ● Characteristics of common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression), including carefully-presented factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental health conditions. This should not be discussed in a way that encourages normal feelings to be labelled as mental health conditions. ● How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall wellbeing. ● Understanding how to overcome worries or other barriers to participating in fun, enjoyable or rewarding activities – that it's possible to overcome those barriers using coping strategies, and that finding the courage to participate in activities which initially feel challenging may decrease worries over time rather than increasing it. ● That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others. That gambling is often advertised as fun and concepts of gambling can be introduced in games directed towards children. ● That the co-occurrence of alcohol/drug use and poor mental health is common and that the relationship is bi-directional: mental health problems can increase the risk of alcohol/drug use, and alcohol/drug use can trigger mental health problems or exacerbate existing ones. That stopping smoking can improve people's mental health and decrease anxiety
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TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Wellbeing online	● About the benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing. Social media platforms and online gaming are designed to be addictive. This works through triggering dopamine release in the brain. Increased use of social media/gaming often leads to less sleep, less time spent connecting in person with humans and less time spent outdoors. Research shows the connection between increased time online and the decline of mental and physical health, especially for children and young people whose brains are still developing (neuroplasty). ● The similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image - for people of all sexes/genders); how people may curate a specific image of their life online; the impact that an over-reliance on online relationships, including relationships formed through social media and those with AI bots, can have. This includes the prevalence of people having cosmetic surgery (inc dental), botox, weight loss injections, as well as the increase in body dysmorphia, and eating disorders. ● How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours. ● The risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt. This should include reference to the high risks involved in investing in Crypto currency or social media influencers. ● How advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online, understanding the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation online, including conspiracy theories. ● The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online. ● The serious risks of viewing online content that promotes self-harm, suicide or violence (inc sexual violence), including how to safely report this material and how to access support after viewing it.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Physical health and fitness	● The characteristics of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill-health, including cardiovascular ill-health. ● Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions. ● That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress. This should be a balanced approach as there are risks involved with over-training, particularly for young people as their bodies are still developing. ● The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Healthy eating	● How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease. The importance of drinking water and staying hydrated for effective body functioning. ● The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. ● The impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain. ● The impacts of ultra-processed foods, energy drinks and some bottled waters. Pupils should know that the long-term harm caused is not fully understood, and this is partly because the food industry have significant influence over the research findings that are published. ● The risks associated with not eating (anorexia/bulimia) and weight loss injections. That fasting can have health benefits for adults, but should not be regularly used by children and adolescents. ● The risks involved with using supplements, protein, creatine, steroids, synthol, (including the risks of authenticity/safety, as many of these products are homemade not in a laboratory), and the possible impact on physical health (e.g. steroids causing kidney and heart disease, as well as preventing natural testosterone production).

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping	● The facts about which drugs are illegal, the risks of taking illegal drugs, including the increased risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the potential health harms, including the link to poor mental health. This should include reference to nitrous oxide, THC, synthetic cannabis and ‘spice’, including the risk that anyone buying these substances cannot be sure which chemical they are getting, as all three are illegal. ● The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances. ● The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption. What constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England. Understanding how to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol. This should include that different types of drinks have different levels of alcohol content and impact of drinking these over a short period of time. ● The physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency. ● The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines. ● The facts about the multiple serious harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so. ● The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit. And that further long-term harm is likely but is currently unknown/unproven as vaping is a relatively new habit/substance. ● Pupils should understand how addiction works, including the effects of withdrawal, in relation to: drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, gambling, social media, gaming.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
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Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system	● Personal hygiene, germs and how they are spread, including bacteria and viruses, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics. ● Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth, reducing consumption of sugar-containing food and drinks, and regular check-ups at the dentist. ● How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals. ● The importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening. ● The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination, immunisation and antimicrobial resistance. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils. That, in the past, medical science is guilty of a practice known as eugenics (for example the Tuskegee syphilis study, 1932 - 1972), and this means that some groups of people don't trust vaccines and therefore don't access them. ● The importance of sufficient good-quality sleep for good health, the importance of screen-free time before bed and removing phones from the bedroom, and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn. ● The importance of healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy, including the importance of pre-conception health, including taking folic acid. The importance of pelvic floor health. Information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and how to access care and support. This includes the dangers of drinking alcohol, smoking and drug taking during pregnancy. ● How to navigate their local healthcare system: what a GP is; when to use A&E / minor injuries; accessing sexual health and family planning clinics; the role of local pharmacies; and how to seek help via local third sector partners which may have specialist services. ● The concept of Gillick competence. That the legal age of medical consent is 16. That before this, a child's parents will have responsibility for consenting to medical treatment on their behalf unless they are Gillick competent to take this decision for themselves. Pupils should understand the circumstances in which someone over 16 may not be deemed to have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment.
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TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
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Personal safety	● How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around roads, railways – including level crossings - and water (including the water safety code), and in unfamiliar social or work settings (for example the first time a young person goes on holiday without their parents). This should include reference to e-scooters, e-bikes, mopeds, as well as driving a car, and getting in cars with friends or on the back of a vehicle. ● How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media. ● How to develop key social and emotional skills that will increase pupils' safety from involvement in conflict and violence. These include skills to support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making, as well as skills to recognise and manage peer pressure. ● Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about violence and/or knife crime. This includes reference to gang-related activity, child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. ● The law as it relates to knives and violence. Content and examples should relate to the local context and avoid using fear as an educational tool. Children should be taught that carrying weapons is uncommon, and should not be scared into the perception that many young people are carrying knives (which can lead to the misconception that they need to carry a knife too). ● The risks and signs that they may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help where there is a concern.
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TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
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Basic first aid	● Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments. ● Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR ● The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed, who can use them and how to locate one
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TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Developing bodies	● The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health. ● The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development. ● About menstrual and gynaecological health, including: what is an average period; period problems such as premenstrual syndrome; heavy menstrual bleeding; endometriosis; and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). When to seek help from healthcare professionals. ● About common health risks for males, including testicular cancer and prostate cancer. ● The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.

Appendix 3: Parent/carer form requesting their child's withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS/CARERS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent/carer		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent/carer signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents/carers	

Appendix 4: Supporting parents to speak to their children about sex education



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