



Title	A18 Relationships and Sex Education Policy
Purpose	To describe the way in which Relationships and Sex Education will be taught at Oak Lodge School
Relevant to	Governors, Senior Leaders, Classroom Staff, Parents
Responsible Officer	Deputy Headteacher (Teaching & Learning)
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Contents

1. AIMS	3
2. INTRODUCTION	4
A rationale for Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)	4
3. THE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION PROGRAMME	6
New components to the RSE Curriculum for first teaching by Summer Term 2021	6
Physical health and mental wellbeing	6
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)	6
LGBT + and RSE	7
A Differentiated Programme	7
4. DELIVERY OF RSE INCLUDING SPECIFIC ISSUES FOR THOSE WITH AN AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITION.	9
5. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	10
6. POLICY STATEMENT	11
6.1 Definition	11
6.2 Roles and Responsibilities	11
6.3 Parents Right to Withdraw	11
6.4 Staff and Training	12
6.5 Assessment and Evaluation	12
APPENDIX 1: RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION CURRICULUM MAP	14
APPENDIX 2: PARENT FORM: WITHDRAWAL FROM SEX EDUCATION WITHIN RSE	15

1. Aims

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) referenced as 'Myself and Healthy Relationships' (MRE) on the curriculum are as follows:

- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Develop students positive and realistic self-image within a framework where sensitive discussions can take place
- Consider the religious background of the students when planning curriculum delivery of RSE
- Develop students moral, social and cultural understanding and respect
- Teach students to respect self and others and learn to communicate effectively & assertively
- Teach students to distinguish between relationships that are healthy and those that are harmful linking this to the impact on their mental well being
- Support the development of skills, understanding and attitudes so students become confident and competent members of their communities
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to use when describing themselves and their bodies.
- Help students to understand their bodies, emotions, sexual feelings and behaviour, so that they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives
- Teach students to be aware of physical and emotional signs and symptoms of poor mental health
- Teach strategies, that reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse as students are more vulnerable to a range of exploitation, bullying due to the nature of their SEND
- Provide students with access to knowledge and understanding regarding safe sexual relationships and raise their self-esteem and confidence
- Ensure compliance with relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010 under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.
- To provide a whole school approach to learn about equality, diversity, British laws and society, tolerance and respect
- Develop students understanding that families are important for growing up because they can give love, security and stability.
- Teach students that families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other's families are also characterised by love and care for them.

2. Introduction

This Policy has been written in accordance with the [statutory guidance document “Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education” \(DfE, 2019\)](#).

This document should be read in conjunction with [KCSIE \(2020\)](#). The new amendments in the KCSIE Safeguarding are as follows:

- Mental health
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation

RSE is set in the context of our wider whole-school approach to ensuring our students are safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school. The RSE curriculum will complement the Trust’s wider policies on behaviour and safeguarding, whilst also complying with the relevant provisions of the [Equality Act 2010](#), under which religion or belief are protected characteristics. There is new content in the RSE framework for teaching that overlaps with the themes in the amended **Safeguarding Policy BSET**

Making the links between RSE and safeguarding, equalities, and behaviour policies, within an LGBT inclusive school environment, means we are striving to equip our students to understand their world and their place within it. There is a clear expectation that through the RSE curriculum we should teach students to make links to understand their own mental health and to take steps to ensure they develop an awareness of the risks associated with using the internet or trusting unfamiliar acquaintances.

RSE will also sit within the context of the Trust’s broader ethos and approach, to provide inclusive, needs led RSE that celebrates difference and diversity. The moral values and framework within RSE will be taught reflecting the aims and ethos of the school, to provide a secure and caring environment that respects each person’s dignity and trust. Our students are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and non-consensual sexual experiences (three times as likely according to the NSPCC); they also have the right to enjoy safe, healthy relationships and positive experiences.

We believe that RSE is vital for the personal social emotional development of our students. It equips them with the information, skills and values to have safe enjoyable and respectful relationships, that also empowers them to recognise signs of positive well-being. Student voice is also central to the culture and ethos of the school, listening to the views of our young people will ensure we are meeting the needs of all our students. Having a good understanding of our student’s faith backgrounds will help to contextualise and plan to deliver a sensitive and supportive programme.

[A rationale for Relationship and Sex Education \(RSE\)](#)

‘A caring and developmental RSE programme needs to be more than just biology and the fundamentals of reproduction. Young People want reassurance about their body image, behaviour, feelings and relationships. They also need knowledge and skills

appropriate to their level of maturity and developmental needs.’ ([Article 3, 28 and 29 United Nations Conventions on the Right of the Child](#)). Children and young people should be prepared for the physical and emotional changes they undergo at puberty. Some students and their parents or carers, frequently say that relationships education was ‘too little, too late and too biological’. Ofsted reinforced this in their 2013 [Not Yet Good Enough report](#).

In the context of the changes set out in the [DfE’s statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance](#) and other relevant guidance ; [Equality Act \(2010\)](#) we are committed to delivering RSE in a way that makes every student feel valued and included. This means we extend our commitment to offering an inclusive curriculum to be LGBT+ inclusive and place additional focus on family life and health and well-being in order to improve outcomes around well-being.

Children and young people with a learning disability are four and a half times more likely to develop an additional mental health condition than those without. In autism cases of poor mental health are common. Approximately 70-80% of autistic children and adults experience mental health problems (Simonoff et al., 2008), most commonly depression and anxiety.

RSE plays a vital part in meeting schools’ safeguarding obligations. Ofsted is clear that schools must have a preventative programme that enables students to learn about safety and risks in relationships. Due to their limited capacity to understand concepts such as ‘keeping safe’ our students require some elements to be reinforced and revisited with a particular emphasis on the notion of **‘public and private’ and ‘consent’**.

RSE will help our students to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing abuse, or have experienced, abuse. We recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSE covers, some students could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences.

In cases of a disclosure, all staff have attended statutory training on child protection and are therefore expected to follow the schools safeguarding policy and procedures. We also recognise that some students may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes to their personal life. For those young people, additional support will be given to prevent them being affected by the content planned for lessons.

3. The Relationships and Sex Education Programme

We place RSE at the heart of our PSHE curriculum as we recognise the benefits to our students social and emotional development. Therefore, it is essential that we have a developmental programme of teaching across the whole school.

At Oak Lodge we gather information about our students and their needs from their Education, Health and Care Plans. When planning an RSE curriculum, we consider the unique needs and profiles that each of our students present and ask ourselves what key learning is needed to ensure our students are safe, healthy and enjoying fulfilling relationships'. We make thematic links across our curriculum areas and plan delivery in a developmentally appropriate and meaningful way.

The new guidelines on Relationships and Sex Education mean that everyone at school in England will be taught about what safe and healthy relationships look like and how to have them.

New components to the RSE Curriculum for first teaching by Summer Term 2021

Physical health and mental wellbeing

Physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked, it is important that students understand that good physical health also contributes to good mental wellbeing, and vice versa. When learning key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, including physical and emotional changes, we aim to extend our curriculum offer to include health education in the **RSE curriculum summary** at the end of this policy in the Unit '**Our Bodies**'

In order to promote good mental and physical health, we will teach students about supports they may need and why. Where appropriate this will include any medicines, they may need to take regularly and why this is important to maintain good physical health. Curriculum focus on mental well-being incorporates strategies to support students to self-regulate, through interventions such as the Zones of Regulation, but also other curriculum interventions such as 'Social Thinking' 'Social Stories' but also drawing on themes in the Recovery Curriculum. All units in RSE are designed to be age and stage appropriate and will be reviewed by the wider pastoral team including therapy team to ensure we promote strategies rooted in positive psychology and psychotherapy.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

In teaching Relationships Education and RSE, schools should ensure that the needs of all students are appropriately met, and that all students understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the [Equality Act 2010](#), under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.

LGBT + and RSE

Some SEND students will also be LGBT+ and some SEND students may have LGBT+ parents or carers, family and friends. Where RSE is taught to pupils with SEND the LGBT+ part of the curriculum (compulsory from 2020 in secondary schools) is often missed. However, young people with learning disabilities and particularly autism are more likely to express themselves authentically, become attracted to whoever they are attracted to, and not conform to the general heteronormative bias of western society, and many other social norms (Abbott, 2015).

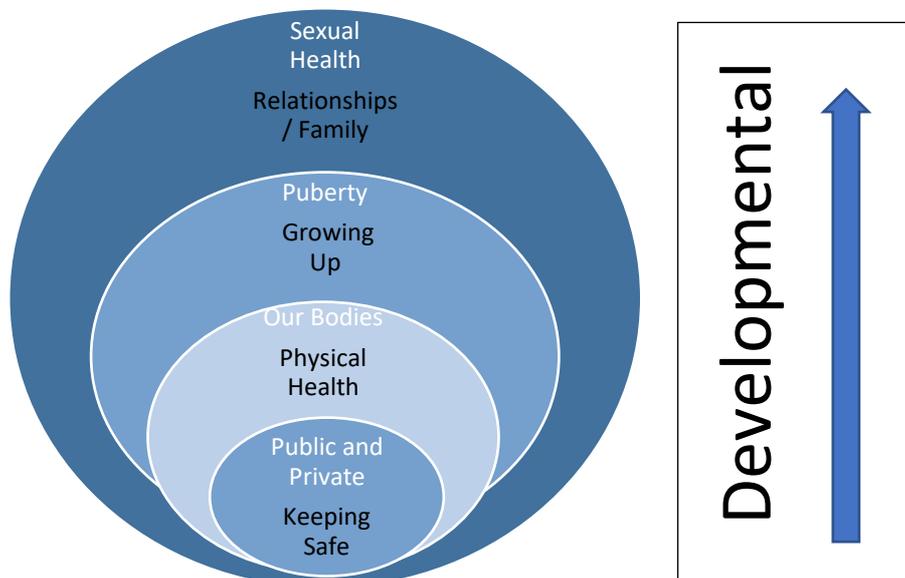
We will ensure that all of our teaching is sensitive and developmentally appropriate in approach and content. At the point at we begin to teach our students about LGBT, our aim is to help our students to understand that human sexuality is expressed in different ways, so they understand what it means and have some words to describe it. We will ensure this content is fully integrated into the RSE programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand- alone unit or lesson.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) helps pupils stay healthy and safe and the knowledge, skills and attributes taught within the RSE curriculum have a positive impact in improving emotional wellbeing and preparation for adulthood.

A Differentiated Programme

In collaboration with students, parents/carers and external agencies, we aim to deliver a differentiated education programme, which considers the communication, needs, social reasoning, cognitive ability and all other aspects of a student's emotional and physical development.

Students with learning disabilities including autism, are likely to develop physically at a different rate to their mental capacity, as such, this can make them particularly vulnerable. The developmental model for RSE curriculum, developed at Oak Lodge, ensures that lessons and resources are delivered in a way student will understand and yet still cover the content that would be appropriate for their age and bodies as illustrated here:



RSE will be taught school-wide as part of the school's curriculum offer. The curriculum is based around five key overlapping and interconnected themes; private/public, body awareness, puberty, relationships and sexual health. These themes, whilst being developmentally ascending in complexity, do inter-relate and form the basis for the content of units of work across the school, whilst also capturing the essential program of study in the [DfE guidance 2019](#). It is also recommended that schools have their sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of students, and this should include how a baby is conceived and born.

Parents will be informed of the RSE curriculum and learning outcomes in advance and can request access to resources and information being used, so that we can also respect the wishes of parents who wish to withdraw their son or daughter from any content.

Students will be taught at developmentally differing levels of the curriculum; therefore, teachers are encouraged to plan relevant to the students developmental, emotional and cognitive level, this may mean for some classes there is a need to work with smaller differentiated groups so that the needs of all students are met.

This is especially relevant for those individuals who are at pubescent stage of development but cognitively at a much lower level of understanding.

RSE as part of our established MRE curriculum will be taught in form groups as part of the planned PSHE program or Science program. However, there must a set weekly timetabled session for the delivery of RSE as part of the PHSE curriculum offer.

An appropriate balance of individual and group teaching will ensure that each student gains skills and understanding appropriate to their age and ability. The curriculum offer will include opportunities for our students to learn about diversity and difference and that this is to be celebrated in relation to family structures, disability and sexuality.

The correct terminology should always be used for body parts and to support our students with language processing difficulties, the use of appropriate visual systems to teach and reinforce concepts such as line drawings, symbols or animated material could be used. Any visual material, such as animated video with sexual content, should be discussed and approved by SLT before use.

Parents will be consulted and given the opportunity to express any concerns regarding use of materials. It is not appropriate to use photos unless it is to illustrate concepts such as feelings and emotions, line drawings should be used for any visual resources that depict sensitive concepts including genitalia.

4. Delivery of RSE including specific issues for those with an autism spectrum condition.

Programs will be slightly different for autistic students due to their very different social and emotional competences and their difficulties relating to others. Oak Lodge has a large population of students with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC). Significant impairment in social reasoning, relating, verbal/non-verbal communication, and flexibility of thought will have a profound effect on all aspects of learning that comprise sex and relationships education.

Avoid using metaphors and euphemisms that could cause confusion, e.g. “others shouldn’t touch you *down below* without your permission”. Also, avoid generalisation statements such as “*touching yourself in private is okay*” may be difficult to interpret. Be specific, ‘in your bedroom, when alone, with the doors closed’ or even have visuals to help aid understanding. Social challenges are part of the core diagnosis for autistic young people, so we should show some acknowledgment that autistic people choose to be alone or to have close asexual intimate relationships.

In some cases, a non-autistic adolescent peer group may not be the best source of role models as information can be misunderstood. It is possible that the vulnerability and uncertainty of the individual with an ASC may be exploited by some peers with better sophisticated reasoning. This makes teaching and development of understanding of concepts in RSE, all the more important for our young people with an ASC to minimise risk.

Misunderstood or overestimated unfulfilled sexual interest may turn into a kind of obsession, reflected in fixed behaviour towards others that might appear as dysfunctional or ‘stalking’ behaviour but is indicative of a lack of social understanding and an inability to relate to others. This combined with inflexible autistic thinking means the desire is often hard to shift and will likely require a multi-disciplinary team approach with psychological support.

Often autistic students experience difficulties in establishing interpersonal relationships, may have limited emotional vocabulary to express their feelings and limited non-verbal understanding, but they do have a strong desire to form relationships. **The implication of this being they may seek out inappropriate ways of having relationships having little awareness of consent unless explicitly taught.** It is essential that autistic students have regular teaching of public and private and the notion of consent if they are at a developmental stage to understand this concept. Failure to teach appropriate social interactions could lead to serious safeguarding concerns.

5. Statutory Requirements

Academies do not have to follow the National Curriculum and as such, are not obliged to teach RSE. If academies do teach RSE, they are required by their funding agreements to have regard to the [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act \(1996\)](#)

This guidance states that all aspects of RSE and within that, health education, is compulsory, which makes most of the PSHE curriculum now mandatory for all students in all schools. As a secondary academy school, we must provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

At Oak Lodge School we deliver the National Curriculum and as part of our core curriculum offer we will teach RSE in line with the information set out in this policy. Schools maintain a statutory obligation under the [Children Act \(2004\)](#) to promote their students' wellbeing, and under the [Education Act \(1996\)](#) to prepare children and young people for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

A comprehensive RSE programme can have a positive impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and their ability to achieve and can play a crucial part in meeting these obligations. Under [Section 3.6 of the National Curriculum](#), RSE is compulsory from Year 7 onwards taking account of the changes to the [National Curriculum for PSHE \(2020\)](#).

6. Policy Statement

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff during mandatory induction and safeguarding training and curriculum and pastoral meetings. We recognise our statutory obligation to include parents and carers and have invited consultation on the new statutory changes via the school website. We will keep parents informed of key issues that may arise from taught sessions, sharing with them any resources including visual supports in the home as requested.

6.1 Definition

RSE is defined as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional, aspects of human behaviour. It involves learning about body awareness, changes to body and emotions, healthy lifestyles, gender, relationships, family life. We also define RSE as learning about physical and mental health as well as sexual health.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values in an integrated way and within a human rights framework. We seek to nurture our student's curiosity in the world around them, supporting their development and their respect for themselves and each other.

6.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body will review the RSE policy every 2 years and ensure its implementation. The Headteacher members of the Senior Leadership Team and the RSE co-ordinator will ensure RSE is taught consistently across the school ensuring staff receive ongoing training on issues related to the teaching of RSE. We will provide support to staff members who feel uncomfortable or ill-equipped to deal with the delivery of RSE to students. We will support parental involvement in the development of the RSE curriculum and where appropriate, respond to and arrange requests to withdraw students from the non-statutory non-science components of the RSE Program.

6.3 Parents Right to Withdraw

Parents & carers do not have the right to withdraw students from relationships education. Parents & carers have the right to withdraw their son or daughter from some aspects of sex education. **This does not include the more biological aspects taught as part of the science curriculum.**

Before granting a request to withdraw a child, a member of the leadership team should discuss the value and importance of RSE with parents or carers. Requests should put in writing and a copy noted on the student's individual plan and a letter held in students record uploaded to the SchoolPod system.

A parent wishing to exercise this right, is invited to see the Headteacher or member of the senior leadership team, who will explore with parents the possibilities of adjusting the programme or approach and will discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the student. Should the parent continue to request that their child may be wholly or partly excused from sex education which is provided as part of statutory relationships and sex education, the student must be so excused until the request is

withdrawn, unless or to the extent that the Headteacher considers that the student should not be so excused.

Once a student has been withdrawn, they cannot take part in the relevant aspect of sex education until the request for withdrawal has been removed, therefore alternative arrangements will need to be made, the student will need to be set alternative work in an alternative space.

[See parent's withdrawal letter \(Appendix 2\)](#)

6.4 Staff and Training

Assistant Headteacher 14-19 and the teacher that is the RSE co-ordinator, have attended external training on the new curriculum framework for first delivery of RSE 2021. Heads of Department responsible for overseeing the delivery of Sex and Relationship Education within their department, are the first point of call for any staff with concerns, purchase and budget queries, curriculum content and delivery.

The Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for Teaching and Learning together Assistant Heads with responsibility for 14-19 and Additional Needs should be available to provide more specialist advice on all planning, implementation and delivery of the RSE program for all staff.

Form tutors will usually be responsible for delivery of RSE / MRE to their class as they have direct pastoral link with students and know them best. However, nominated staff may deliver taught sessions of RSE, where this is the case, it is important there is consistency of approach in relation to any sensitive issues.

It is acknowledged that this area of work may be difficult for some staff members or so any person who is uncomfortable with agreed programs should discuss with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Staff will receive ongoing training on RSE as part of their continued professional development. It is recognised that staff delivering RSE require training on the curriculum content and this will be done through individuals attending whole-school training programme that includes external training. Given the sensitivity of RSE, the Senior Leadership Team will work together to ensure staff are fully supported in terms of supervision and in professional development.

6.5 Assessment and Evaluation

Evaluation is concerned with the appropriateness of content and the effectiveness of the methodologies used in achieving the learning objectives. This is particularly important given the sensitive content of RSE. Assistant Headteachers with curriculum responsibility will monitor the delivery of the RSE curriculum in their relevant Departments.

Deputy Headteacher for Teaching and Learning will monitor the appropriateness of content particularly for those on the autistic spectrum, to ensure suitable

methodologies and materials are used. Both assessment and evaluation are collaborative processes between our young people, their parents or carers and staff.

Regular formative assessment should be made throughout delivery of a unit of work and more summative assessment made using the B Squared assessment system or through an applicable qualification's assessment procedures.

Many aspects of social emotional growth will be tracked via EHCP's and the Social Communication Emotional Regulation Transactional Support (SCERTS) assessment process, towards 8 quality indicators from SCERTS: Sense of self; sense of other; social membership and friendships; independence; active learning and organisation; flexibility and resilience; happiness; co-operation and appropriateness (of behaviours). These together are indicators of a positive sense of well-being.

Appendix 1: Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum Map

Unit 1: Keeping Safe	Unit 2: Our Bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body awareness • Public/private parts of the body • Where can I touch? Where can others touch me? • Boundaries of privacy • Public/private places at home, school and elsewhere • Public/private activities • Behaviours in public/private • Important people to me • The law and sexual consent • Recognise and report abuse • The importance of seeking and gaining mutual consent through positive and active communication, and go beyond teaching how to say 'no' • E- safety - how information and data is shared and used online • Report feelings of being unsafe • First Aid/ Healthcare Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public/private <i>to consolidate prior learning</i> • Body parts and terminology. (Learning the correct biological/medical names for the genitalia and reproductive organs, will also support girls at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)). • Describing and comparing parts of the body • Puberty and change • Coping with change • Signs of low mood and anxiety • Hygiene • Male/female anatomy • Learning that one's body belongs to oneself and that only we can say who has access • Sexual Health • Understanding medicines • Understanding wellbeing • Eating and exercise and links with good physical and mental health
Unit 3: Growing Up	Unit 4: Relationships and Family Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public/private <i>to consolidate prior learning</i> • My body; names and functions of reproductive organs • Puberty: masturbation, wet dreams, periods • Gender and sexuality opportunities for students to discuss and explore sexual orientation choices in a safe environment; LGBT, heterosexual or questioning in terms of those exploring their sexual identity. • Relationships, friends • Dating, mutual consent • Menstruation, erections, wet dreams, masturbation • Self-image and self esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different types of relationships • Healthy friendships • Compliments • Online relationships • Trust • Equality in relationships • Different types of committed, stable relationships • Roles and responsibilities of parents • Consent, sexuality and rejection • Changing relationships • What marriage is, • Saying 'no' • How to identify behaviour in a relationship which is positive and supportive and that which is exploitative and controlling. • Being alone

Appendix 2: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

In secondary education from September 2020:

Parents will not be able to withdraw their child from any aspect of Relationships Education or Health Education (RSE)

Parents will be able to withdraw their child (following discussion with the school) from any or all aspects of Sex Education, other than those which are part of the science curriculum, up to and until three terms before the age of 16.

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