

September 2025

Responsibility	Head Teacher
Date of last review	30/09/2025
Date of next review by	30/09/2026

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Date: 30.09.2025

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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
- 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 school we must provide relationships education to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.

We are not required to provide sex education, but we do need to teach the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum.

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state, as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 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 The Aspire Academy we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

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

1. Review all relevant information pulled together including relevant national and local (contextual) guidance
2. Key staff met with the Governors

3. Staff consultation - school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
4. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
5. Pupil consultation – we investigated what pupils want from their RSE
6. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity, equality and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, pupils and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so pupils are fully informed and don't seek answers online. We will share all curriculum materials with parents and carers on request

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, Tutor time and assemblies.

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
- 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

Pupils may also receive stand-alone sex education interventions delivered by a trained health professional.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families

- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and social media
- 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.

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

The 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).

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

The school uses the Jigsaw programme to deliver PSHE, including RSE. **See Appendix 1 for overview.**

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 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).

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.

6.1 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:

- o Safe and supported
- o 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:

- o A whole-class setting
- o Small groups or targeted sessions
- o 1-to-1 discussions
- o 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:

- o Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- o Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- o Are age-appropriate, given the age and maturity of the pupils
- o Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics

- o Fit into our curriculum plan
- o Are from credible sources
- o Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- o 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

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:

- o Are age-appropriate
- o Are in line with pupils' developmental stage
- o 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:

- o What they're going to say
- o 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

Share 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 governing board

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

8.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE (see section 9).

8.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science 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)

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 Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher.

Tutors will teach the PSHE curriculum to their tutor groups; the RSE curriculum is incorporated within this.

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 have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

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

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Head Teacher will discuss the request with parents 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 Head Teacher can refuse a request to withdraw the pupil from sex education.

Alternative work 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 Head Teacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE in addition to staff learning from presentations and workshops and assemblies delivered by charities such as Purple Leaf on harmful sexual behaviours.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Andrew Phillpots, Deputy Head Teacher through:

- Planning scrutinies
- Learning walks

- Book trawls
- Lesson observations

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

Appendix 1

JIGSAW SECONDARY PSHE EDUCATION: LONG TERM OVERVIEW — COMPETENCIES-BASED MODEL

Year	Being Me in My World	Celebrating Difference	Dreams and Goals	Healthy Me	Relationships	Changing Me
7	Unique me, differences & conflict, my influences, gateway emotions, belonging to a group, peer pressure, peer on peer abuse, online safety, sexting, consequences, online legislation	Bullying, prejudice & discrimination (positive and negative), Equality Act, bystanders, stereotyping, challenging influences, negative behaviour and attitudes, assertiveness	Celebrating success, identifying goals, employment, learning from mistakes, overcoming challenges, planning skills, safe & unsafe choices, substances, gangs, knives, exploitation, emergency first aid	Stress and anxiety, managing mental health, physical activity and mental health, effects of substances, legal consequences, nutrition, sleep, vaccination and immunisation, importance of information on making health choices	Characteristics of healthy relationships, consent, relationships and change, emotions within friendships, peer on peer abuse, rights and responsibilities, being discerning, assertiveness, sexting	Puberty changes, Reproduction facts, FGM, breast flattening/ironing, responsibilities of parenthood, IVF, types of committed relationships, media and self-esteem, self-image, brain changes in puberty, factors affecting moods, sources of help and support
8	Self-identity, influences, family and identity, stereotypes, personal beliefs and judgements, managing expectations, first impressions, respect for the beliefs of others Marriage	Positive change made by others, how positive behaviour affects feelings of wellbeing, social injustice, inequality, community cohesion and support, multi-culturalism, diversity, race	Long-term goals, skills, qualifications, careers, money and happiness, ethics and mental wellbeing, budgeting, variation in income, positive and negative impact of money, online	Long-term physical health, responsibility for own health, dental health, stress triggers and help tips, substances and mood, legislation associated with substances,	Positive relationship with self, social media and relationship with self, negative self-talk, managing a range of relationships, peer on peer abuse, personal space, online	Types of close intimate relationships, physical attraction, love, legal status of relationships, behaviours in healthy and unhealthy romantic relationships, pornography,

	Protected characteristics Active listening	and religion, stereotypes, prejudice, LGBT+ bullying, peer on peer abuse hate crime, fear & emotions Stand up to bullying, the golden rule; Organ and blood donation	safety and legal responsibilities, gambling issues	exploitation and substances, county lines, medicine, vaccinations, immunisation	etiquette, online privacy, bullying and personal safety, social media issues and the law, coercion, unhealthy balance of power in relationships, sources of support	sexuality, alcohol and risky behaviour
Year	Being Me in My World	Celebrating Difference	Dreams and Goals	Healthy Me	Relationships	Changing Me
9	Perceptions about intimate relationships, consent, sexual exploitation, peer approval, peer on peer abuse, grooming, radicalisation, county lines, risky experimentation, positive and negative self-identity, groups, influences, social media, abuse and coercion, coercive control	Protected characteristics, Equality Act, phobic and racist language, legal consequences of bullying and hate crime, sexism, ageism, positive and negative language, banter, peer on peer abuse, bullying in the workplace, direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation. Prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping	Personal strengths, health goals, SMART planning, the world of work, links between body image and mental health, non-financial dreams and goals, mental health and ill health, media manipulation, self-harm self-esteem, stigma, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, depression	Misperceptions about young peoples' health choices, physical and psychological effects of drugs and alcohol, alcohol and the law, alcohol and drug poisoning, addiction, smoking, vaping, drug classification, supply and possession legislation, emergency situations, first aid, CPR, substances and safety, sources of advice and support	Healthy relationships, Power and control in intimate relationships, risk in intimate relationships, importance of sexual consent, assertiveness skills, sex and the law, pornography and stereotypes, contraception choices, age of consent, family planning, consequences of unprotected sex, STIs, support and advice services	Mental health stigma, triggers, support strategies, managing emotional changes, resilience and how to improve it, reflection on importance of sleep in relation to mental health, reflection on changes, benefits of relaxation
10	Human rights, societal freedom, understanding safety in UK and beyond, ending relationships safely, stages of grief, loss and bereavement, peer on peer abuse, social media and culture, use of online data, threats to	Equality including in the workplace, in society, in relationships Equality Act 2010 Vulnerable groups including disability and hidden disability Workplace expectations Rights and responsibilities	Impact of physical health in reaching goals relationships and reaching goals, resilience, work/life balance, connections and impact on mental health, balanced diet, vital organs, blood donation,	Improving health, mental health, sexual health, blood-borne infections, self-examination, diet and long-term health, misuse of prescription drugs, substances and the body, common	Sustaining long-term relationships, intimacy, healthy relationship with self Attraction, love, lust Relationship choices, ending relationships safely, consequences of relationships ending	Impact of societal change on young people, role of media on societal change, reflection on change so far and how to manage it successfully, decision making, sexual identity gender,

	online safety, online identity, assessing and managing risk, the law and social media, Risk and emergency contacts Positive and negative relationships	Power and control in relationships, coercive control Benefits of multi-cultural societies Equity, equality and inequality	benefits of helping others, online profile and impact on future goals and employability	mental health disorders, positive impact of volunteering, common threats to health including chronic disease, epidemics, misuse of antibiotics	e.g. bullying, peer on peer abuse, revenge porn, grief-cycle, Impact on family understanding love, fake news Pornography	spectrum of sexuality, stereotypes in romantic relationships, sexual identity and risk, physical and emotional changes, family change
Year	Being Me in My World	Celebrating Difference	Dreams and Goals	Healthy Me	Relationships	Changing Me
11	Becoming an adult. Age limits and the law Relationships and the law, consent, coercive control, peer on peer abuse, domestic abuse, honour-based, violence, arranged and forced marriages The Equality Act 2010 The law on internet use and pornography Social media concerns, sexting Keeping safe, emergency situations, key advice, first aid, scenarios and consequences		Anxiety, solution focused thinking, sleep, relaxation, Aspiration on; career, finances, budgeting, borrowing, relationships, Skills identification, realistic goals, gambling, financial pressure, debt, dream jobs, skill set, employment, education and training options, long-term relationship dreams and goals, parenting skills and challenges, resilience, what to do when things go wrong	Managing anxiety and stress, exam pressure, concentration strategies, work- life balance, sexual health, hygiene, self- examination, STIs, sexual pressure, fertility issues, contraception, consent, pregnancy facts and myths, pregnancy choices including adoption, abortion, bringing up a baby, financial implications, identifying a range of risk including rape and strategies for staying safe Expectations in relationships	Stages of intimate relationships, positive and negative connotations of sex, spectrum of gender and sexuality, LGBT+ rights and protection under the Equality Act, 'coming out' challenges, LGBT+ media stereotypes, peer on peer abuse, power, control and sexual experimentation, forced marriage, honour-based violence, FGM and other abuses, hate crime, sources of support	



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

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

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