

'They will soar on wings like eagles ...'
Isaiah 40:31

collaborate | enrich | trust | innovate | aspire | nurture



Multi Academy Trust Policy

Common Trust Policy, Use as Published

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Date adopted by Trust Board:

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Date of next Review: Awaiting updated guidance

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
V1	29.1.25	AW & JAJ	<i>New policy in draft for Sept 2026.</i>

Aquila Multi-Academy Trust RSE Policy

1. Policy Statement

Aquila Multi-Academy Trust is committed to providing high-quality Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in line with statutory guidance from the Department of Education. This policy outlines the approach to RSE in our academies, supporting pupils to make informed choices, develop positive relationships, and build resilience. Our RSE curriculum reflects Aquila's values of **Collaborate, Enrich, Trust, Innovate, Aspire, and Nurture**.

2. Legal Framework and national guidance

The Department for Education statutory guidance, issued under Sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, makes it a requirement for all primary schools to teach Relationships and Health Education from September 2020. This would normally be as part of the PSHE programme of study within each school. It is advised that schools have a Sex education programme in place but this is not statutory. This guidance does not form a National Curriculum but instead gives schools guidance on age-appropriate compulsory subject content whilst giving schools "flexibility to shape their curriculum according to the needs of their pupils and communities". In primary schools this is defined as "the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focussing on family and friendships, both on and offline".

Our Church of England schools will approach RSE in a faith sensitive and inclusive way.

Our PSHE policy is informed by existing DfE guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)
- Alternative Provision (statutory guidance)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools)
- Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education. (NICE guidance)
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges (guidance for schools and colleges)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying)
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC))

3. Objectives and Aims of RSE

We believe that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) should be delivered as an integral part of the curriculum across the school and not in isolation, taken out of context or over emphasised. Our programmes are delivered with continuity throughout the school and are for all our children, including those with physical, emotional or learning difficulties.

Our programmes recognise that there are many different kinds of families and relationships, and help children to gain information and know where they can access support, not promoting any particular approach to relationships over another. We recognise the particular needs of pupils who are adopted or fostered. We also acknowledge and support those who may be considered young

carers, appreciating that roles and responsibilities within families vary from one family to the next. RSE should be treated as a positive experience for young people to understand their identity, in terms of gaining a stronger understanding of themselves, a sense of belonging, their citizenship etc., recognising the importance of consent at all times to protect themselves and others. We believe that children should be made aware of the changes that are taking place in their bodies as they grow.

RSE should teach children:

- To develop their own moral values and individual conscience
- The importance of stable and loving relationships within a family
- The value of care and respect for themselves and others
- To make informed decisions without prejudice, based on an understanding of difference
- To manage their own emotions and to deal with conflict, recognising that conflict does happen but can be managed and resolved using appropriate strategies
- To be prepared for puberty and adulthood
- To help gain access to information and support
- To develop skills for a healthier, safer lifestyle
- To develop and use communication and assertiveness skills, to cope with the influences of their peers and the media, as well as being able to discern between what is right and wrong

These values and skills are explored throughout the whole school programme of Personal, Social and Health Education which focuses strongly on emotional literacy. We also seek to provide relevant and appropriate guidance, particularly when safeguarding updates are provided, to help children keep themselves safe and informed, in order to protect themselves from harm and from engaging in inappropriate behaviour, including when online and on electronic devices

As a Trust we agree to the Church of England Education Office's Charter for faith sensitive and inclusive Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) as shown below.

In Aquila C of E schools, we seek to provide Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) which will enable all pupils to flourish. We believe that the principles of this charter apply equally in principle to all schools.

We commit:

1. To work in partnership with parents and carers. This will involve dialogue with parents and carers through all stages of policy development as well as discussing the resources used to teach their children and how they can contribute at home. It must, however, be recognised that the law specifies that what is taught and how it is taught is ultimately a decision for the school.

2. That RSE will be delivered professionally and as an identifiable part of Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE). It will be led, resourced and reported to parents in the same way as any other subject. There will be a planned programme delivered in a carefully sequenced way. Staff will receive regular training in RSE and PSHE. Any expert visitors or trainers invited into the school to enhance and supplement the programme will be expected to respect the school's published policy for RSE.

3. That RSE will be delivered in a way that affords dignity and shows respect to all who make up our diverse community. It will not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics

in the Equality Act and will be sensitive to the faith and beliefs of those in the wider school community. RSE will seek to explain fairly the tenets and varying interpretations of religious communities on matters of sex and relationships and teach these viewpoints with respect. It will value the importance of faithfulness as the underpinning and backdrop for relationships. It will encourage pupils to develop the skills needed to disagree without being disagreeable, to appreciate the lived experience of other people and to live well together.

4. That RSE will seek to build resilience in our pupils to help them form healthy relationships, to keep themselves safe and resist the harmful influence of pornography in all its forms. It will give pupils opportunities to reflect on values and influences including their peers, the media, the internet, faith and culture that may have shaped their attitudes to gender, relationships and sex. It will promote the development of the wisdom and skills our pupils need to make their own informed decisions.

5. That RSE will promote healthy resilient relationships set in the context of character and virtue development. It will reflect the vision and associated values of the school, promote reverence for the gift of human sexuality and encourage relationships that are hopeful and aspirational. Based on the school's values it will seek to develop character within a moral framework based on virtues such as honesty, integrity, self-control, courage, humility, kindness, forgiveness, generosity and a sense of justice but does not seek to teach only one moral position.

6. That RSE will be based on honest and medically accurate information from reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights. It will distinguish between different types of knowledge and opinions so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health as appropriate to their age and maturity.

7. To take a particular care to meet the individual needs of all pupils including those with special needs and disabilities. It will ensure that lessons and any resources used will be accessible and sensitive to the learning needs of the individual child. We acknowledge the potential vulnerability of pupils who have special needs and disabilities (SEND) and recognise the possibilities and rights of SEND pupils to high quality relationships, sex and health education.

8. To seek pupils' views about RSE so that the teaching can be made relevant to their lives. It will discuss real life issues relating to the age and stage of pupils, including friendships, families, faith, consent, relationship abuse, exploitation and safe relationships online. This will be carefully targeted and age appropriate based on a teacher judgment about pupil readiness for this information in consultation with parents and carers.

4. Curriculum Content and Delivery

See Appendix 1 for specific school information linked to their individual programmes of study.

The majority of relationships and sex education is delivered through PSHE lessons and wider aspects of the national curriculum. This applies across the whole school, including the Foundation Stage.

We follow the national curriculum for science which incorporates the following – there is no right of withdrawal from the Science curriculum.

Early Years Foundation Stage - Understanding the World (Nursery and Reception):

- Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members
- They know that other children do not always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this
- They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions

Key Stage 1 Science - children will learn about the human body and that animals and humans grow, change and reproduce. The Key Stage 1 Science National Curriculum indicates that pupils should be taught to:

- Identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense
- Explore and compare the differences between things that are living, dead, and things that have never been alive
- Identify that most living things live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants, and how they depend on each other
- Notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults
- Find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)
- Describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food, and hygiene

Key Stage 2 Science – children will learn more about the body, what humans need for growth and development and extend their understanding of reproduction. The Key Stage 2 Science National Curriculum indicates that pupils should be taught to:

- Identify that animals, including humans, need the right types and amount of nutrition, and that they cannot make their own food; they get nutrition from what they eat
- Identify that humans and some other animals have skeletons and muscles for support, protection and movement
- Describe the simple functions of the basic parts of the digestive system in humans
- Identify the different types of teeth in humans and their simple functions
- Construct and interpret a variety of food chains, identifying producers, predators and prey
- Describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals
- Describe the changes as humans develop to old age
- Identify and name the main parts of the human circulatory system, and describe the functions of the heart, blood vessels and blood
- Recognise the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle on the way their bodies function
- Describe the ways in which nutrients and water are transported within animals, including humans
- Recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents

Relationships Education

In line with Department for Education guidelines, by the end of primary school our children will have knowledge and understanding of the following.

Families and people who care for me

Pupils should know

- That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability.
- The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives
- That others' 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 children's families are also characterised by love and care
- That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up
- That marriage or civil partnership represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong
- How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed

Caring friendships

Pupils should know:

- How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends
- The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties
- That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded
- That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right
- How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed

Respectful relationships

Pupils should know

- The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs
- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- The conventions of courtesy and manners
- The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness
- That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority
- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help
- What a stereotype is, and how they are generally unfair, unhelpful or even destructive

- The importance of consent, permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults

Online relationships

Pupils should know :

- That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not
- That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous
- The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them
- How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met
- How information and data is shared and used online

Being safe

Pupils should know:

- What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)
- About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe
- That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact
- How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know
- How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult
- How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard
- How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so
- Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

5. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

Teachers need to be aware that sometimes disclosures may be made during these sessions; in which case, safeguarding procedures must be followed immediately. Sometimes it is clear that certain children may need time to talk one-to-one after the lesson. It is important to allow the time and appropriate staffing for this to happen. If disclosures occur, the schools safeguarding policy is followed.

6. Differentiation/SEND

Teachers will need, as always, to tailor each lesson to meet the needs of the children in their classes. To support this differentiation, much of the RSE lesson content will be delivered using a variety of teaching strategies that enable children to learn and understand to their full potential.

Schools need to demonstrate how delivery of the content will be made accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND. Schools should be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education and RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some pupils; for example, those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors should be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects. In specialist provisions and for some SEND pupils in mainstream schools there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of pupils at different

developmental stages. As with all teaching for these subjects, schools should ensure that their teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law

7. Information for Parents

Aquila Schools recognise the role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships. We believe that for the children to achieve the desired objectives, a positive and united relationship must continue to exist between home and school and we would encourage discussion about this area of the curriculum at home.

To promote this objective, we:

- Inform parents about the school's RSE policy and teaching programme
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RSE education of their child
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy, about the arrangements for sex education in the school and any specific issues that may affect a child in this regard
- Use the thoughts of parents to help review this policy over time
- Inform parents about the best practice known with regard to RSE, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home

We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing bodies and their increasing responsibilities.

Parents of Key Stage 2 children will be invited to hear about the curriculum delivery in more detail and to view any resources so that they can be better informed and support their children appropriately at home. However, parents are welcome to arrange an appointment with the school to see any of the teaching materials being used in their child's class as part of RSE, and to find out how these are being used to support high quality teaching and learning. Individual schools can add specific details of processes, online or printed information, or parent access to materials that they may be using. (See appendix 1)

Relationship education is embedded throughout the year in all year groups, however, parents/carers are informed about schools' RSE curriculums annually. Parents/carers will therefore have the opportunity to be fully aware of what is taught, to see a sample of resources used and are invited to ask any questions they have.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships or Health Education at primary school. We appreciate the sensitivity and concerns some parents may feel towards RSE and, therefore, we encourage open and honest communication. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from some or all of sex education delivered as part of the statutory RSE that goes beyond the national curriculum for science and outside of the Relationships Education guidance.

Any requests to withdraw should be made to the Headteacher of the school. If a child is excused from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the time of withdrawal. Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in the specific sex education lessons until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

Pupils will be taught that parents/carers share the responsibility with school and are a vital source of support and learning for RSE.

8. Equal Opportunities

RSE will be delivered in line with the school's equal opportunities policy within an atmosphere of mutual respect. Resources selected to support the programme will be free from cultural bias wherever possible and will avoid gender stereotyping. RSE will be available to all pupils regardless of gender, culture or disability.

9. External contributors

External contributors from the community, e.g. health promotion specialists, school nurses, social workers, and community police, make a valuable contribution to school PSHE programmes. Their input should be carefully planned and monitored so as to fit into and complement any programme. Members of the clergy or church groups may be called upon. Teachers **MUST** always be present during these sessions and remain responsible for the delivery of the school's programme.

Sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise in learning from real-life experience. Teachers will be prepared to handle personal issues arising from the work, to deal sensitively with, and to follow up appropriately, disclosures made in a group or individual setting. Issues that we address that are likely to be sensitive and controversial because they have a political, social or personal impact or deal with values and beliefs include: family lifestyles and values, physical and medical issues, financial issues, bullying and bereavement.

Teachers will take all reasonable, practical steps to ensure that, where political or controversial issues are brought to pupils' attention, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views. Teachers will adopt strategies that seek to avoid bias on their part and will teach pupils how to recognise bias and evaluate evidence. Teachers will seek to establish a classroom climate in which all pupils are free from any fear of expressing reasonable points of view that contradict those held either by their class teachers or their peers.

10. Responsibilities and Monitoring

All teachers are responsible for delivering the PHSE Curriculum in line with this policy. The PSHE leader will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of PHSE across the school alongside senior leaders and governors.

RSE has clear links with other school policies aimed at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- ICT Policy and Safe Internet Use Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- RE Policy
- Child Protection Policy

11. Policy Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust in consultation with stakeholders, considering updates from the Department for Education and feedback from the school community.

Appendix 1:

Schools to add specific school information linked to their individual programmes of study.