

# SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

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The policy owner is:	Acle Academy
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Signed by the Chair of the Local Advisory Board:	Matthew Arrowsmith-Brown
Ratified by the Board of Trustees	
Signed by the Chair of Trustee Board	

## 1) Rationale and Ethos

Relationship and Sex Education (SRE) aims to inform children and young people about relationships, emotions, sex, sexuality and sexual health. It enables them to develop personal and social skills and a positive attitude to sexual health and well-being.

At Acle Academy, we believe that high quality Relationships and Sex Education will stay with our pupils for life. RSE is **not** about encouraging teenagers to become sexually active nor is it about promoting any particular lifestyle or relationship choice. RSE is about providing pupils with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make safe, healthy and informed relationship choices as young people and in the future as adults. RSE at Acle Academy is set within an innovative curriculum fit for the world our young people are living in. We believe in empowering our pupils to understand their bodies, to reflect on their relationship values and to be able to openly discuss relationships and sex. We believe that this approach will reduce the risk of unhealthy and abusive relationships. At Acle Academy, we are committed to the important role that RSE plays in pupils' holistic education and we aim to build on the RSE programmes covered in Primary School. The theme of consent underpins all of our RSE workshops and modules. We introduce pupils to the importance of consent from Year 7 and this is revisited on a yearly basis and adapted to the age of each year group.

Effective RSE is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. It helps support young people through their physical, emotional, mental, social and moral development. It helps young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

### RSE curriculum for SEN pupils

Where possible all pupils will remain with their class for RSE lessons. Pupils with SEND or pupils who have been identified as likely to need SEMH support with RSE will either receive extra support from the class teacher or the support of a Teaching Assistant during their RSE lessons, or arrangements will be made for specific pupils to be withdrawn from RSE lessons with the rest of their class to receive a differentiated version of the RSE programme delivered within the team in Inspire. The SENCO and Head of Character and Culture will make the relevant plans at the start of each academic year, in consultation with parents.

## 2) Objectives

At Acle Academy our Relationships and Sex Education Programme seeks to:

- Be age appropriate and differentiated to the needs of the pupils including SEN, autistic, visually impaired pupils and any other disabilities that require a bespoke curriculum
- Present information in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner
- Encourage the development of social skills and strategies, which will reduce the risk of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse.
- Be fully **inclusive of all genders, sexual orientations and all types of families (LGBTQ inclusive)**

- Develop a clear understanding of the importance of **consent**; how to give, withdraw, ask for and recognise consent, reinforcing the importance of **relationships** rooted in **mutual respect**
- Explore the skills needed for **effective parenting** and how to assess one's readiness to be a parent
- To represent all types of families and to explore the different methods for starting a family
- Ensure pupils can identify the qualities of **healthy and unhealthy relationships**
- Allow pupils to examine the physical and emotional implications of sexual behaviour and to explore the arguments for **delaying sexual activity**
- Make pupils aware how and where to **seek help** if they are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship
- Prepare pupils for the journey from **adolescence to adulthood**
- Provide pupils with a safe environment to learn about **sexual orientation and gender identity**, reinforcing the importance of mutual respect and tackling LGBTQ misconceptions, homophobia, transphobia, bi-phobia and gender stereotypes
- Ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of **sexual and reproductive biology**, including knowledge of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases
- Ensure pupils understand the different risks associated with various types of sexual activity and understand how to engage in **safe sexual activity** by exploring a range of **contraception**
- Place paramount importance on online safety and the risks of using social media and the internet for sexual purposes
- Develop pupils' understanding of the dangers of pornographic material

RSE is:

Embedded in the Character and Culture Curriculum and delivered by a specialist/ Qualified teacher. It also contributes to the science curriculum, and elements of it is covered in assemblies and during tutor time.

### **3) Legislation (statutory regulations and guidance)**

From September 2020 the guidance document '*Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers*' will become statutory. This document clearly sets out the curriculum content that secondary schools must deliver on RSE and Health Education. This document contains information on what schools should do and sets out the legal duties with which schools must comply when teaching Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. Unless otherwise specified, 'school' means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent schools, including academies and free schools, non-maintained

Documents that also inform the school's RSE policy include:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)

- Equality Act (2010),
- Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014)
- Keeping children safe in education – Statutory safeguarding guidance (2016)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)

### **Relationship to other policies**

The RSE policy can also be linked to other policies. e.g.:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Drugs and Substance Misuse Education Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equalities Policy

### **Equalities and Disability Discrimination Act**

Acle Academy provides education for all, acknowledging that the society within which we live is enriched by diversity. We strive to ensure that the ethos of the school reflects diversity of all members of the school community, where everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect and fairness. Students are provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity. (See Equalities Policy).

### **Legal responsibilities and working with parents**

The law in relation to RSE states:

- The governing bodies of schools are required to keep an up to date RSE Policy that describes content and the organisation of RSE provided outside the science national curriculum.
- Parental support is integral to the success of our RSE curriculum. While we have an educational and legal obligation to provide young people with Relationships & Sex Education, we respect the primary role of the parents in educating their children about these matters. Our RSE programme is outlined on our website through the Character and Culture curriculum map, and parents/guardians are very welcome to explore our RSE curriculum further by requesting to view the teaching materials or meeting with teachers.
- Under the Education Act 1993, parents have the right to withdraw their children from either part, or all, of the Sex Education provided by the school. However, this does not include aspects of Sex Education covered by the Science National Curriculum. From September 2020, parents and carers cannot withdraw their child from Health Education or the Relationships Education element of RSE. A young person, up until three school terms before they turn 16, can choose to receive Sex Education if they would like to, and we as a school should arrange for your child to receive this teaching in one of those three terms. Whilst every effort is made, sometimes relationship and sex topics can arise incidentally in other subjects, lessons and situations and it is not possible to withdraw pupils from these relatively limited and often unplanned discussions.
- Parents with concerns or considering withdrawing their child for RSE should in the first instance contact the head of dept. for Character and Culture, who will invite the parent to a meeting to discuss their concerns and reassure the parents of the health and educational benefits of RSE. In most cases, this resolves any concerns, but should parents still wish to withdraw their child from RSE then a request should be made in writing to the Principal.

#### **4) Curriculum Design**

##### **Core principles**

##### **Acle Academy aims to provide young people with:**

- relationship skills that prepare them for the challenges of the teenage years and adult life
- opportunities to explore their own values and develop their own moral framework
- opportunities to understand and accept difference and diversity
- an understanding of their own bodies
- an awareness of the rights they have over their own body
- the ability to know where to seek help and advice within and outside school
- high self-esteem, self-awareness and emotional health
- the skills to be assertive
- good communication skills
- the skills to make positive informed choices (that reduce risk)
- the ability to respect the right of others to hold opinions that differ from their own as long as these views do not impact on the rights of others.
- the ability to take responsibility for and accept the consequences of their own actions
- the knowledge to reduce the risks to their own and the health of others
- the ability to understand the risks to health and well-being associated with teenage conception

##### **Acle Academy teaches RSE within the following moral and values framework engendering:**

- self-respect
- respect and tolerance towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, feelings, views and sexual orientation/gender identity
- an awareness of the way others feel
- mutual support and co-operation
- honesty and openness
- the acceptance of the responsibility for and the consequences of personal actions
- the right of people to hold their own views within the boundaries of respect for the rights of others
- the right not to be abused by or taken advantage of by other people
- the right to accurate information about sex and relationship issues

##### **How will the RSE programme be monitored and evaluated?**

Evaluation of the RSE programme outside the science order is conducted using a variety of activities that have been built into the programme:

- Student self-assessment completed at beginning and end of topic
- Teacher assessment of students' progress
- Lesson observations
- Department review

**CPD:** CPD opportunities are offered within school to ensure consistency of delivery.

##### **The Importance of Sex and Relationships Education in Secondary Schools**

##### **What do young people know?**

Sex and Relationships Policy: March 2021

Children and young people are bombarded with sexualised images and content via all aspects of the media, from a variety of sources, from a very early age. The messages received from these sources can often be unhealthy, inaccurate, stereotyped and trigger prejudice. Some young people may feel that talking about sex related topics is taboo, leaving them with nowhere to process this information and feeling confused. A sensitively taught RSE programme in the secondary school can provide an opportunity for young people to discuss sex and relationship topics in a safe environment, at an age appropriate level and at a time when they will be developing their own attitudes, values and opinions. Hopefully, the programme will complement any parental education and support those young people where none of the issues around sex and relationship have been discussed in the home.

### **It's not just about sex**

Effective RSE is embedded in the Character and Culture curriculum and not only focuses on sexual facts, but also on the development of other important personal and social skills including, assertiveness, effective communication, decision-making, and self-awareness. During key stages 3 & 4 young people are becoming increasingly aware of their own sexuality and that of those around them. It is important therefore, to provide opportunities for these young people to explore and develop those attitudes, values and opinions that will subsequently help in the development of their personal moral framework.

### **Be Safe**

Young people who feel good about themselves and are knowledgeable and confident about their own bodies are more likely to act responsibly in their sexual behaviour and to have fulfilling relationships. Research shows that effective SRE, starting in primary school, positively delays sexual activity and does not encourage experimentation. Equipping young people with the skills to access information, support and advice on sexual health allows them to be autonomous in their relationships and hopefully removes the peer and media influences from their decision-making processes.

### **What is good quality secondary RSE aiming to do?**

Effective secondary RSE aims to enable young people to develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about relationships. It aids further development of emotional health and self-esteem and provides young people with an understanding of their own bodies and sexuality. It challenges prejudice and stereotyping and guides young people towards the acceptance of diversity. RSE enables young people to protect themselves and seek help and support. Good practice RSE builds on previous knowledge and understanding and provides a progressive curriculum based on the needs of the individual.

## **5) Sensitive or Controversial Topics**

- During Relationships & Sex Education lessons (and at other times) controversial topics may arise. The judgement of individual teachers will decide as to whether the subjects are suitable for class discussion. Teachers will try to answer pupils' questions honestly, sensitively and in such a way that takes the context into account. In all circumstances, the professional judgement of the teacher must come in to play

- If a question is felt to be too explicit, the teacher will acknowledge it and deal with it outside the whole class setting
- Teachers should establish a set of ground rules so that young people are aware of parameters.
- Pupils should never be asked to disclose their sexual orientation or personal information about themselves or others
- Teachers and pupils will show respect for all genders, sexualities and different types of families
- Any concerns that arise about sexual abuse or any other safeguarding issues must be followed up under the school's safeguarding procedures
- Where discussions about sexual behaviour arise from apparently unrelated topics, teachers will give attention to relevant issues, again using professional judgement.
- HIV/AIDS - Informative discussions covering the transmission of the HIV virus may, by the very nature of the subject, include discussion of certain sexual acts and practices. Teachers will deal sensitively and objectively with information of this kind, and will always avoid the development of bias and prejudice. Teachers will challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about HIV.
- Teachers should also be aware that they may be dealing with pupils who are HIV positive or who have close links with others who are.

## **6) Confidentiality**

- Effective RSE should enable and encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are in a sexual relationship or contemplating being so. It is desirable but not always possible that that person should be their parent or carer. The law allows health professionals to see and in some circumstances to treat young people confidentially. Part of this process includes counselling and discussion about talking to parents.
- When a member of staff learns from an under 16 year old that they are having, or are contemplating having sexual intercourse, they must refer the matter to the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead, or if a sixteen year old pupil is contemplating having sexual intercourse with a pupil below the age of 16, who will lead on the most appropriate course of action in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

## **7) The Role of Health Professions in the Delivery of Relationships and Sex Education**

The school will on occasions work with visitors and health professionals in the development and implementation of the schools Relationships & Sex programme. Any visitors used to help in the delivery of the Relationships & Sex Education programme will be clear about the boundaries of their input and will be aware of the Relationships & Sex Education curriculum, relevant school policies and their work will be planned and agreed in advance.

## **8) An Outline of the Core Themes at Key Stage 3 & 4**

**Students will be taught:**

### **Core Theme 1: Health and wellbeing**

- How to maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing including sexual health.\*
- About parenthood and the consequences of teenage pregnancy.
- How to assess and manage risks to health and to stay, and keep others, safe.
- How to identify and access help, advice and support.
- How to make informed choices about health and wellbeing matters including drugs, alcohol and tobacco; maintaining a balanced diet; physical activity; emotional health and wellbeing and sexual health.
- The role and influence of the media on lifestyle.

*\* Sexual health is included within this core theme; however, sexual health will also be considered within the context of healthy relationships.*

### **Core Theme 2: Relationships and Sex Education**

- How to develop and maintain a variety of healthy relationships within a range of social/cultural contexts and to develop parenting skills.
- How to recognise and manage emotions within a range of relationships.
- How to deal with risky or negative relationships including all forms of bullying (including the distinct challenges posed by online bullying) and abuse, sexual and other violence and online encounters.
- About the concept of consent in a variety of contexts (including in sexual relationships.)
- About managing loss including bereavement, separation and divorce.
- To respect equality and be a productive member of a diverse community.
- How to identify and access appropriate advice and support.

***Additional information regarding the content of the PSHE Association SRE curriculum can be found in Appendix A***

### **How we will support students thought to be 'at risk'**

Students thought to be at risk, or vulnerable in relation to particular topics, will be informed prior to the lesson of the content being covered. Parents will also be made aware when necessary.

# Appendix A

## Key Stage 3

### Core theme 1: Health and well-being

#### At KS3 Students should have the opportunity to learn:

- to recognise their personal strengths and how this affects their self-confidence and self-esteem
- to recognise that the way in which personal qualities, attitudes, skills and achievements are evaluated by others, affects confidence and self-esteem
- to be able to accept helpful feedback or reject unhelpful criticism
- to understand that self-esteem can change with personal circumstances, such as those associated with family and friendships, achievements and employment
- the characteristics of mental and emotional health and strategies for managing it; to manage growth and change as normal parts of growing up (including consolidation and reinforcement of Key Stage 2 learning on puberty, human reproduction, pregnancy and the physical and emotional changes of adolescence)
- the importance of taking increased responsibility for their own personal hygiene
- that certain infections can be spread through sexual activity and that barrier contraceptives offer some protection against certain STIs
- about contraception, including the condom and pill (see also *Relationships*)
- how the media portrays young people, body image and health issues and that identity is affected by a range of factors, including the media and a positive sense of self
- ways of recognising and reducing risk, minimising harm and getting help in emergency and risky situations
- about how to access local health services

### Core theme 2: Relationship and Sex Education

#### At KS3 Students should have the opportunity to learn:

- the qualities and behaviours they should expect and exhibit in a wide variety of positive relationships (including teams, class, friendships etc.)
- to further develop and rehearse the skills of team working including objective setting, outcome planning, cooperation, negotiation, managing setback and compromise
- to further develop the communication skills of active listening, negotiation, offering and receiving constructive feedback and assertiveness
- to explore the range of positive qualities people bring to relationships
- that relationships can cause strong feelings and emotions (including sexual attraction)
- the features of positive and stable relationships (including trust, mutual respect, honesty) and those of unhealthy relationships
- that the media portrayal of relationships may not reflect real life
- different types of relationships, including those within families, friendships, romantic or intimate relationships and the factors that can affect these (including age, gender, power and interests)

- the nature and importance of marriage, civil partnerships and other stable, long-term relationships for family life and bringing up children
- that marriage is a commitment, entered into freely, never forced through threat or coercion and how to safely access sources of support for themselves or their peers should they feel vulnerable.
- the roles and responsibilities of parents, carers and children in families
- how to deal with a breakdown in a relationship and the effects of change, including loss, separation, divorce and bereavement
- to understand the importance of friendship and to begin to consider love and sexual relationships in this context
- to understand what expectations might be of having a girl/boyfriend
- to consider different levels of intimacy and their consequences
- to acknowledge the right not to have intimate relationships until ready
- about readiness for sex and the benefits of delaying sex (or any level of intimacy beyond that with which the individual feels comfortable)
- that consent is freely given and that being pressurised, manipulated or coerced to agree to something is not 'consent'; that the seeker of consent is responsible for ensuring that consent has been given and if not given or withdrawn, that decision should always be respected.
- to learn about the law in relation to consent (including the legal age of consent for sexual activity, the legal definition of consent and the responsibility in law for the seeker of consent to ensure that consent has been given)
- about contraception, including the condom and pill (see also 'Health') and the importance of communication and negotiation in contraceptive use
- about the risks related to unprotected sex, which could include exploring the consequences of unintended pregnancy and the options available in such circumstances
- to recognise the portrayal and impact of sex in the media and social media (which might include music videos, advertising and sexual images shared between young people)
- about the difference between sex, gender identity and sexual orientation
- to recognise that there is diversity in sexual attraction and developing sexuality
- the terms associated with sex, gender identity and sexual orientation and to understand accepted terminology.
- about the unacceptability of sexist, homophobic, transphobic and disablist language and behaviour, the need to challenge it and how to do so
- to recognise bullying and abuse in all its forms (including prejudice-based bullying both in person and online/via text, exploitation and trafficking) and to have the skills and strategies to manage being targeted or witnessing others being targeted
- the support services available should they feel or believe others feel they are being abused and how to access them
- to recognise peer pressure and have strategies to manage it

## **Key Stage 4**

### **Core theme 1: Health and well-being**

#### **Building on KS3, students at KS4 should have the opportunity to learn:**

- to evaluate the extent to which their self-confidence and self-esteem are affected by the judgments of others
- where and how to obtain health information, advice and support (including sexual health services)
- to take increased responsibility for monitoring their own health (including testicular and breast self-examination)
- how lifestyle choices affect a foetus
- about STIs, including HIV/AIDS, how to protect themselves and others from infection and how to respond if they feel they or others are at risk
- to recognize and manage feelings about, and influences on, their body image including the media's portrayal of idealised and artificial body shapes
- about personal safety and protection, reducing risk and minimising harm in different settings (including social settings, the street, on roads and during travel)
- the wider risks and consequences of legal and illegal substance use including on their personal safety, career, relationships and future lifestyle

## **Core theme 2: Relationships**

### **Building on KS3, students at KS4 should have the opportunity to learn:**

- strategies to manage strong emotions and feelings
- the characteristics and benefits of positive, strong, supportive, equal relationships
- that living together, marriage and civil partnerships are ways that people freely and without coercion, demonstrate their commitment to each other
- parenting skills and qualities and their central importance to family life (including the implications of young parenthood)
- to recognise when a relationship is unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of both emotional and physical abuse or violence including honour based violence, forced marriage and rape) and strategies to manage this or access support for self or others at risk.
- managing changes in personal relationships including the ending of relationships
- to develop an awareness of exploitation, bullying and harassment in relationships (including the unique challenges posed by online bullying and the unacceptability of physical, emotional, sexual abuse in all types of teenage relationships, including in group settings such as gangs) and how to respond
- about the concept of consent in relevant, age-appropriate contexts building on Key Stage 3
- about impact of domestic abuse (including sources of help and support)
- the impact of separation, divorce and bereavement on families and the need to adapt to changing circumstances
- about statutory and voluntary organisations that support relationships experiencing difficulties or in crisis, such as relationship breakdown, separation, divorce, or bereavement
- how to access such organisations and other sources of information, advice and support
- about diversity in sexual attraction and developing sexuality, including sources of support and reassurance and how to access them

- to understand the role of sex in the media and its impact on sexuality (including pornography and related sexual ethics such as consent, negotiation, boundaries, respect, gender norms, sexual 'norms', trust, communication, pleasure, orgasms, rights, empowerment, sexism and feminism)
- how to seek consent and to respect others' right to give, not give or withdraw consent to engage in different degrees of sexual activity
- to recognise when others are using manipulation, persuasion or coercion and how to respond
- to understand the pernicious influence of gender double standards and victim-blaming
- to recognise the impact of drugs and alcohol on choices and sexual behaviour
- to manage unwanted attention in a variety of contexts (including harassment and stalking)
- to understand and respect others' faith and cultural expectations concerning relationships and sexual activity
- to assess readiness for sex
- about accessing and the correct use of contraception, negotiating condom use, reinforcing and building on learning in Key Stage 3
- to understand the consequences of unintended pregnancy and of teenage parenthood (in the context of learning about parenting skills and qualities and their importance to family life)
- the reasons why parents choose to adopt/foster or to place children for adoption/fostering
- about abortion, including the current legal position and the range of beliefs and opinions about it
- the pathways available in the event of unintended pregnancy, the possible physical and emotional reactions and responses people may have to each option and who to talk to for accurate, impartial advice and support
- that fertility levels can vary in different people; can be damaged by some sexually transmitted infections, decreases with age
- about the options open to people who are not able to conceive
- the role peers can play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support)