



Walthamstow Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Adopted by:	Walthamstow Academy	
Date:	September 2026	
Signed off by:	Emma Skae	Leon French
Role:	Principal	Chair of Governors
Review frequency:	Annually	
Review date:	September 2027	



United Learning
The best in everyone™

■ Ambition ■ Confidence ■ Creativity ■ Respect ■ Enthusiasm ■ Determination

DEFINITION

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

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

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Its objective is to enable students to learn about:

- (i) families and people who care for them, including the nature of marriage and civil partnership and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children,
- (ii) forming and maintaining caring relationships,
- (iii) the characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships, including online,
- (iv) how relationships may affect physical and mental health and wellbeing, and how to ensure they are safe, and
- (v) intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

Relationships and sex education will only use teaching and materials which are appropriate to the age and will be sensitive to the religious background of the students receiving it

We aim to teach relationships and sex education with reference to our academy core values: ambition, determination and respect. In particular the idea of respect for oneself and for others is at the heart of our RSE programme.

LINKS TO LEGISLATION, STATUTORY GUIDANCE AND WA POLICIES

As a secondary academy we must provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreement to have regard to [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

The curriculum described in this policy was designed using the following DfE guidance:

[RSE Statutory guidance](#)

[RSE Secondary curriculum](#)

This policy links to the following Walthamstow Academy policies:

[Safeguarding](#)

[Equal Opportunities](#)

[Special Educational Needs](#)

PARENT, STAFF AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT REGARDING THE POLICY

At Walthamstow Academy we believe that success for our students can only be achieved when parents/ carers, staff and students work together. With this in mind, all parents will be given the opportunity to understand the purpose and content of our Relationships and Sex Education curriculum and this takes the form of a parent consultation which all parents/ carers are invited to contribute to. Parents/ carers will also be given the opportunity during this consultation to discuss any concerns they may have which will in turn help to develop our curriculum moving forwards. During this consultation we are able to share examples of some of the key resources which are used as part of Relationships and Sex education to reassure parents/ carers of the content and enable parents/ carers to fully understand the content so that they can reinforce the key messages at home.

We also believe that success for our students is achieved when students and staff work together. We regularly invite student voice on our RSE provision and we engage with students when we update the RSE policy annually, through a meaningful student voice process.

PARENTAL RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

Although parents/ carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education that is delivered as part of our Relationships and Sex education curriculum, it is our aim at Walthamstow Academy to encourage parents to understand the value of this education in helping to keep our students safe and to support their social, emotional and physical well-being and development.

Parents/ carers have the right to withdraw their **child from** some or all of the sex education provided (except from sex education taught under the science curriculum), but not from the relationships education up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the student wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the academy will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Assistant Principal in charge of RSE. Before granting this request the Assistant Principal will discuss this request with parents/ carers to fully understand and address the concerns parents may have. This will allow for Walthamstow Academy to clarify the content, nature and purpose of the curriculum. Once these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. safeguarding concerns), the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. If a student is withdrawn from sex education, the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary. Our curriculum has been agreed in consultation with parents, students and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't seek potentially inaccurate answers from sources online or other sources.

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health, religious and economic (PSHRE) education curriculum, during tutor time and is taught by students' form tutors. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

Students are taught much of RSE within their tutor groups. Most of the curriculum is delivered by the tutor, but some topics may be taught to the group by another member of academy staff who has received specific training on the delivery of a content area or an external provider.

The religious background of all students is taken into account when planning teaching and materials, so that sensitive topics are handled appropriately, and that all relationship education teaching meets the requirements of equality law.

TEACHING OF STUDENTS WITH SEND

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education at Walthamstow Academy must be accessible for all students. This is particularly important when planning teaching for students with special educational needs and disabilities.

High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility. Walthamstow Academy will pay due regard to the preparing for adulthood outcomes, as set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching RSE to those with SEND.

Our programme will take account of those students who are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. We will note that RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some students; for example, those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities.

THE LAW

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions. Students will be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism/radicalisation

- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or ‘county lines’ drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)

TRAINING AND DELIVERY BY EXTERNAL VISITORS

Staff will be trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it will be included in our continuing professional development calendar throughout the year.

The Senior Vice Principal in charge of RSE 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 and/or deliver RSE sessions to students where appropriate. As with any visitor, we will check the visitor or visiting organisation’s credentials. We will ensure that the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with our planned programme as set out in this policy. We will discuss the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for our students. We will expect to see the materials visitors will use as well as a lesson plan in advance, so that we can ensure it meets the full range of students’ needs (e.g. special educational needs). We will also ensure that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with our safeguarding policy. Parents/ carers will be notified of this in advance of these sessions, and can request to view the content taught during these sessions via the Senior Vice Principal in charge of RSE.

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The delivery of RSE is monitored through:

- Learning walks
- Student voice
- Staff voice

This monitoring will be undertaken by Heads of Year, the PSHE Lead, the senior leadership team, and other relevant pastoral staff. A programme of monitoring will be devised by the Senior Vice Principal in charge of RSE and PSHE Lead.

Students’ individual development in RSE is monitored by their tutor as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the Senior Vice Principal in charge of RSE annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the LGB

COMPLAINTS

Walthamstow Academy prides itself on the high quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. It recognises that parents/ carers may, from time to time, have concerns about the progress, achievement, behaviour or welfare of their child. This includes any concerns that you may have about the Sex and Relationships policy. Parents/ carers are encouraged to make those concerns known to staff so that they can be addressed in partnership with the Academy. For further details on our complaints procedure, please see our complaints policy.

APPENDIX 1: CONTENT TO BE TAUGHT IN EACH SCHOOL YEAR

Each year students will review topics taught in previous years as part of RSE. They will also approach new topics at an age-appropriate point. Where topics are being taught to a year group for the first time they are identified in red (except in Year 7 where all content is assumed to be new).

Year	Curriculum to be covered (students should know...)
7	Friends & Family - that there are different types of committed, stable relationships. - how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children. - what marriage is, including their legal status – for example, that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony. - why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into. - the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships. - the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting. - how to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships), how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed - the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as: - trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict - reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship - practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships <i>What is grief? and How can we support others' mental health?</i> Online & Media - their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online - about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online - not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them - how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours

	Safety & Respect • how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others Intimate relationships & health • key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing • the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health • how to respect personal space, understand consent within friendships and communicate boundaries clearly Mental and Physical Wellbeing • about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics • about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist • the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination • the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn • how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer • how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary • that happiness is linked to being connected to others Drugs, alcohol and tobacco • the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances First Aid • basic treatment for common injuries
8	Friends & Family • the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as: • trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict • reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship • practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) • 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 people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs

- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

Online & Media

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- the impact of viewing harmful content
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
- how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours
- how online games and platforms use features such as in-game purchases and gambling-style rewards, and how these can influence spending decisions
- how AI-generated content, including deepfakes, can be used to spread misinformation, and how to question whether online content is genuine

Safety & Respect

- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others
- how to recognise and challenge misogyny and harmful online messages about women and relationships, including those shared by influencers

Intimate relationships & health

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- what consent means in relationships, how to communicate and respect boundaries, and why consent must be freely given and can be withdrawn at any time

	Mental and Physical Wellbeing • about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics • about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist • the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination • the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn
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	• how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary • that happiness is linked to being connected to others • how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns • common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression) Drugs, alcohol and tobacco • the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions • the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances • the health risks of vaping, including nicotine addiction First Aid • basic treatment for common injuries
9	Friends & Family • how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) • 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 people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs • about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help • that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control • what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable • the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal Online & Media • their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online • not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them • what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online • the impact of viewing harmful content • that specifically sexually explicit material, for example pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see

	themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners • that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail • how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online • how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours • the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image), how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online Safety & Respect • the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships • how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online Intimate relationships & health • how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship • that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing • the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause • that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others • that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex • the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available • the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage • that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)
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	Mental and Physical Wellbeing • about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics • the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn • common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression) • how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health • the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness Drugs, alcohol and tobacco • the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions • the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances • the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood • the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency • awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks • the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so • the health risks of vaping, including nicotine addiction, and how to respond to pressure to vape First Aid • basic treatment for common injuries • life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR • the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed
10	Friends & Family • how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) • 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 people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs • about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help • that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control • what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable

- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

Online & Media

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- the impact of viewing harmful content
- that specifically sexually explicit material, for example pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
- the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image), how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online
- how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours
- how AI-generated content, including deepfakes, can spread misinformation, and how to check whether online content is genuine
- how AI may change different jobs and the skills young people may need in the future

Safety & Respect

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online

	Intimate relationships & health • how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship • that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing • the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause • that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others • that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex • the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available • the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage • that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help) • how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing • about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment • how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour • how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment
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	Mental and Physical Wellbeing • about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics • the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn • the benefits of regular self-examination and screening • common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression) • how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health • the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness • about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation Drugs, alcohol and tobacco • the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions • the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances • the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood • the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency • awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks • the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so First Aid • basic treatment for common injuries • life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR • the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed

11	Year 11 revisits and deepens key RSE concepts through discussion, scenarios and debate. This includes consent in relationships and image sharing; recognising coercion, pressure and sexual harassment; and challenging misogyny and harmful messages about relationships, including those shared by online influencers. Pupils will consider how to respond safely, support others and seek help. Some discussions may take place in single-sex groups where appropriate.
12/13	Sixth Form RSE Sixth Form revisits and deepens learning about consent, healthy relationships and personal boundaries through discussion, scenarios and debate. This includes recognising coercion, sexual harassment and sexual violence; understanding image-based abuse and coerced image sharing; and knowing how to seek support. Students critically examine misogyny and harmful online messages about gender and relationships, including those shared by influencers and online communities. They also consider how pornography can shape expectations of relationships, consent and violence. Students learn how to access NHS services, including sexual health services, and make informed decisions about their healthcare.

APPENDIX 2: FORM FOR PARENTS TO USE IF THEY WISH TO WITHDRAW CONSENT

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	