

**HOLYROOD**

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**POLICY**

# **Relationship and Sex Education Policy**

*Updated: March 2024*

## **Holyrood Academy Relationship and Sex Education Policy**

### **Introduction**

The Relationships Education, Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Student and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all students receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all students receiving secondary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in all Academies except independent Academies. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) continues to be compulsory in independent Academies.

This Policy is available on the Holyrood Academy website and it can be made available on request. New staff are made aware of the Policy as part of their Induction to the Academy programme.

### **Rationale**

At Holyrood Academy, we believe that effective Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is essential if our students, as they grow, are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. It contributes to promoting the spiritual, moral social, cultural, emotional, mental and physical development of our students, preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. We understand that there is a statutory requirement for us to have in place such a policy compiled by the Governors.

We believe RSE should not be delivered in isolation, but be firmly rooted in the Personal Development Programme and supplemented by Science and other subjects of our taught curriculum.

Research conclusively shows that effective RSE enables young people to make sense of the sexual messages and imagery that are around them. RSE enables students to understand risks and consequences of sexual activity, and to gain the knowledge and skills they need to stay safe and be healthy. RSE education enables students to delay sexual activity until they are able to take responsibility to ensure the positive physical and emotional benefits of intimate loving relationships.

Effective RSE can impact on the academic achievement of students as it can enable those who face difficulties to get help and thus helps them to stay on track with learning.

### **Definition of Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)**

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, 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. It is about respect, love and care and the benefits of making and maintaining a stable marriage or relationship.

Relationship and Sex Education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development.

We recognise that to be human is to experience sexual feelings, seek connections with other people and develop relationships, which may be physical or non-physical.

Our teaching of sex and relationship education is applicable to all sexual orientations and will include teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. All students will have been taught LGBTQ+ content at a time considered appropriate and, at that stage, the content will be fully integrated into the programme of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson.

RSE seeks to enable young people to feel positive about themselves, manage relationships and access the infrastructure of support available.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at Holyrood Academy are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

At Holyrood Academy, we aim to provide our students with an age appropriate RSE programme that is tailored to their physical and emotional maturity as advised by the national PSHE association. In doing this, we acknowledge the value of contributing to a spiral curriculum. It should enable them to make positive choices about their sexual and emotional health, both now and in the future. Sex education is taught within the wider context of relationships.

We believe that RSE will be achieved by providing an environment and atmosphere where students feel safe, relaxed, not intimidated, but focussed; and where they have confidence and trust in the knowledge, ability and skills of their teachers.

### **Moral Framework**

Students will be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:-

- Being honest with themselves and others.
- Developing a critical awareness of themselves and others.
- Learning to show tolerance, understanding, respect and care for others.
- Acknowledging the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in sexual relationships.
- Developing an awareness and belief in one's own identity.
- Having a positive attitude towards the value of stable relationships for the upbringing of a student.
- Acknowledging and understanding diversity with regard to religion, culture and sexual orientation.
- Having self-discipline regarding their sexuality.

### **Working with Parents/Carers**

The Academy is committed to working in close partnership with parents and carers who are the key people in teaching their student about sex and relationships. The Academy aims to complement parents in this role. The religious convictions and culture of students and their parents/carers will always be respected.

Parents/Carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of a statutory RSE. Before granting, any such request a member of the Senior Team will discuss this request with parents/carers, and, as appropriate, with the student to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Any requests and discussions will be documented to ensure a record is kept.

Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the student turns 16. After this point, if the student wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the Academy will make arrangements to provide the student with sex education.

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

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the Academy will respect the parent/carers' request to withdraw the student, up to and until three terms before the student turns 16. The Academy will provide information for other sources of support to enable the parent/carer to meet their responsibility to provide alternative RSE.

If a student is excused from sex education, the Academy will ensure that the student receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

### **Content and Organisation**

*Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.*

'Relationships and Sex Education' (DfE, 2019, p.25)

RSE is taught through a well-structured and planned curriculum within the Personal Development Programme (PDP) curriculum. In addition, biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

Contributions may be made through other subjects such as Health and Social Care. Issues about RSE may arise spontaneously in other lessons. This is not considered to be part of the planned RSE programme and parents or carers cannot withdraw students in these circumstances.

Sex education is taught within the wider context of relationships commencing in Year 7 with managing relationships enabling students to understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within pastoral relationships.

It is recognised that students with special educational needs are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Students with special educational needs will generally receive RSE within the planned programmes. However to respond to their specific needs it may occasionally be appropriate to withdraw them to deliver the information in a different way in order to meet their individual needs.

The curriculum will:

- teach about relationships, love and care and the responsibilities of parenthood as well as sex;
- ensure needs of all students are appropriately met, with relevant provision for protected characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender reassignment;
- ensure teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content, emphasising the importance of equality and respect;
- focus on boys and girls equally;
- build self-esteem;
- teach the acceptance of responsibility and the consequences of one's actions in relation to sexual activity and parenthood;
- provide young people with information about different types of contraception, safe sex and how they can access local sources of further advice and treatment;
- give young people a clear understanding of the arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure, including intimacy without sexual activity
- link sex and relationship education with issues of peer pressure and other risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol; and ensure young people understand how the law applies to sexual relationships as well as broader safeguarding issues.

'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education', DfE, - published 2019, p. 30

Aspects of RSE may be delivered through:

- PDP lessons
- Impact Days
- Theatre in Education programmes
- Core and foundation subjects
- Tutor time, including assembly

The RSE programme will be delivered by:

- PDP CurriculumTeam
- Subject Teachers
- Visiting Health Professionals.

Normally male and female students will be taught together. However, when and if deemed appropriate, students are taught in separate gender groups.

### **Equal Opportunities**

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of student 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, and some student may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after student or young carers).

No individual will be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

The programme will aim to be sensitive to the needs of all students in the Academy, regardless of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation or health status.

A designated Governor is the link to the full Governing Body with regard to PDP and RSE provision in the Academy.

### **Staff**

The Senior Leadership Team will always identify staff who will co-ordinate the delivery and organisation of the Personal Development Programme. Continuous professional development will be provided for teachers involved in delivering the RSE programme in the Academy.

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE
- 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 Headteacher.

Teachers will promote the use of appropriate terminology and respond sensitively and effectively to the inappropriate use of language. RSE is a crucial role in reducing sexist, sexual, homophobic and transphobic bullying. Staff will respond to reports and incidents of bullying by referring to the Academy's Bullying Policy.

Teachers will promote the use of inclusive language i.e.: 'partner' rather than boy/girlfriend/husband/wife in appropriate contexts. Staff and students will be involved in the negotiation and setting of ground rules in their lessons.

### **Students**

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

Assessment for learning is planned into the RSE curriculum enabling students to reflect on their own progress in knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudinal development.

Review of the programme is planned into the RSE curriculum enabling students to reflect on how the topics have been delivered, their currency and appropriateness.

### Confidentiality

Parents/carers will be informed of the Academy's confidentiality policy. The Academy will be acting in loco parentis. Whenever a student makes a disclosure, they will be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers. Child Protection issues will be addressed according to our Child Protection Policy.

Different codes of conduct apply to different professionals working in our Academy. Through the dissemination of our Confidentiality Policy students, parents, staff and health professionals working with us are aware of the different roles people have within the Academy, the confidential support available and how confidentiality works in practice.

Students will be made aware of the confidential support available from doctors, local clinics and support groups.

Staff **must** follow child protection guidelines. Members of staff who are not health care professionals must not give individual contraceptive advice.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and review of the RSE programme is carried out annually using the Academy Improvement Plan, Curriculum Review and Team Improvement Plan.

## Appendix 1

### **Code of Practice for delivering the RSE Programme**

'Teachers' is used as a generic term to cover all those adults delivering the programme including tutors and external speakers and counsellors.

The RSE programme enables students to learn about the significance of loving and stable relationships and includes learning to *'understand human sexuality...the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay and ...about obtaining appropriate advice on sexual health.*

*Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others'* 'Sex and Relationship Education Guidance' pub DFE July 2000 p4.

Pastoral Team Leaders will discuss the RSE programme with teachers at planning meetings. Teachers should raise issues of concern or discomfort about delivery of any aspects of the programme at these meetings to ensure that opportunity is available to provide adequate support, training and resourcing. Teachers will be given support and training to deliver aspects of the programme that are concerned with complex and controversial issues. Specialist teachers and/or qualified external speakers and counsellors will deliver some topics.

The establishment of ground rules is included in schemes of work within the RSE programme. Ground rules create a safe environment in which participants do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments. Ground rules should include the use of appropriate language; behaviour; sharing information and depersonalising questions. Teachers should remind students and enforce the use of ground rules throughout the RSE programme.

Teachers should inform students that there are areas of discussion for which complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Students must be informed that any inappropriate revelations occurring within any curriculum area or pastoral time including disclosure of premature sexual activity or alleged abuse will be reported immediately to the appropriate senior member of staff in accordance with the Academy's Child Protection Policy.

Our RSE programme consistently emphasises the importance of the role of parents in developing the attitudes and moral perspectives of our students. Any teacher, approached by a student for specific advice on aspects of his/her sexual behaviour or contraception, should encourage them to seek advice from their parent/guardian and, if appropriate, a relevant Health Professional. In all such instances, the student's Pastoral Team Leader must be informed in accordance with the Academy's Child Protection Policy.

Teachers will present factual knowledge and moral issues using a range of teaching methods and up-to- date resources. Teachers should present topics and issues objectively. Teachers should actively guide discussion, challenging fixed assumptions and encouraging students to explore their attitudes and judgements.

Teachers should use formal, technical language in their presentation of topics.



Students should be encouraged to be careful and responsible in their use of language. Teachers must recognise that some students will need guidance and direction in learning and using appropriate language.

Some aspects of the RSE programme will arise naturally within other curriculum areas. In such instances, it is appropriate for teachers to answer factual questions and to develop issues relating to their subject area. It is not appropriate for teachers to expand into a more open-ended discussion of sexually-related issues. Teachers will use their professional judgment to decide whether it is appropriate to deal with some issues and questions that arise spontaneously in lessons in front of the whole class.

Any inappropriate revelations or questioning on sexually related issues must be reported immediately to the appropriate senior member of staff in accordance with the Academy's Child Protection Policy.

## Appendix 2: Parent Form: Withdrawal from Sex Education within RSE

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

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