



Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Policy

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees with reference to the academy's Equality Policy. The aims of the Equality Policy are to ensure that Plume Academy meets the needs of all, taking account of gender identity, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances. It is important that in this academy we meet the diverse needs of students to ensure inclusion for all and that all students are prepared for full participation in a multi-ethnic society.

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Last Reviewed: September 2024	Next Review: September 2025

1. DEFINITIONS

Relationships and Sex Education (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.

- 1.1 “Board of Trustees” – this refers to the Plume Academy’s Board of Trustees, who have ultimate responsibility for governance on all academy related matters.
- 1.2 “Academy” – this refers to Plume Academy.
- 1.3 “We/Us” – this refers to all employees and stakeholders associated with Plume Academy.
- 1.4 “DfE” – this refers to the Government’s Department for Education”.
- 1.5 “LA” – this refers to the local authority, based on its location within England. This may be a county, unitary authority, metropolitan borough or London borough.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- a) Legislation set in place by successive Education Acts indicates that it is the academy’s responsibility to ensure that all students are offered the opportunity of receiving a comprehensive, well-planned programme of relationships and sexual health education during their school careers in fulfilment of the requirement of the Secretary of State’s 2000 guidance on Sex and Religious Education (“SRE”) Act 2011 and National Curriculum 2014 that the school curriculum should be one which:
 - i. promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the academy and of society; and
 - ii. prepares such students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- b) From September 1994, schools introducing changes incorporated in Sections 352 and 404 of the Education Act 1996, have the following legal powers and duties:
 - i. those responsible for governance must make a written statement of their policy on sex and relationships education available to parents and carers;
 - ii. sex and relationships education (including education about abortion, *Human Immunodeficiency Virus (“HIV”)*, *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (“AIDS”)* and other sexually-transmitted infections must be provided for all registered students; and
 - iii. sex and relationships education must be provided in such a manner as to encourage young people to have regard to moral considerations and the value of family life.
- c) The Board of Trustees acknowledges its legal responsibilities and in aiming to meet the requirements of the Secretary of State’s 2000 guidance on SRE Act 2011 and National Curriculum 2018, considers that appropriate sex and relationships education must be an important element in the curriculum of the academy in preparing students for adult life (see Appendix). As a secondary academy school, we 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 agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996. At Plume Academy, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

- d) At Plume Academy, when the Relationships and Sexual Health Programme is taught as part of the National Curriculum for Science, it is treated in a factual way and deals with biological details of the reproductive system.
- e) In Personal Development, the Relationships and Sexual and Health Education Programme reflects the broad moral values and ethos of the academy. Such values as respect for oneself and others, honesty, loyalty, responsibility and sensitivity to others are promoted, as is the recognition of the different attitudes and views of others. Relationships and Sexual Health Education is set within the context of a stable family background with the definition of family being any grouping, which gives a child within it the necessary love, care, provision and support needed to thrive. Due regard will be given to the religious groupings within the academy especially in relation to matters which could contravene their core religious beliefs and required actions and behaviours.
- f) Relationships and Sexual Health Education is set within a moral framework also considering emotional and psychological aspects and stressing the importance of behaving in a socially responsible way. It will also respect the cultural backgrounds of all students.
- g) The academy recognises that parents/carers are the key figures in helping their children cope with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up, and in preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities that sexual development brings. Relationships and Sexual Health Education aims to be complementary and supportive of the role of parents/carers, but we also recognise that some students may receive little or no "sex education" from their home setting. Therefore, we need to be responsive to this.

3. AIMS OF RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION, RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary. We have developed the curriculum in consultation with external agencies, parents and carers, 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 do not seek answers online.

- a) The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE):
 - i. to provide objective information about the physical, emotional, moral and social aspects of human sexual development;
 - ii. to prepare students to deal effectively with changes they will experience during puberty and adolescence and to cope with the challenges they will face as adults;
 - iii. to prepare students for the roles they will assume in adult relationships and parenthood by helping them to acquire the knowledge and skills relevant to these areas, particularly when using technology or social networks;
 - iv. to prepare students to view their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner and to enable them to recognise the risks of certain types of sexual behaviour;
 - v. to assist students to develop and clarify a personal set of values and attitudes which in turn will support them in their decision making in the present and in the future;
 - vi. to assist students to understand about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children;
 - vii. to encourage students to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity and respect for themselves and others, acceptance of responsibility, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity;
 - viii. to develop students' self-esteem and self-improvement, encouraging students to view themselves in positive terms;

- ix. to provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place;
- x. to prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene; and
- xi. to teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- xii. To assist student in being able to talk about their emotions

b) The aims of Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing

- i. enable students to make well-informed, positive choices for themselves.
- ii. enable students to understand how their bodies are changing, how they are feeling and why
- iii. to encourage students to further develop the language that they use to talk about their bodies, health and emotions and to understand why terms associated with mental and physical health difficulties should not be used pejoratively.
- iv. enable students to understand where normal variations in emotions and physical complaints end and health and wellbeing issues begin.
- v. To encourage students to recognise the links between good physical health and good mental wellbeing and that this can also influence their ability to learn.
- vi. To encourage students to recognise the importance of self-care, the benefits of physical activity, time spent outdoors, the benefits of sufficient sleep, good nutrition and strategies for building resilience.
- vii. To assist student to know the contribution that hobbies, interests and participation in their own communities can make to overall wellbeing. They should understand that humans are social beings and that outward-facing activity, especially that with a service focus (for example, work, volunteering and participation in organisations such as the scouts or the girl guiding movements, the National Citizen Service or the Duke of Edinburgh Award) are beneficial for wellbeing.
- viii. To provide students with factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental and physical health conditions (such as eating disorders and self-harm), drugs, alcohol and information about effective interventions.

- c. In endeavouring to successfully meet these aims, the academy will take account of and ensure appropriateness to the age and stage of development of all its students.

4. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) It is the responsibility of the Plume Academy Trustees to establish a policy and procedure for Relationships and Sexual Health Education and to monitor its effectiveness.
- b) It is the responsibility of the Joint Heads of Academy to promote an ethos of mutual respect in relationships and ensure that RSE is provided as part of the curriculum, which prepares students for adult life. The Joint Heads of Academy will also ensure consistency in delivery occurs across the whole academy whilst also managing requests from students to withdraw from their RSE education at any point in time as is their right to do so.
- c) It is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise themselves, and comply, with this policy and procedure in accordance with relevant professional standards. This is whilst also ensuring the delivery of RSE is completed in a sensitive manner whilst modelling positive attitudes towards RSE at the same time. They must also ensure that student's individual needs and queries must be dealt with on a lesson-by-lesson basis.

5. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- a) The designated member of staff will report on the policy to the Joint Heads of Academy as appropriate.
- b) The Joint Heads of Academy will report to the Board of Trustees on any relevant aspects of the working of the policy as appropriate.

6. CORE PROCEDURES

6.1 Organisation of Relationships and Sexual Health Education Programme

RSE is taught within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the Science curriculum, and other aspects are included in Religious Education (RE).

In order to deliver the three main elements of RSE i.e. attitudes and values, personal and social skills, and knowledge and understanding, the organisation of Relationships and Sexual Health Education in the academy, the following will be adhered to:

The teacher with responsibility for planning - Subject Leader for Personal Development

Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, external agencies, students and parents/carers. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.
2. Staff consultation – all academy staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties invited to attend a meeting about the policy and delivery of the lessons. Written communication October 2024 via an invite to a parental consultation forum. Details of the policy together with planning and implementation offered to parents/carers and feedback included.
4. Year 7 Parent/stakeholder consultation – October 2024: inviting parents and carers to a consultation evening regarding RSE. The RSE forum and consultation evening was prepared and readied for delivery.
5. Student consultation – we investigated what exactly students want from their RSE.
6. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with the Board of Trustees and ratified.

Exemplar delivery of the programme:

Aspects of the RSE Programme are taught at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 during tutor group time, during Personal Development lessons and 'drop down' specific sessions when students may have their normal timetable suspended to facilitate delivery of aspects of the programme by external professionals. Teaching staff are supported through the provision of materials and training where required.

Training Provision: Academy-based training; external agencies (Essex County Council, Terence Higgins Trust) the local National Health Service (NHS), the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and its support staff for training in the academy.

At the beginning and end of the RSE module for each Year Group there will be a survey to identify knowledge and understanding and key areas for focus. This review will lead to individualised student intervention and adaptation of the subject content. In addition to questions directly related to the lesson content, there will also be subjective questions related to the *Ofsted document entitled the 'review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges'¹ (published 10th June 2021)*. This has developed and strengthened the quality of provision and demonstrates meaningful outcomes for the students.

At the start of any Relationships and Sexual Health Education Programme sessions, teachers will undertake a discussion with their class to establish ground rules including the use of appropriate language and the need to create an atmosphere characterised by trust, honesty and confidentiality. Techniques that enable students to ask questions anonymously will be part of the programme. Students will not be required to answer potentially embarrassing or personal questions. Scenarios will be used to help students discuss key issues without recourse to providing personal exemplars. Throughout Relationships and Sexual Health Education sessions, information will be presented in a factual, unbiased way and controversial issues handled with sensitivity so that students are given information enabling them to make healthy decisions.

As part of Relationships and Sexual Health Education, students are taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing up children, recognising that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. Therefore, students should learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society.

Plume Academy prides itself on its inclusion of all students. This is evidenced through its relationship development with ECC, THT, MDC and other organisations.

We recognise that different families have different values relating to sexuality, sexual relationships, contraception and marriage. We recognise that some of our students or other members of the Plume community may be lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender or have parents or carers who are. We have a policy that protects any individual from being a victim of prejudice because of their sexuality and this will be reinforced through the Relationships and Sexual Health Education Programme.

Review and evaluation of the programme: this takes place regularly and is used by the Subject Leader for Personal Development to amend the programme as and when necessary.

Specific classroom arrangements: students are generally taught in their mixed gender groups. However, on those occasions when trained staff or health professionals are required to discuss gender specific topics, suitable arrangements will be made for single sex groups.

6.2 Issues of Confidentiality

It is important to distinguish between the academy's function of providing education generally about sexual related matters and counselling and advice to individual students regarding any related issues, particularly if it relates to their own sexual behaviour.

The **Sex and Relationship Guidance 2000** states that:

- i. There may be cases where a teacher learns that an under-age student is engaging in, or contemplating, having sexual intercourse. In these circumstances, schools need to be proactive in taking steps to ensure that:

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>

- a. wherever possible, the young person is persuaded to talk to their parent/carer about the situation in question;
 - b. any child protection issues are addressed and actioned; and
 - c. the child has been adequately counselled and informed about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and related advice and guidance services.
- ii. When the staff member who receives the information believes there is a child protection issue to be addressed, he/she should refer the case to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. They should also make clear to the student that he/she cannot guarantee confidentiality.
 - iii. It is only in the most exceptional cases that schools should be in the position of having to handle such information without parental knowledge, and where younger students were involved; this would be grounds for serious concern. The Joint Heads of Academy, Trustees and DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) should monitor the frequency of such cases.

In practice, if students ask for individual advice, staff members should:

- i. encourage students to discuss their concerns with their parents/carers;
- ii. tell students where to seek confidential advice and information as appropriate;
- iii. give advice to students who have not been withdrawn from sex education, within the boundaries of their own professional role;
- iv. not promise students confidentiality at any point in time;
- v. use their discretion to keep disclosures made to them confidential, if, in the staff member's professional judgement, this is in the student's best interest; and
- vi. are not obliged to break confidentiality; they can only be instructed by the Joint Heads of Academy or DSL to do so.

When the staff member who receives the information believes there is a child protection issue to be addressed, they should refer the case to the DSL. The staff member should also make clear to the student that he/she cannot guarantee confidentiality. The staff member should ensure that the student understands that if confidentiality must be broken he/she will be informed in the first instance.

It is only in the most exceptional case that schools should be in the position of having to handle such information without parental/carer knowledge, and where younger students were involved, this would be grounds for serious concern. The Joint Heads of Academy, Trustees and DSL should monitor the frequency of such cases.

6.3 Parental/carer withdrawal of their child (ren) from Sex and Relationships Education

- Parents/carers will not be able to withdraw their child from any aspect of Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents/carers will be able to withdraw their child (following discussion with the academy) from any or all aspects of Sex Education, other than those, which are part of the science or RE curriculum, up to and until three terms before the age of 16.
- Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of sex education within RSE up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the academy will arrange this.
- Subject to the Joint Heads of Academy's power to direct, staff members are not obliged to inform parents/carers where students seek individual advice about sexual matters, but can maintain confidentiality if, in their professional judgment, this would be in the student's best interest.

- Merely informing a student of where he/she can seek confidential advice is not sex education. Staff members can still provide such information to students who have been withdrawn.
- Parents/carers requesting withdrawal will be invited to discuss their concerns with the Personal Development Subject Leader or a senior member of staff, though there is no obligation for them to do so. It is hoped that, in most cases, explanation or a minor modification may assure them that the programme is suitable for their child (ren).
- Parents/carers still wishing to withdraw their child (ren) should make this request in writing to the Joint Heads of Academy, following which alternative arrangements may be made for the teaching or supervision of the student(s) who is/are withdrawn.
- A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The Joint Heads of Academy will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action.
- Dialogue between the academy and parents/carers will remain open and parents/carers will be informed of future RSE lessons so that they may revoke their request at a later date should they wish to do so.

6.4 Disclosure

- Students are educated and guided on harmful sexual behaviours and how to report an incident. The academy reinforces through our Safeguarding Policy and curriculum delivery as to how a zero tolerance attitude towards this behaviour is taken.
- Students are provided with channels of communication and reporting structure throughout the key stages.

Appendix: National Curriculum requirements²

For Key Stage 3

- 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;
- the features of positive and stable relationships (including trust, mutual respect, honesty and equality) and those of unhealthy relationships (including imbalance of power, coercion, control, exploitation and abuse of any kind);
- that the media portrayal of relationships may not reflect real life and the possible impact of this on people's expectations of relationships;
- how to manage or deal with the breakdown of 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;
- 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 consent is not given or is withdrawn, that decision should always be respected;
- about the risks related to unprotected sex, which could include exploring the consequences of unintended pregnancy and the options available in such circumstances;
- about the difference between assigned/biological 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;
- to understand the feelings and pressure that the need for peer approval can generate, including in relation to the purchase and use of tobacco and alcohol (including cheap/illicit alcohol and cigarettes), drugs and other risky behaviours;
- to understand the terms 'habit', 'dependence' and 'addiction' in a wide variety of contexts (including substance use and information technology) and where and how to access support if they have concerns;
- laws relating to the carrying of offensive weapons (including what might motivate someone to carry one and the range of consequences), and strategies for managing pressure to carry a weapon;
- about the difference between friendship groups and gangs (including the risks posed by membership of gangs on individuals, families and communities) and strategies for managing pressure to join a particular group or gang and how to access appropriate support; and
- how to manage any request or pressure to share an image of themselves or of others including who to talk to if they have any such concerns.
- 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.
- To understand the basic first aid treatments for common injuries and lifesaving skills.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-social-health-and-economic-education-pshe/personal-social-health-and-economic-pshe-education>

For Key Stage 4

- strategies to manage strong emotions and feelings;
- managing changes in personal relationships including the ending of relationships;
- 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;
- the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
- 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 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 options open to people who are not able to conceive; and
- the role peers can play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support).

This Relationships and Sexual Health Education Policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Trustees of Plume Academy.