



Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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Contents

1. Context
2. Aims
3. Statutory Requirements
4. Policy Development
5. Definition
6. Curriculum
7. Delivery of RSE
8. Inclusivity
9. Use of Resources
10. Use of External Organisations and Material
11. Roles and Responsibilities
12. Parents' Right to Withdraw
13. Training
14. Monitoring Arrangements
15. Links to other Policies

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Topics required by DfE Guidance and included in our Curriculum Map

Appendix 2: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

Appendix 3: New Guidance

1. Context

The Lion Works School is an Independent special school. We are part of an ethical and progressive organisation that believes it can achieve real change for children, young people and their families.

The Lion Works School is situated within the BCP local authority. We offer an academic and vocational specialist learning provision across KS3, KS4 and Post 16 aiming to reduce barriers to enable successful learning experiences and outcomes. There are a variety of routes a student can take, which include GCSEs, BTECs and other accredited qualifications whilst building confidence, improving wellbeing, enabling self-regulation and increasing attendance. Our school is full of life and has a wealth of resources to spark interest and ignite that passion to achieve, equipping our students for everyday life and the opportunities that await them.

We adhere to the values of **ARC**:

Ambition
Resilience
Community

The Lion Works School operates within the SPELL framework. SPELL is The National Autistic Society's framework for understanding and responding to the needs of children and adults on the autism spectrum. It focuses on five principles that have been identified as vital elements of best practice in autism and emphasises ways to change the environment and our approaches to meet the specific needs of each person.

SPELL stands for Structure, Positive approaches and expectations, Empathy, Low arousal, Links:

Structure	Structure makes the world a more predictable, accessible and safer place. We can support people on the autism spectrum in creating structured environments using visual information.
Positive (approaches and expectations)	We must seek to establish and reinforce self-confidence and self-esteem by building on natural strengths, interest and abilities.
Empathy	We must try to see the world from the standpoint of the autistic child or adult, knowing what it is that motivates or interests them but importantly what may also frighten, preoccupy or otherwise distress them.
Low arousal	Approaches and the environment need to be calm and ordered in such a way so as to reduce anxiety and aid concentration.
Links	Autistic people, their parents or advocates should be seen as partners. Open links and communication will reduce the risk of misunderstanding, confusion or the adoption of fragmented, piecemeal approaches.

2. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school 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

We are aware that Sex and Relationship Education can be an emotive subject particularly for students with special educational needs. The students at The Lion Works School are a very individual group of young people. Most have a diagnosis of autism and/or associated diagnoses and traits of social communication difficulties resulting in the potential for vulnerability and relational concerns.

Research has highlighted that children and young people with autistic spectrum conditions typically have limited awareness of themselves and others, of their own and other people's feelings, of the intricacies of initiating and maintaining social relationships, the often 'unwritten' rules of society, social rituals and boundaries. The way that people with an ASC diagnosis perceive their environment and process their thoughts means that decision-making, planning, predicting and reflecting upon consequences can be more difficult than for someone who does not have a diagnosis of ASC. The use and understanding of language and other non-verbal communication skills and attention skills can be reduced.

Our students have a right to receive meaningful sex and relationship education that provides information and strategies to keep them safe and healthy whilst forever mindful of their unique and individual needs.

Therefore, we aim to provide Sex and Relationship Education within a secure environment that enables our students to:

- Learn the value of respect, love and care for self and others
- Explore attitudes using critical thought and decision-making including learning about safety (on and offline) and risks in relationships.
- Learn to manage and understand their emotions and relationships through the development of empathy and informed choice making.
- Appreciate and understand about growing up, physical development, human sexuality, reproduction and sexual health

3. Statutory Requirements

Here at The Lion Works School, we believe it is especially important that our students receive effective Relationships and Sex Education in accordance with the Department for Education in their stated beliefs;

“Schools should be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education and RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some pupils; for example, those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors should be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subject s... In special schools and for some SEND pupils in mainstream schools there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages. As with all teaching for these subjects, schools should ensure that their teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law”.

As an Independent school, we provide RSE to all students under section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#).

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

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Independent School Standards Regulations 2014](#)

At The Lion Works School we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

4. Policy Development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and board members. Parents have been consulted via letter as to the content and delivery of the RSE curriculum on the school website. All parents have the rights to withdraw their child from non-statutory components of RSE sessions. Should parents wish their child to be withdrawn from the sex education programme they should contact the school.

5. Definition

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 never about the promotion of sexual activity but enables sensitive conversations to be had about safe and healthy relationships in preparation for Adulthood.

6. Curriculum

At The Lion Works School, RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum within which we aim to support pupils, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC). SMSC development is promoted through all our subjects, including the ethos of our school where development of positive attitudes and values is central to everything we do.

Angela Habgood is our PSHE and RSE area lead. They will continue to develop professional development opportunities for the teaching and learning of RSE and write, develop and implement a yearly action plan aligned to the school development plan. They will also invite external visitors, as appropriate, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE and to widen the school's offer in relation to this area of the curriculum.

We utilise resources from Jigsaw Secondary Curriculum for PSHE and RSE and the PSHE Association, but this is constantly under review and teachers are encouraged to share and signpost additional resources and adapt the delivery in response to local or national events, ideas and the news. For instance, our use of the 'Educate Against Hate' resource pack and our work with Wired Therapy and the 'Safer Schools' team.

Our staff know that RSE teaching should:

- be age-appropriate
- be developmentally appropriate
- be evidence-based
- be mindful of the religious backgrounds of pupils
- be inclusive, regardless of pupils' developing sexuality or sexual identity
- identify laws in England which relate to the subject content.

7. Delivery of RSE

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).

Within Sex Education, we cover contraception, sexual health and consent, whilst also considering what constitutes healthy and unhealthy relationships with the aim of providing information that can help prepare our students for adulthood and allow them to make informed choices and know how to keep themselves safe.

In KS3, RSE covers the following topics:

KS3 Year 7	KS3 Year 8	KS3 Year 9
Positive and healthy friendships	Relationship Values	Respectful relationships and behaviours
Respecting differences	Influences on relationship expectations	Freedom and capacity to consent
Boundaries privacy and consent	Sexual orientation and gender identity	Sexual health
Conflict and reconciliation	Consent – Avoiding assumptions	Contraception
Ending friendships and relationships	Introduction to contraception	Managing the end of relationships
Healthy online friendships		Recap
Puberty and emotional changes		
Menstrual Wellbeing		
Healthy and unhealthy relationships		
Managing conflict		
Introduction to consent		
Sexuality and Gender		

In KS4, RSE covers the following topics:

KS4 Year 10	KS4 Year 11
Family Life	Family Conflict
Managing Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships	Long Term Commitments
The role of intimacy and pleasure	Sexual Health, fertility and routes to parenthood
The impact of pornography	Pregnancy outcomes
Pressure, persuasion and coercion	Pregnancy choices
Managing healthy and unhealthy relationships	Recap
Addressing relationship issues	

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers, amongst other

structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children or young carers). We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

8. Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that considers how a diverse range of students will relate to them, and is attuned and sensitive to all students' experiences. During lessons, we will endeavor to make students feel safe and supported and able to engage with the key messages. We will also make sure that students learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in a small class setting, in smaller groups or targeted sessions, in 1:1 discussions and through other digital formats. We will always give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed based on our individual students' development, ability and understanding.

9. Use of resources

We **will** consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support students in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our students
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to students' experiences and won't provoke distress

10. Use of External Organisations and Materials

The Lion Works School values the contribution of others to enhance and extend our curriculum offer. We currently use the Space Youth Project and Wired Therapy. However, we are mindful of our duty and responsibilities with ensuring that any agency and any materials that are used are judged to be appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality and KCSiE (2024). We will ensure that any speakers, tools and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We will also check that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use age-appropriate, in line with students' developmental stage and comply with this policy and relevant legislation including the [Teachers' Standards](#) , The [Equality Act 2010](#) , The [Human Rights Act 1998](#) and The [Education Act 1996](#).

11. Roles and Responsibilities

The School Board

The governing board will advise the CEO on approving the RSE policy, and support the headteacher with its implementation and ensure the school fulfils its statutory obligations.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school with support from other members of the Senior Leadership Team, and for managing requests to withdraw students from components of RSE (see section 9).

Staff

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 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 these with the Headteacher.

Our PSHE / RSE Lead is: Angela Habgood

Students

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

12. Parents' Right to Withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

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

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The Headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action to reach a shared agreement. Alternative school work will be given to students who are eligible and request to be withdrawn from sex education.

13. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The PSHE/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.

14. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Kelly Twitchen (Deputy Head with overall responsibility for Curriculum at TLWS) through:

Adherence to our QA Calendar and monitoring arrangements

Lesson observation schedules

Learning walks

Work and planning scrutinies

Staff, student and parent feedback

We use Evidence for Learning (EfL) to record progress towards EHCP targets and IEPs and progress towards curriculum outcomes as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher and PSHE/RSE Lead on a yearly basis or if new guidance is issued from the Department for Education. At every review, the policy will be agreed by the chair of the board and reviewed at a subsequent board meeting.

15. Links to other Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- PSHE Policy

Appendix 1 - Relationships and Sex Education: [Statutory Guidance on RSE and Health Education](#)

All topics prescribed by the DfE are contained within our five-year rolling plan, namely:

Topic (DfE statutory wording)

Families

- F1 That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- F2 How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children
- F3 What marriage is*, including its legal status e.g. 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
- F4 Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into
- F5 The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships
- F6 The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to the raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting
- F7 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); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

Respectful relationships, including friendships

- RS1 The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: 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
- RS2 Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- RS3 How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- RS4 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
- RS5 About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- RS6 That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- RS7 What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- RS8 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 and media

- OM1 Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- OM2 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
- OM3 Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- OM4 What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- OM5 The impact of viewing harmful content
- OM6 That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. 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 partner
- OM7 That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- OM8 how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

Being Safe

- BS1 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
- BS2 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 and sexual relationships, including sexual health

- ISR1 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
- ISR2 That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- ISR3 the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women - including menopause
- ISR4 That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- ISR5 That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- ISR6 The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- ISR7 The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- ISR8 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)

- ISR9 How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- ISR10 About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- ISR11 How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- ISR12 How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

THE LION WORKS SCHOOL POLICY



Appendix 2: Parent form - withdrawal from sex education within RSE

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	Include notes from discussions with parents and agreed actions taken.

Appendix 3: New Guidance

Force Marriage Guidance: New forced marriage guidance and resource pack to support schools with relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) teaching
DfE Bulletin: 21/03/23

On 27 February new legislation was introduced in England and Wales to raise the minimum age of marriage and civil partnership to 18 years, making it a crime to cause under-18s to marry, even without coercion.

The Home Office has updated its [forced marriage guidance](#). The main changes are in Chapter 2 ('Understanding forced marriage'), with minor changes made to other chapters, including education (Chapter 8).

This affects what is taught in RSHE lessons. The Home Office has published a [forced marriage resource pack](#), bringing together key information, guidance, leaflets, videos, case studies, details of support organisations and other resources. It includes specific resources teachers can use.