



The Forge School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Reviewed: January 2025

Ratified by Governors:

New Review due: January 2026

Person responsible: Daniel Smith

Relationships and Sex Education Policy Update

Due to the changes to the statutory guidance provided via the Department for Education (DFE) for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSE) this policy has been reviewed (2026) and will be updated for September 2026. These updates will include:

- Further development in the teaching of gender identity and biological sex.
- Further development in the teaching of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and deepfakes including fake news, fake accounts and understanding digital content including pornography.
- Further development in the teaching of sexual harassment & violence including revenge porn, upskirting, financial exploitation, strangulation/suffocation, and that abuse is never the victim's fault.
- Further parental engagement and transparency through sharing teaching materials and making all teaching materials available at request.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these updates to the RSE policy, please contact Mr. Marc Cresswell the PSHE & Careers lead either via email MCresswell@theforge.worcs.sch.uk or telephone 01527 597 936.

As noted, the updates above have been developed following the statutory guidance provided via the DFE guidance. This guidance can be accessed via the link below.
[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#)

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) Policy

Legislation

This policy was reviewed and developed in response to the following guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE, 2019)
- 16-19 Study Programmes Guidance (DfE/ESFA, 2019)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (DfE, 2018)
- Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE, 2017)
- Sexting in Schools and Colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people (UKCCIS, 2016)
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE, 2015)
- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools (DfE, 2014)
- National Curriculum in England – Key Stages 1-4 (DfE, 2014)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding policy and Procedures
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Positive Behaviour & Relationship Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disability Policy
- Equality Policy
- IT Security and Acceptable Use Code
- PSHE Curriculum Map

Aims and Objectives of the School SRE Policy

Our aims for our RSE curriculum are as follows:

- To deliver high-quality, age-appropriate and ability appropriate RSE lessons as part of our overall planned school curriculum and ethos
- To fulfil our legal obligations related to RSE, whilst taking account of parental views
- To ensure students are provided with accurate information from reliable sources
- To use a range of appropriate resources matched to the strengths and needs of individual students
- To provide students with opportunities to engage positively in sensitive discussions and enable them to have the confidence to ask questions to help address any misconceptions
- To encourage students to remember what they learn to support their ongoing preparation for the future

In order to achieve our aims, we will plan and teach the RSE content set out by the DfE and provided in Appendix 1 of this policy.

Legal Requirements

The Relationships, Sex and Health Education Regulations (2019) made under the Children and Social Work Act (2017) brought some compulsory changes into effect in all schools from September 2020. Relationships Education is now compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is now compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. The regulations also make Health Education compulsory in all schools. Details of what is taught as part of Health Education are outlined in our PSHE Curriculum Map.

The focus of Relationships Education is to teach the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. The aim of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships.

Parental Engagement

From September 2021, the law requires schools to consult with parents and carers on their RSE policy. Consultation must be carried out when the policy is formed and subsequently whenever it is updated. In line with this, The Forge will notify all parents each academic when the policy has been reviewed, updated and uploaded to the school website and we will provide a window of opportunity for all parents to respond with their views.

We understand that parents may have concerns about some aspects of RSE and all views will be listened to and carefully considered. However, the school will ultimately make the final decision about what is to be taught and when, and this will be informed by our statutory obligations as well as the needs of our pupils.

Right to withdraw

RSE is an important part of our curriculum and it is hoped that all pupils will participate in all aspects of these lessons. However, the school acknowledges the legal rights of parents as described below:

From September 2021, parents of both primary and secondary aged pupils will not be able to withdraw their children from any aspect of Relationships Education or Health Education (which includes learning about the changing adolescent body and puberty).

Parents of both primary and secondary-aged pupils will not be able to withdraw their child from any aspect of the National Curriculum for Science (which includes subject content such as reproduction in humans and plants, hormones in reproduction, hormone and non-hormone methods of contraception communicable diseases including sexually transmitted infections in humans).

Parents will be able to withdraw their child (following discussion with the school and providing notification to the Head of School in writing) from any or all aspects of Sex Education (other than those as listed above) up to and until three terms before the age of 16.

In line with the statutory guidance, where pupils are withdrawn from Sex Education, we will keep a record of this (including discussions/requests from parents) and we will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

In line with the statutory guidance, if any secondary-aged pupil wishes to receive Sex Education rather than be withdrawn, we will make arrangements to provide the pupil with Sex Education during one of the three terms before the age of 16.

Organisation of School SRE Policy

Sex and Relationships Education should be accessible to all pupils, irrespective of gender, ethnic background, physical and cognitive ability (see Equal Opportunities Policy). There may be issues of age, readiness and appropriateness as pupils move through the school. Although all pupils will follow a PSHE curriculum, we teach sex education through different aspects of the curriculum (for example, science). In PSHE we teach pupils about relationships and encourage them to discuss issues.

Specific Classroom Organisation

The pupils may be divided into small groups or be given individual sessions for PSHE sessions. All pupils work on understanding or experiencing the way their bodies function, looking after our bodies, safety and relationships (people in our lives). During Key Stage 3, pupils will start work on aspects of sex and relationships. Parents will be notified when pupils are starting this area of work.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The staff will review progress and evaluate the work at the end of each scheme of work or mid-term plan. This will follow the same pattern as in other curriculum policy documents.

Resources

The resources used will be selected to support our aims for SRE and Equal Opportunities policies. Resources will be appropriate to age, maturity and special learning needs of our pupils.

Specific and Sensitive Issues

The school nurse visits half termly and any pupil requiring advice regarding contraception should be referred to the school nurse. Their wishes for confidentiality should be respected. The school would support pupils or staff infected or affected by HIV or other related conditions in consultation with the LA, Primary Care Trust and the School Nurse.

At Risk Issues

Pupils need to know that there are some issues which cannot remain confidential. The teacher would assess whether the young person is at risk follow the LA Guidelines on Child or Adult Protection Issues.

Inappropriate Questions / Behaviour / Responses

The pupils at The Forge School have social, emotional or mental health difficulties and may ask inappropriate questions or behave in an inappropriate manner. The teacher would assess the context of the behaviour and deal with it accordingly. This may involve individual sessions for the pupil outside the group. The teacher would need to be sensitive to the pupil's individual learning difficulty and communication problems and support for pupils and their families is available from our learning mentors if required.

We would ensure that any visiting teacher is aware of the school's SRE Policy document and teaches within that framework.

Bullying incidents

The Forge School has a zero tolerance approach to bullying. Any bullying incidents caused as a result of the sex and relationship education programme, such as those relating to sexual orientation, will be dealt with as seriously as other bullying incidents within the school.

Any occurrence of these incidents should be reported to a member of school staff, who will then discipline the pupil once he/she is on school premises.

These incidents will be dealt with following the process in our behaviour policy.

The headteacher will decide whether it is appropriate to notify the police or parents for action taken against a pupil.

The Law and Sexual Activity

We will ensure that pupils are made aware of aspects of law that relate to sexual activity. Sex and relationships education will be taught in the context of celebrating diversity. Our approach to SRE will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. Our pastoral support will take account of the needs of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual pupils. We shall also actively tackle homophobic bullying.

The Law and FGM

Teaching about FGM is compulsory in secondary school. Following the statutory RSHE guidance we ensure that:

- The Forge addresses the physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM) as referenced in FGM gov UK document. Pupils are taught where to find support and that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM or fail to protect a person for whom you are responsible from FGM.
- Pupils know the concepts of, and laws relating to FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
- Pupils are made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example: female genital mutilation (FGM).

Whilst it is adults' responsibility to protect children from harm, if children and young people are taught about FGM there's more chance they will report it.

Every young person — as a citizen in a diverse society — should learn about FGM, but especially children and young people at immediate or future risk of FGM, and young people who have experienced FGM (they may or may not be aware of what has happened to them).

Our pupils need to know:

- What FGM is and how it affects people
- What the law says on FGM

- How to manage the threat of FGM (for themselves or for others)
- How to seek help and support if FGM has happened (for themselves or for others)

The role of other members of the community

We encourage other valued members of the community to work with us to provide advice and support to the pupils with regard to health education. In particular, members of the Local Health Authority, such as the school nurse and other health professionals, give us valuable support with our sex education programme. Other people that we may call on include religious groups, social workers and youth workers.

The role of the headteacher

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our sex education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the headteacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The headteacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school sex education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy, and that they work within this framework. The headteacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

Topic	Pupils will learn about
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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 • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The different forms of abuse that can occur within the family and their characteristics. This includes domestic, physical, emotional, neglect and FGM. • Identifying and understanding where to get help and support with the forms of abuse listed above. Including statutory services and charities.
<p>Respectful Relationships including friendships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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 (e.g. 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.
<p>Online and Media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to

	<p>others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Being Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 and sexual relationships including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, e.g. 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 • 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/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