

Blackpool Aspire Academy: Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy Statement

Academic Year: 2026-2027

Responsibility: PSHE Co-ordinator / SLT

Review Cycle: Two Years

Philosophy

Blackpool Aspire Academy is committed to delivering high-quality teaching with regard to RSE as part of the PSHE programme of study. It is the philosophy of the school to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of students and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of later life. This encompasses personal relationships, sexuality, and sexual health—both physical and emotional.

The school's philosophy is that RSE will be delivered in an objective and balanced manner by all staff. RSE will link with other areas of PSHE such as peer pressure, the law, risk-taking behaviour, and personal responsibility. All schemes of work are fully inclusive and open to all students, ensuring every child matters.

What is Relationship and Sex Education?

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral, and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, and care. It also covers the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity—this would be inappropriate teaching.

Objectives for RSE

- To develop responsible judgments and make well-informed decisions.
- To support students through their physical, emotional, and moral development.
- To respect themselves and others as they transition from childhood to adulthood.
- To understand the law regarding consent, sharing images, and sexual behaviour.
- To build resilience and self-esteem to avoid being pressured into unwanted activity.
- To access confidential, professional sexual health advice and local Blackpool services.
- To understand the risks of STIs, unwanted pregnancies, and the impact of substances on decision-making.

Provision and Organisation

RSE is taught in discrete PSHE lessons by Blackpool Aspire Academy teaching staff and qualified health professionals (e.g., the School Nursing Team). A member of teaching staff remains with the group during any external presentation. Ground rules for all sessions include:

1. No personal questions to anyone.
2. No personal comments.
3. No laughing at questions or comments.
4. Safe and sensible behaviour.
5. Listen to everyone.

Curriculum Content (Key Stages 3 and 4)

Using local data and the 2026-2027 mapping, our curriculum is prioritised into 2 core themes: **Health and Wellbeing** and **Relationships**.

1. Families & Healthy Connections

- Understanding marriage, civil partnerships, and cohabitation.
- The legal rights of families and inclusivity of LGBTQ+ and blended families.
- Identifying healthy vs. unhealthy relationships and coercive control.

2. Consent and the Law

- Statutory teaching on consent (freely given, informed, and reversible).
- Legal consequences of "sexting," deepfakes, and the **Online Safety Act 2026**.
- Specific laws regarding FGM, "Rough Sex" legislation, and grooming.

3. Sexual Health and the Body

- Puberty, menstrual health (PCOS/Menopause), and clinical self-examination.
- Contraception (LARC), STIs, and the three legal pathways for unplanned pregnancy.
- The impact of social media algorithms on body image and mental wellbeing.

4. Being Safe in Blackpool

- Coastal safety and regional risks such as County Lines and "cuckooing."
- Signposting to local services: **Connect 42**, **CASHER**, and **Horizon**.

Teaching and Learning

Lessons cater to various learning styles using group work, role play, and interactive discussion. Only age-appropriate materials approved by health and educational professionals are used.

Dealing with Sensitive Issues: Staff identify sensitive topics in advance and use distancing techniques. Correct biological terminology is used at all times to minimise embarrassment. 'Ask it baskets' are provided in every lesson for anonymous queries.

Inclusion and SEN Provision

Adapted activities are provided to meet the needs of pupils registered as SEN. Content is inclusive of LGBTQ+ identities, reflecting equality, respect, and tolerance as per the Equality Act 2010.

Child Protection and Confidentiality

Staff must follow the Academy Child Protection Policy. While RSE lessons are a "safe space," staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if a safeguarding disclosure is made.

Parents' Right to Withdraw

Under Section 405 of the Education Act 1996, parents may withdraw their children from the 'Sex Education' component of RSE up until three terms before the child turns 16. However, from three terms before they turn 16, the pupil themselves has the right to opt back into sex education even if their parents have requested withdrawal, and the school will facilitate this.

Please note that before any withdrawal decisions are confirmed, parents are required to meet with the PSHE lead to discuss their concerns and receive clarification around the content of the curriculum.

There is **no right to withdraw** from:

- National Curriculum Science (biological aspects of human growth and reproduction).
- Relationships Education.
- Health Education (puberty and menstrual health).

Monitoring and Evaluation

The PSHE Co-ordinator monitors the programme through observations, work samples, and staff feedback. Students are regularly consulted to ensure the curriculum remains relevant to the "Blackpool context" and modern challenges.