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1. Vision and Objectives

Vision

At St Andrew's Academy we believe that high quality PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) and RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) will benefit our pupils for life. PSHE and RSE are designed to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy and independent lives.

Effective RSE teaching **does not** encourage early sexual experimentation or promote any particular lifestyle or relationship choice. It should enable our pupils to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.

We believe that our pupils should be empowered to understand their bodies and the way they change as they grow, to think about what a good relationship is and to have the confidence to discuss relationships and sex. We strongly believe that this approach will reduce the risk of unhealthy and abusive relationships in the future. The concept of consent is taught progressively throughout the curriculum and is embedded across relationships, safeguarding, online safety, physical health and preparation for adulthood.

Objectives

At St Andrew's Academy, our PSHE and RSE curriculum aims to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
- Be age-appropriate, accessible and differentiated to the needs of all of our pupils.
- Develop social skills and strategies to reduce the risk of abuse, and/or misunderstandings that can lead to abuse.
- Be sensitive to gender, sexual orientation, disability, faiths and all types of families with equality and respect.
- Make our pupils aware of the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Prepare pupils for puberty and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships, reinforcing the importance of loving relationships based on mutual respect.
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- Research and data have shown that pupils with SEND and communication difficulties are far more vulnerable, so we aim to provide a cohesive PSHE and RSE curriculum to keep them as safe as we possibly can.

2. Statutory Requirements

Under the Education Act (1993) and the Education Reform Act (1998), all schools are required to maintain a Statement of Policy regarding RSE and make it available to parents/carers on request. This policy reflects the statutory guidance Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2026).

From 1 September 2026, St Andrew's Academy will deliver Relationships, Sex and Health Education in accordance with the Department for Education statutory guidance *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2026)*. The curriculum has been designed to fulfil all statutory requirements whilst being adapted appropriately for learners with Severe Learning Difficulties and Autism. The curriculum reflects

the academy's commitment to safeguarding, equality, preparation for adulthood and the development of knowledge, understanding and practical skills that enable pupils to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

As a secondary Special School, St Andrew's Academy follows the secondary guidance and curriculum content as detailed above. However, we adapt it to make it relevant and understandable to our pupils, who have Severe Learning Difficulties and/or Autism.

3. Policy Development

We consult with all stakeholders when developing or reviewing the PSHE and RSE policy. There are ongoing opportunities for parents/carers, staff, pupils and Academy Councilors to comment or raise any concerns through surveys, regular contact, Student Voice and group discussions. Our policy is freely available on our school website and can be emailed to any stakeholder on request.

4. Definition

PSHE and RSE are combined in a curriculum and taught in separate sessions for the different areas of focus.

PSHE is focused on a holistic approach to each pupil, and involves building self-esteem, resilience, citizenship, health and preparing for the world of work.

RSE is focused on the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils and involves learning about emotions, healthy relationships, healthy lifestyles, diversity, personal identity, sexual health and sexuality.

5. Curriculum

At St Andrew's Academy, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is delivered through a developmental Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum that is specifically designed to meet the needs of learners with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Autism and associated needs. Our curriculum is fully aligned to statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education requirements whilst recognising that our pupils develop knowledge, understanding and skills at different rates and may require significantly greater repetition, explicit teaching and opportunities for generalisation than their mainstream peers.

Rather than following age-related topics, pupils access a carefully sequenced pathway of learning based on their individual developmental stage and level of understanding. This ensures that pupils acquire the foundational knowledge, communication skills and understanding required before moving towards more complex concepts. For example, pupils develop emotional awareness before exploring grief and loss, learn about personal boundaries before consent and understand healthy relationships before considering exploitation, abuse or sexual relationships.

The curriculum is designed around seven developmental domains which together provide comprehensive coverage of statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, Health Education, safeguarding, preparation for adulthood and personal development. Learning is revisited regularly to support retention, enable consolidation and provide opportunities for pupils to apply skills across different contexts and stages of their lives.

The curriculum explicitly addresses contemporary safeguarding risks including online exploitation, harmful online influences, misogyny, pornography, misinformation, artificial intelligence,

deepfakes, sexual harassment, coercive control and exploitation. Teaching is carefully adapted to pupils' developmental stages whilst ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to remain safe in modern society.

Curriculum Principles

Our PSHE and RSE curriculum is underpinned by the following principles:

- Learning is developmentally appropriate rather than solely age-related.
- Safeguarding is embedded throughout all domains of learning.
- Pupils build upon previously acquired knowledge and skills.
- Learning is personalised and accessible for all pupils.
- Pupils revisit key concepts regularly through a spiral curriculum approach.
- Preparation for adulthood is central to all curriculum planning.
- Pupils are taught to recognise, understand and communicate their needs.
- Diversity, equality, inclusion and respect are promoted throughout the curriculum.
- Teaching is evidence-informed and reflects current statutory guidance.
- Pupils are supported to apply learning in real-life situations beyond the classroom.

Curriculum Structure

The curriculum is organised into the following seven domains:

Domain 1: Self, Emotions and Mental Wellbeing

This domain develops pupils' understanding of themselves, their emotions, wellbeing and personal identity. Pupils learn to recognise and communicate feelings, develop emotional awareness, build resilience, understand mental wellbeing and access support when required. Learning includes self-awareness, self-advocacy, emotional regulation, coping strategies, loneliness, bereavement and grief, confidence, mental health and personal wellbeing.

Domain 2: Relationships, Consent and Social Understanding

This domain teaches pupils about friendships, families, social interaction, healthy relationships, communication and consent. Pupils develop an understanding of trust, respect, kindness, personal boundaries and relationship safety. As pupils progress, they learn about unhealthy relationships, coercion, manipulation, abuse, harassment, sexual harassment, consent and the law. Learning is centered upon helping pupils recognise safe relationships and seek support where necessary.

Domain 3: Safety and Safeguarding

This domain equips pupils with the knowledge and skills required to remain safe in a range of environments and situations. Learning includes recognising risk, trusted adults, personal safety, body safety, boundaries, exploitation, grooming, bullying, criminal exploitation, county lines, knife crime, emergency situations and accessing support. Teaching aims to ensure pupils understand their rights, responsibilities and routes to help when they feel unsafe.

Domain 4: Online Life, Media and Digital Safety

This domain reflects the increasingly significant role technology plays in pupils' lives. Pupils develop understanding of online relationships, digital citizenship, media influence and online safety. Learning includes online communication, cyberbullying, grooming, scams, misinformation, deepfakes, artificial intelligence, social media influences, online exploitation, pornography, radicalisation, harmful online communities and digital wellbeing. Pupils are taught how to critically evaluate information, recognise manipulation and access support when concerns arise.

Domain 5: Physical Health, Sexual Health and Self-Care

This domain supports pupils to understand physical wellbeing, personal care, puberty, sexual health and healthcare. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles, nutrition, exercise, hygiene, body changes, privacy, healthcare services and self-care. As pupils progress, learning includes puberty, consent, contraception, reproductive health, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, sexual health services and safe sexual behaviour, where appropriate to individual developmental readiness.

Domain 6: Communities and Responsibilities

This domain develops pupils' understanding of citizenship, inclusion, communities, diversity and social responsibility. Learning includes equality, respect, protected characteristics, discrimination, rights, responsibilities, democracy, laws, community participation, environmental responsibility and active citizenship. Pupils learn how their actions affect others and how they can contribute positively to society.

Domain 7: Preparation for Adulthood and Independent Living

This domain prepares pupils for life beyond school. Learning focuses on developing independence, daily living skills, organisation, community access, travel, financial understanding, employment awareness, decision-making, self-advocacy and adulthood. Pupils are supported to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence required for as much independence as possible in adult life.

Curriculum Delivery

Pupils access all curriculum domains throughout their time at St Andrew's Academy. Rather than teaching fixed year-group topics, staff identify the most appropriate learning objectives for each pupil using the academy's Skills Hierarchies and assessment systems. This ensures pupils work on objectives that are appropriately matched to their stage of development whilst maintaining access to the full breadth of the curriculum

	Autumn Term 1	Autumn Term 2	Spring Term 1	Spring Term 2	Summer Term 1	Summer Term 2
PSHE	Self, Emotions and Mental Wellbeing		Online Life, Media and Digital Safety		Communities and Responsibilities	Preparation for Adulthood and Independent Living
RSE	Relationships, Consent and Social Understanding		Safety and Safeguarding		Physical Health, Sexual Health and Self-Care	

6. Delivery of RSE

- Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the Science curriculum, and other aspects are included in Religious Education (RE).
- PSHE and RSE are taught by male and female staff, who are consistent and familiar to our pupils to ensure they feel comfortable discussing different topics.
- Pupil progress is assessed through the academy's PSHE and RSE Skills Hierarchies which identify small, sequential steps of learning. Assessment is ongoing and informs future planning, personalised learning goals and intervention. Evidence is captured through Evidence for Learning and the academy's wider assessment systems.
- Our pupils have input into what they learn through Student Voice, Personal Goals, Growth Mindset, SMSC and the 'Your Views' section in Annual Reviews, where pupils can express what's important to them and for them to be able to learn about what to do for their future.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to ensure that

there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent/carer families, LGBT parents/carers, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, 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).

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Academy Council

The Academy Council will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Chair of the Academy Council will approve policies outside of Academy Council meetings, otherwise in meetings.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that PSHE and RSE are taught consistently across the school and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from the non-compulsory section of the RSE curriculum.

7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE.
- Monitoring progress.
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils.
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the non-compulsory section of the RSE curriculum.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. All teachers are expected to teach RSE under the guidance of the curriculum manager. Teachers who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the curriculum manager.

7.4 Pupils

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

8. Parents/Carers' Right to Withdraw

The DfE states that parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from the specific Sex Education lessons within the RSE curriculum by putting their wishes in writing to the Headteacher, following a discussion with staff.

The DfE are clear that parents/carers **cannot** withdraw their child from the Relationships Education, the Health Education or the Science Education that covers puberty, conception and reproduction.

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from the non-compulsory components of sex education within RSE up to and until three terms before their child turns 16, or throughout their time at St Andrew's Academy if they do not have the ability to decide for themselves. If the child is able to make an informed choice and wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

At St Andrew's Academy, we believe that our RSE and PSHE curriculum is invaluable to keeping our pupils safe and it is taught at the age and stage of each pupils' level of understanding. Therefore, we would strongly suggest that before parents/carers withdraw their child from sex education that they have a discussion about their concerns with either the class teacher, the curriculum manager, Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher to fully understand what their child will be taught.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 of this policy and addressed to the Headteacher.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Headteacher will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action.

9. Training

Staff questionnaires are sent each year about intent, implementation and impact. Staff are offered relevant training depending on what pupils need support with. This may be Mental Health training, Bereavement training, Health training etc. This could be done in-house, online or in person by training providers or trained staff in school. Resources are shared with all staff to support delivery of the PSHE and RSE curriculum.

10. Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of PSHE and RSE is monitored through:

- The checking of Medium Term Plans at the start of each term by the Assistant Head's learning walks.
- Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.
- This policy will be reviewed appropriately.

Appendix 1: Parent/Carer Form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS/CARERS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent/carer		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent/carer signature			
TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL			
Agreed actions from discussion with parents/carers	Actions will be agreed following parental feedback.		

Appendix 2: Easy read principles of RSE by Mencap

What does good Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) look like?



RSE means relationships and sex education.

RSE is taught to students in schools.



RSE helps people learn about themselves.

It helps people to decide what friendships and relationships they want with other people and to learn about their bodies.



RSE is important for all students to learn about.

It should be planned and part of the timetable for all students.



Teachers should get training on how to teach RSE to all students.

It should be taught often.



It is important for parents and carers to be included and told about what their child will learn in RSE lessons.



Students should feel safe and included in RSE lessons.



Students should learn about safe relationships.

This means learning about:

- consent (telling someone yes or no)
- friendships and relationships
- families
- signs and types of abuse
- using the internet safely.



RSE should teach students the facts and about the law.



There should be positive and open discussions in schools.

RSE lessons should give the facts and good information.

This will help people to understand their bodies and make choices and decisions.



Students should learn about the things that make up our feelings on relationships and sex such as:

- TV and movies
- music
- religion
- people around you.



RSE should teach students about where they can get help and advice.

This means knowing who they can talk to if there is a problem.



RSE should teach about what it means to be LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans).

Students should learn about treating everyone in an equal way.



RSE should be accessible for everyone.

This means using things like easy read information, Makaton and videos.

It also means giving the student more time to learn.



Students should be included in planning RSE and be able to give their ideas.

This guide was made by Mencap in partnership with the Sex Education Forum.

PSHE AND RSE (Personal, Social, Health, Economic and Relationships and Sex Education) Policy



St Andrew's Academy

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