

# ACET Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

**DATE: May 2026**

**POLICY LEAD: Trust Lead for Personal Development**

**APPROVED BY: Trustees**



Excellence



Equity



Empowerment

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

| <b>Policy Level</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Trust Secondary                                      |                                                                     |
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| <b>Approved By</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Trustees                                             |                                                                     |
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| This policy remains valid until it is reviewed and replaced; it does not expire by date alone.<br>Policies are reviewed annually, or sooner if required by statutory or legislative changes,<br>in line with best practice |                                                      |                                                                     |
| <b>Policy Lead / Author</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                | ACET Trust Lead for Personal Development / S. Rhodes |                                                                     |
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| V1                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | September 2026                                       | Policy updated in line with consultation and new statutory guidance |
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## **1. Introduction and Policy Statement**

At ACET Academies, we are committed to providing high-quality Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) that supports our pupils' personal development and prepares them for life in modern Britain.

All schools with a secondary phase need to provide relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education. This policy sets out our approach to delivering statutory RSHE in line with the Department for Education's guidance, which comes into effect from September 2026. Our RSHE curriculum is designed to:

Equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to keep themselves safe, healthy and to thrive in their relationships

Prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life

Promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils

Create a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment both on and offline.

Our curriculum for RSHE reflects current law as it applies to relationships, so pupils understand what the law does and doesn't allow. Staff comply with our school's requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty when planning and teaching RSE, to create an inclusive classroom. Staff are given opportunity to develop their understanding in key areas.

## **2. Legal Framework**

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- DfE statutory guidance: Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) (2025, for implementation September 2026)
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education Act 1996
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

We must have an RSE policy in place and must proactively engage and consult parents/carers when we develop and review it, and publish our RSE policy on our school's website, and provide a copy to anyone who asks for one.

## **3. Curriculum Content**

### **3.1 What We Teach**

Our RSHE curriculum covers the following main areas:

#### **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)**

- a) Families

- b) Respectful relationships
- c) Online safety and awareness
- d) Being safe
- e) Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

#### **Health Education**

- f) Mental wellbeing
- g) Wellbeing online
- h) Physical health and fitness
- i) Healthy eating
- j) Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping
- k) Health protection and prevention
- l) Personal safety
- m) Basic first aid
- n) Developing bodies

#### **New content in the updated guidance includes:**

- AI literacy and deep fake images and videos
- Knife crime and conflict resolution
- Tackling misogyny, incel culture, and their influence on attitudes toward women and girls — as
- Well as recognising how these issues can negatively affect boys and young men
- The impact of pornography on the teenage brain
- More detailed learning about menstrual and gynaecological health, including menopause
- conditions like endometriosis
- Skills and confidence to access healthcare services when they need them

The DfE has set out what pupils should know by the end of secondary school. Our teaching needs to reflect current law as it applies to relationships, so pupils understand what the law does and doesn't allow.

### **3.2 How We Teach RSHE**

The guidance allows us to differentiate and personalise for pupils based on factors such as age, physical and emotional maturity, religious background, and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

We deliver RSHE through:

- Dedicated PSHE lessons delivered by trained staff / form time
- Cross-curricular links, particularly in science, PE and computing
- Assemblies
- Themed days and events (drop down days)

Effective education will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs and/or

disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is made accessible to all students either through key work with individuals in inclusion or classes (Thrive) taught in a particular way to meet the needs of all students.

If the Trust were to use external companies to support the teaching of RSHE, their resources would be required to quality approve before they presented to the students.

### **3.3 LGBTQ+ Content**

Our RSHE covers the "facts and the law" about biological sex and gender reassignment, including that legal rights may differ based on biological sex, and that all people with protected characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender reassignment, have protection from discrimination.

We make sure there is equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships, cover all facts about sexual health in a way that is relevant for LGBTQ+ pupils, and make sure same-sex relationships are integrated into RSHE, not taught as a standalone unit or lesson.

We do not use materials that use cartoons or diagrams that oversimplify gender identity, or perpetuate stereotypes, endorse any view or teach it as fact (e.g. we don't teach as fact that all people have a gender identity), or suggest that social transition is a simple solution to feelings of distress or discomfort.

### **3.4 Safeguarding and Creating a Safe Learning Environment**

We play a crucial role in preventative education. Our approach prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment. Our programme tackles, at an age-appropriate stage, issues such as supporting children to develop the skills that form the building blocks of all positive relationships, healthy and respectful relationships, boundaries, consent and kindness in relationships, stereotyping, prejudice and equality, body confidence and self-esteem, how to recognise and report concerns about an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour, the concepts of, and laws relating to - all forms of sexual harassment, and abuse, and how to access support, and what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 The Governing Body**

The Trust Board will:

- Approve this policy
- Hold the headteacher to account for its implementation
- Ensure the school complies with statutory requirements

## **4.2 The Principal:**

The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school
- Managing requests to withdraw pupils from sex education
- Ensuring staff receive appropriate training
- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning

## **4.3 PSHE/RSHE Lead and Trust lead for Personal Development**

Is responsible for:

- Coordinating the delivery of RSHE across the school
- Supporting staff with planning and resources
- Monitoring and evaluating the curriculum
- Liaising with parents/carers and external agencies
- Keeping up to date with developments in RSHE

## **4.4 All Staff**

All staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in accordance with this policy
- Responding appropriately to pupils' questions
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress and reporting concerns
- Being aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead if they have concerns about a child. Staff work in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

## **4.5 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Engage fully in RSHE lessons
- Treat others with respect and sensitivity
- Ask questions when they need clarification
- Follow the school's behaviour policy during RSHE lessons

## **5. Parents' and Carers' Rights and Engagement**

## **5.1 Proactive Engagement**

We make parents/carers aware of what we're teaching in RSHE. This includes inviting parents into school to discuss the curriculum and the importance of RSHE. We show parents a representative sample of the resources we plan to use.

We also allow parents to view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE, if they request them

We engage with parents/carers through:

- Curriculum overviews published on our website
- Regular communication via newsletters / social media
- Opportunities to view resources
- Individual meetings when requested

## **5.2 Right to Withdraw from Sex Education**

Parents and carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from part or all of the sex education delivered as part of RSE. They can do this up until 3 terms before their child turns 16. After that, it's the child's decision.

Parents/carers cannot withdraw their child from:

The relationships education in RSE, health education, or content that's taught as part of the science curriculum, e.g. sexual reproduction.

### **Process for withdrawal requests:**

Parents/carers should contact the principal in writing to request withdrawal

The headteacher will meet with parents/carers to discuss the impact of withdrawing the pupil from sex education including the social and emotional effect of being left out, and the pupil hearing an account of what happened in lessons from their peers, which might be inaccurate.

We will also discuss the withdrawal with the pupil to make sure their wishes are heard.

The principal will decide, which may include refusing the request in exceptional circumstances

### **Exceptional circumstances:**

Headteachers can refuse a request in 'exceptional circumstances'. For example, because of safeguarding concerns or if a pupil is particularly vulnerable.

If a pupil is withdrawn, it's our responsibility to make sure they receive appropriate, purposeful education during the withdrawal period.

## **6. Staff Training and Support**

All staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. The training is regularly updated. In addition, all staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety (for example, via email, staff meetings) as required, and at least annually. Keeping Children Safe in Education

Staff delivering RSHE will receive:

- Initial training on the RSHE curriculum and this policy
- Regular CPD updates on RSHE topics
- Access to quality-assured resources and schemes of work
- Support from the RSHE lead
- Opportunities to share best practice

## **7. Safeguarding**

RSHE plays an important role in safeguarding pupils. Through our curriculum, we teach pupils:

- How to recognise unsafe situations and relationships
- How to ask for help and support
- About consent and healthy relationships
- How to report concerns

Our safeguarding policies and procedures are transparent, clear, and easy to understand for staff, pupils, parents, and carers. Systems are in place, and they are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report any form of abuse or neglect, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.

All staff follow our child protection policy and procedures. Any disclosures made during RSHE lessons will be handled in accordance with our safeguarding policy.

## **8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

### **8.1 Monitoring and Evaluation**

We monitor and evaluate our RSHE provision through:

- Pupil voice surveys and feedback
- Learning walks and lesson observations
- Work scrutiny
- Staff feedback
- Parent/carers feedback
- Feedback from the Governor linked to PSHE/RSHE
- Analysis of safeguarding data
- Resources on the website that can be viewed by parents

## **8.2 Policy Review**

We must proactively engage and consult parents/carers when we develop and review our policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the trust board in consultation with:

- Staff
- Pupils
- Parents/carers
- The wider school community

## **9. Links to Other Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- SEND Policy

## **10. Further Information and Support**

For pupils:

- Pastoral team
- PSHE/RSHE lead
- External mental health support
- Designated Safeguarding Lead

For parents/carers:

- PSHE/RSHE Trust lead: Sarah Rhodes [srhodes@swintonacademy.org](mailto:srhodes@swintonacademy.org)
- Headteacher:
- School websites all available via: [astoncetrust.org](http://astoncetrust.org)

External support:

- Brook: [www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)
- NSPCC: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- Childline: 0800 1111
- YoungMinds
- KOOTH

This policy has been written specifically for ACET Academies as a secondary school, reflecting the updated RSHE guidance that comes into effect in September 2026.