SHARE POLICY & PROCEDURE Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education – Secondary

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1. Policy statement

1.1 SHARE MAT believes in 'Valuing People, Supporting Personal Best'. This ethos underpins the development of a curriculum and school culture that addresses the broader social, emotional, and contextual factors influencing the lives of children and young people. Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) is a fundamental component of this provision, supporting pupils to acquire the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence necessary to lead safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.

1.2 SHARE MAT academies actively promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the entire school community, including pupils, staff, and families. A secure understanding of healthy relationships is central to building resilience and safeguarding wellbeing. Through the delivery of RSHE, pupils are equipped with the knowledge and understanding required to develop respectful, supportive relationships with themselves and others throughout their lives. RSHE contributes directly to the academy's prevention strategy in relation to child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexism and misogyny. Through education, pupils are supported to recognise harmful behaviours, challenge harmful attitudes and seek help when concerns arise.

1.3 The DfE recognises that "Children and young people need knowledge and skills that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships. High quality, evidence-based teaching of relationships, sex and health education can help prepare pupils for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life, and can promote their moral, social, mental and physical development."

1.4 We pursue this aim through a planned, contextualised curriculum which is guided by key principles as set out in the DfE's statutory guidance:

- Engagement with pupils
- Engagement and transparency with parents
- Positivity
- Careful sequencing
- Relevant and responsive
- Skilled delivery of participative education
- Whole school approach

A detailed explanation of these key principles can be found in paragraph 15 of the DfE's RSHE statutory guidance, 2025.

1.5 At SHARE MAT, our role in delivering RSHE is to:

- Provide relevant, unbiased, evidence-informed information about relationships, sex and health education including vaping addiction, gynaecological health, accessing healthcare services and vaccinations
- Provide a space in which sensitive discussions can take place safely
- Prepare students for puberty and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Support students in developing high levels of self-respect, confidence and empathy for others
- Help pupils develop healthy, respectful relationships understanding consent and boundaries including understanding violence against women and girls, sexual coercion, controlling behaviour, harmful gender stereotypes and the impact of pornography on relationships and attitudes.
- Teach students the correct vocabulary required to describe both themselves and others
- Teach students the facts about the law so that they are clear about their rights and responsibilities as citizens
- Help pupils develop an informed and respectful understanding of different types of relationships and characteristics, including LGBT relationships and identities
- Address sexual harassment and sexual violence through a whole-school approach to modelling positive relationships, alongside discrete teaching of healthy relationships in RSHE lessons
- Help students develop a critically evaluate online content including misogyny and harmful online influencers

1.6 SHARE MAT remains committed to ensuring effective safeguarding is central to everything we do. Discussions about sensitive topics in RSHE can lead to increased safeguarding reports. The DfE statutory RSHE guidance 2025 agrees that "Effective teaching will support prevention of harms by helping young people understand and identify when things are not right". Any concerns arising from RSHE lessons will be managed in accordance with the SHARE MAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and KCSIE.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching staff and volunteers – outlining Thornhill Community Academy's approach to delivering RSHE. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

3. Legal and statutory framework

3.1 Schools have a legal duty to promote the welfare of their pupils, which includes their health and wellbeing, and this is guided by statutory guidance and frameworks.

3.2 From September 2026, each academy will implement teaching in line with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health

Education statutory guidance (effective September 2026) Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance.

3.3 RSHE is an integral part of safeguarding responsibilities as set-out in the statutory guidance for schools in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

3.4 The SEND Code of Practice states that schools must provide adequate support for pupils with special educational needs, including in the teaching of RSHE.

4. Policy aims and objectives

4.1 In line with the RSHE statutory guidance (paragraph 14), this policy focuses on the RSHE curriculum and aims to:

- "Set out the subject content, how and when it will be taught, and who is responsible for teaching it, including any external providers the school will use.
- Differentiate between relationships and sex education (where sex education is taught), so that parents have clear information. Relationships education doesn't involve explaining the detail of different forms of sexual activity but can cover sensitive topics such as sexual violence in order to keep children safe.
- Include information about a parent's right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education.
- Explain how content will be made accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).
- Describe how the subject is monitored and evaluated.
- Set out how parents can view curriculum materials.
- Explain how teachers will answer questions about topics in sex education from which the child has been withdrawn.
- Explain how the policy has been produced, who approves the policy, and how and when it will be reviewed."

5. Role and responsibilities

5.1 The below staff have a responsibility to develop students' understanding of RSHE:

Role	Responsibilities	Contact
All staff (Including teachers, TAs, wider support roles and volunteers)	• Promote positive relationships rooted in kindness and care. • Report concerns following academy procedures.	
RSHE Teachers, Form tutors	• Deliver pre-planned lessons by following the guidance and training provided by the RSHE leader in their academy. • Deliver RSHE in a sensitive way, model positive attitudes to RSHE, monitor student progress, and respond to the needs of each individual student. • Staff do not have the right to opt out of delivering RSHE. Those who have concerns about delivering RSHE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher.	

RSHE leader	• Design a well-sequenced, contextually relevant curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. • Engage with stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff, DSL, SENDCo and governors) throughout the design and implementation process. • Ensure consistency in delivery by sharing high-quality resources and providing appropriate training for staff. • Monitor the impact of the curriculum through assessment data and quality assurance processes. • Work closely with the DSL and SENDCo to ensure the curriculum is inclusive, accessible, and responsive to safeguarding and additional needs.	Megan Walker
Assistant Headteacher in charge of Personal Development	• Monitor and evaluate the approach to RSHE, supporting RSHE leaders to ensure effective, consistent delivery. • Contribute to the school's quality assurance processes and identify professional development needs to drive continuous improvement	Lucinda Rudd
DSL and SENDCo	• Regularly liaise with the RSHE leader to ensure that the curriculum is contextualised, inclusive, and contributes to the overall safeguarding of pupils.	Claire Keen Dale Goodwin
Headteacher	• Ensure that RSHE is prioritised appropriately within the school's strategic planning and daily operations. • Allocate sufficient curriculum time for effective RSHE delivery, embedding RSHE within the school's CPD cycle. • Maintain oversight of quality assurance outcomes to identify and address areas for improvement.	Matthew Burton
Academy Governors	• Monitor and evaluate the impact of the RSHE Policy & Procedure • Hold the Headteacher/Principal to account for its implementation.	
Trust Improvement Lead	• Write and update this policy. • Drive consistency and continuous improvement in RSHE provision through strategic support and evaluation. • Support Headteachers by ensuring fidelity to statutory guidance, supporting implementation in each setting through CPD for RSHE leaders, and leading quality assurance processes.	Danny Glover
Executive Leadership Team	• Report to the Trust Board.	Jenny Carr

Trust Board of Directors	• Review this policy and evaluate reports about the Trust's plans for RSHE.	Pupil Committee

6. Procedures and implementation

6.1 RSHE is primarily delivered through the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programme. Delivery methods may include tutor-led sessions, assemblies, and cross-curricular links where appropriate - for example, exploring religious perspectives in RE or sexual health content in science.

6.2 At Thornhill Community Academy, RSHE is primarily delivered through Learning for Life lessons for one hour a week.

6.3 Curriculum plans detailing the content of the lessons can be found on our academy website here: Learning4Life

6.4 **Curriculum Content**

6.4.1 RSHE focuses on equipping pupils with the knowledge and skills to develop healthy, respectful relationships in all areas of life.

6.4.2 In secondary education, the content of the curriculum includes all statutory elements as laid out in the statutory guidance (paragraph 32-39;41-47). This includes:

- Families
- Respectful relationships
- Online safety and awareness including emerging online risks linked to AI
- Being safe, including sexual harassment and abuse
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
- Mental wellbeing, including emotional regulation, loneliness, change, bereavement, loss and accessing support, physical health and fitness, healthy eating
- Personal safety, including road safety, rail safety, water safety, safety in public spaces, emergency help-seeking and risk recognition.
- Developing bodies, including menstrual and gynaecological health, fertility, and menopause.

6.4.3 In addition to the statutory content above, the curriculum includes topics that are contextually relevant to our pupils, informed by local health and crime data. Wherever possible, this content is planned and outlined within the curriculum plans (see section 6.3). Where immediate or emerging needs arise, delivery may take place through responsive assemblies. Parents will be notified when such assemblies occur.

6.4.4 All topics are taught within the context of family life, with sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds and circumstances of pupils - including single-parent families, LGBTQ+ families, adoptive and foster families, and children with alternative support structures such as looked-after children or young carers.

6.4.5 The curriculum is designed to promote positive personal development and prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. It supports the development of key personal attributes such as resilience, self-respect, honesty, integrity,

kindness, and courage, and helps pupils identify and respond to situations where something may not be right.

6.4.6 The curriculum design is inclusive of all learners, including those with SEND, primarily through quality-first teaching. Where appropriate, content may be delivered via alternative methods such as small group or one-to-one support. Staff should consult the SEND Toolkit for further guidance on our whole school SEND approach.

6.5 Right to Withdraw

6.5.1 Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from Sex Education within RSHE up to three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the pupil wishes to receive Sex Education, the academy will arrange for them to do so.

6.5.2 As set out in the statutory guidance, "Relationships education will focus on how to form and sustain positive relationships but will also help children identify risks and harms. Relationships education may therefore include topics related to preventing sexual abuse, for example, or avoiding sharing inappropriate material online. This can be done without describing the detail of any sexual activity involved." (paragraph 23)

6.5.3 Similarly, Health Education includes statutory content such as:

- Risks of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Contraception
- Reproduction and fertility
- Pregnancy outcomes
- Accessing sexual health services

This content is delivered at an appropriate time and is often delivered through the science curriculum.

6.5.4 Parents may request to view the materials used in Health and Relationships lessons but cannot withdraw their child from them due to their statutory nature.

6.5.5 Parents must submit requests to withdraw a child from Sex Education lessons in writing to the Headteacher/Principal. The request should include:

- Name of parent(s)/carer(s)
- Name of pupil
- Pupil's form group
- Date of request
- Reason for withdrawal
- Any additional information the school is asked to consider

A copy of the request will be placed on the pupil's educational record.

6.5.6 The Headteacher (or a delegated senior leader) will meet with the parent/carer to discuss the request and confirm next steps. Pupils who are withdrawn will be provided with alternative learning activities, which may include independent study, revision, or additional assessments.

6.6 Responding to Sensitive Questions

6.6.1 Share MAT recognise that some pupils will have questions beyond the scope of the curriculum, and children whose questions go unanswered might instead turn to inappropriate sources of information, including online.

6.6.2 Staff are encouraged to respond to pupil questions in an age-appropriate and informed manner. Where questions fall outside the scope of the curriculum or policy, staff will aim to provide accurate information to prevent pupils seeking potentially harmful answers online.

6.6.3 If a question cannot be answered immediately, staff will follow up in future lessons or signpost pupils to trusted sources.

6.6.4 In some instances, staff may ask a pupil to speak to their parents or a trusted adult, for example if a child has been withdrawn from sex education by a parent or carer.

6.7 Openness with parents about RSHE materials

6.7.1 Share MAT is committed to transparency and openness with parents about what is being taught in RSHE and their right to view curriculum materials used.

6.7.2 The statutory guidance states that "schools should take steps to pro-actively engage parents and make sure they are aware of what is being taught in RSHE" (paragraph 55)

6.7.3 Parents/carers will be invited to attend RSHE information evenings where a selection of teaching materials will be shared.

6.7.4 Parents who wish to view the full set of RSHE resources may request a meeting with the RSHE Lead. During this meeting, the RSHE Lead will provide access to the materials and explain how they are delivered in context, supporting parents in understanding the curriculum's intent, structure, and approach.

6.7.5 Resources will not be distributed for parents to view at home under ordinary circumstances.

6.7.6 Where materials are shared, they are confidential and protected by copyright, and must not be copied, distributed, or shared externally.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

7.1 The delivery of RSHE is monitored by the RSHE leader, academy leadership team and trust leaders.

7.2 Governors / Directors receive assurance regarding the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems and the academy's approach to online safeguarding education.

7.3 Monitoring activities include work scrutiny, learning walks, and student voice exercises.

7.4 Where appropriate, peer reviews may also be utilised to evaluate the impact of the RSHE provision.

7.5 Additionally, pupils' knowledge will be routinely assessed, and the curriculum will be adapted accordingly. More information can be found in our assessment policy, here.

7.6 Findings from RSHE monitoring activities are recorded and analysed as part of the academy's (SEF) to ensure consistency, quality, and continuous improvement in RSHE provision.

7.7 The policy has been developed through consultation with pupils, parents, staff, governors, safeguarding leaders and SEND leaders. Feedback is used to inform regular review of both the curriculum and policy. It will be reviewed every year to assess and evaluate its implementation and impact.

8. Training and awareness

8.1 Staff are supported in the effective and confident delivery of RSHE through a combination of internal and external training opportunities.

8.2 Staff are supported in the effective and confident delivery of RSHE through a combination of internal and external training opportunities.

8.3 Staff receive guidance, resources, and planning support from the RSHE Leader to ensure consistent and high-quality delivery of RSHE content.

8.4 The RSHE leader regularly supports staff through CPD sessions, guidance, and pre-teaching of materials.

8.5 Staff with responsibility for RSHE are encouraged to undertake accredited CPD, such as the NSPCC's RSHE training, to deepen subject knowledge and pedagogical confidence.

8.6 All staff complete statutory safeguarding training, which supports the delivery of RSHE themes - particularly those relating to consent, healthy relationships, online safety, and recognising signs of abuse or exploitation.

8.7 Visitors such as school nurses, sexual health professionals, and other specialists may be invited to support the delivery of RSHE and provide training to staff on specific topics. When working with external agencies, the RSHE leader will ensure that the resources are "accurate, age and stage appropriate, and unbiased," as well as avoiding resources from "organisations that have a broader interest in promoting harmful products…. Or that have a strong partisan view on a contested topic" (RSHE Statutory Guidance, paragraph 52). RSHE leaders are responsible for checking the credentials of any visitor or visiting organisation.

8.8 Regular audits are conducted to assess staff confidence and competence in delivering RSHE content. These audits help identify training needs and inform targeted CPD planning.

8.9 This multi-layered approach ensures that staff are well-equipped to deliver RSHE in a way that is accurate, inclusive, and sensitive to the needs of all pupils.

9. Equality and diversity statement

9.1 The delivery of RSHE is underpinned by the principles of equality, inclusion, and respect for all.

9.2 The effective teaching of RSHE supports pupils in developing respectful attitudes and behaviours, helping them to understand the importance of equality, dignity, and human rights in all relationships.

9.3 By the end of secondary education, pupils will have been taught about the law relating to the protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

9.4 In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, Share MAT is committed to ensuring that RSHE is taught in a way that:

- Promotes equality and challenges discrimination.
- Does not discriminate against pupils or amount to harassment based on any protected characteristic.
- Reflects the diverse needs of all pupils.
- Is inclusive and sensitive to the lived experiences of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds, including those with protected characteristics.
- Supports understanding of the Equality Act 2010.
- Fosters respect and empathy

This commitment ensures that RSHE contributes to a safe, inclusive, and respectful school environment where all pupils feel valued and supported.

10. Linked policies

10.1 This policy is directly linked to and should be implemented in conjunction with:

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance
Keeping Children Safe in Education

In addition, the relevant policies, which can be found on individual academy websites, include:

- SHARE MAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy & Procedure
- SHARE MAT SEND Policy and Procedure
- SHARE MAT Secondary Behaviour Policy & Procedure.
- SHARE MAT Online Safety Policy and Procedure

11. Schedule of Amendment

Version No	Amendment
5.0	Policy fully rewritten using the updated Share MAT outline and Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance (effective September 2026)
6.0	Policy updated with additional elements of curriculum focus and staffing changes.