



SHARE MAT Secondary Academy Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy & Procedure – 2022/23

Thornhill Community Academy

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Section 1 - Aims

As part of our core belief of 'Valuing People, Supporting Personal Best', it is important that we develop a curriculum and culture which educates our children and young people in wider contextual issues. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is a vital part of the wider knowledge required by students to live happy and successful lives, whilst feeling confident in themselves.

The SHARE MAT Secondary Academy Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy & Procedure aims to:

- Provide a space for students in which sensitive discussions can take place;
- Prepare students for puberty and give them an understanding of sexual development and the important of health and hygiene;
- Support students in developing high-levels of self-respect, confidence and empathy for others;
- Create a positive culture regarding issues of sexuality and relationships;
- Teach students the correct vocabulary required to describe both themselves and others.

Section 2 – Statutory Requirements

SHARE MAT secondary academies are required to provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.



SHARE MAT secondary academies teach RSE as set out in this policy.

Section 3 – Policy Development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved:

- Review – a member of staff compiled all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance;
- Staff consultation – all academies in SHARE MAT gave their staff the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations;
- Parent consultation – parents were invited to a Microsoft Teams Meeting in July 2021, and again in Term 1 of 2021/22, to discuss the policy, including being given an overview of topics covered regarding RSE and school responses to disclosures around Sexual Abuse issues following the 2021 media reports linked to the 'Everyone's Invited' website.
- Pupil consultation – we complete regular student voice and work scrutiny activities to ensure we are covering the topics most relevant to their needs, basing this in their thoughts, feelings and experiences in their local area;
- Ratification – once the policy was agreed by stakeholders, it was shared with governors at each academy and has been ratified by the Local Governing Body.

Section 4 - Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of our students and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves both sharing information and exploring key issues students face today and in their future. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity. RSE aims to provide students with the knowledge and understanding to become positive citizens in 21st Century multi-cultural Britain.

Section 5 - Curriculum

Our RSE curriculum is primarily delivered through our Personal, Health, Social and Emotional (PHSE) programmes, which vary from academy to academy. Activities may include tutor-based activities, assemblies and links through subject curriculum, where relevant e.g. key views of specific religions in religious education. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, staff will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online – where staff cannot answer they will do their utmost to respond in following lessons.

For more information about our curriculum, please see individual academy websites where the PSHE programme of study is available for all years.

Section 6 – Delivery of RSE

Where appropriate links can be formed, these will be incorporated into the teaching of curriculum subject lessons. Biological aspects of RSE are mainly taught in the science curriculum and other aspects such as religious beliefs and views are taught in religious education, as mentioned above.

Pupils also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by trained health professionals, which primarily occur during assemblies.

RSE focuses on giving students the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, including:



- Families;
- Respectful relationships with peers;
- Online and social media relationships;
- Being safe online and in the community;
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

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 families, LGBTQ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children have a different support structure around them (e.g. looked after children or young carers).

Section 7 – Roles and Responsibilities

The academy governing body will monitor and evaluate the impact of the RSE Policy & Procedure to hold the Headteacher/Principal to account for its implementation.

The Headteacher/Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the academy, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE (see Section 8 below).

Staff will:

- Deliver RSE in a sensitive way;
- Model positive attitudes to RSE;
- Monitor student progress and development of their knowledge;
- Respond to the needs of each individual student;
- Respond appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from non-statutory components of the RSE curriculum.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of delivering RSE. Those who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher/Principal. All form tutors, science teachers and religious education teachers are responsible for the delivery of the RSE curriculum.

Students will:

- Be expected to engage fully in RSE;
- Respond and interact with others in a civil and respectful manner;
- Approach topics and points for discussion sensitively, bearing in mind situations that their peers may be facing outside school;
- Be open-minded and refrain from judging others.

Section 8 – Right to Withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the academy will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing, addressed to the Headteacher/Principal, who will consider the request and respond appropriately.



The request should include the following information:

- name of parent(s)
- name of student
- student form group
- date of request
- reason for withdrawing from sex education within RSE
- any additional information the school are requested to consider.

A copy of the request will be placed on the students' educational record and the Headteacher/Principal or a delegate will discuss this request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative work will be given to any student who is withdrawn, and may include use of this time for homework, revision or additional assessments.

Section 9 - Training

Staff are supported in the appropriate delivery of RSE by the PSHE coordinator and as part of their ongoing professional development.

External visitors and agencies such as school nurses, sexual health professionals and other appropriate people may also be invited to support, deliver and train staff in teaching RSE topics.

Section 10 – Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the PSHE coordinator and the academy leadership team and MAT leaders. This monitoring includes planned work scrutiny, lesson drop-ins, learning walks and student voice activities which help to develop and improve the delivery of RSE material over time.

Section 11 – Other Appropriate/Linked Policies

The RSE policy should be read in conjunction with national guidance including:

- Keeping Children safe in Education (2022)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

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

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