

Secondary Relationships and Sex Education Policy; incorporating PSHE

Relationships & Sex Education (Secondary)

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Policy

This policy is informed by DfE statutory guidance and advice: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Published 25 June 2019
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Approved by:	Curriculum and Standards Policy and Scrutiny Committee
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The RSE policy supports/complements the following policies	<p>Anti-Bullying Policy CEIAG Policy E Safety Policy Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy Substances Misuse & Education Policy Mental Health & Well-Being Policy SMSC Policy: Collective Worship & British Values Guidance Transgender Guidance</p> <p><i>External documents that inform the school's RSE policy include:</i> <i>Education Act (1996)</i> <i>Learning and Skills Act (2000)</i> <i>Education and Inspections Act (2006)</i> <i>Equality Act (2010)</i> <i>Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2020)</i> <i>Keeping children safe in education; Statutory safeguarding guidance (2024)</i> <i>Children and Social Work Act (2017)</i></p>

Revisions

Version	Page/Para No.	Description of Change	Approved On
2	The whole policy for the secondary phase has been recreated and adopted.	The secondary policy has been separated from the primary phase. Two separate primary policies are now in place for RSE and PSHE. To be adopted for 22 – 23.	
3	1	Removed 2014 ref Added 2020 ref to RSE Policy Guidance	
3	2	Updated KCSIE ref 2024 Ref to 2020 compulsory guidance added	
3	4	Added in Sept 2020 guidance	

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1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) in our secondary academies are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- We support the DfE ambition for all young people to stay safe and prepared for life in modern Britain. This ambition is realised through the development of this policy, which extends our current statutory duty to provide age-appropriate Relationships Education for the primary phase (see separate primary policy) and Relationships & Sex Education for the secondary phase, delivered through Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE).
- Each academy has the freedom to deliver content appropriate to the age of the students and their religious backgrounds within the Meridian Trust framework for PSHE, which includes RSE, (App1 and App 3 secondary academies).

2. Statutory requirements

All Meridian Trust secondary academies teach RSE as set out in this policy.

Secondary academies

All Meridian Trust secondary academies must provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017. Since September 2020, Relationship Education, Health Education and Relationship & Sex Education became compulsory in England. From September 2021 schools are expected to teach an RSE Curriculum that meets DfE guidance. 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.

As part of Meridian Trust we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

Our funding agreement and articles of association can be found on the Meridian Trust website: <https://www.Meridian Trust.co.uk/legal-documents/>

Special academies

All Meridian Trust special schools provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017. Since September 2020, Relationship Education, Health Education and Relationship & Sex Education became compulsory in England. From September 2021 schools are expected to teach an RSE Curriculum that meets DfE guidance. 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.

We do not have to follow the National Curriculum for our primary aged pupils, but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including requirements to teach science which would include the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum.

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.

As part of Meridian Trust we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

Our funding agreement and articles of association can be found on the Meridian website: <https://www.cmatrust.co.uk/legal-documents/>

Delivery of RSE: Special academies

RSE focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, giving pupils the information they need to help them develop nurturing relationships of all kinds through the 3 core strands and 3 further strands for our special schools including:

- Self care, support and safety
- Managing feelings
- Changing and growing
- Self Awareness
- The World I Live in
- Healthy Lifestyles

The RSE SEND framework accompanies the PSHE Association Programme of Study which supports our curriculum delivery. Our curricula are delivered by developmental stage and the specific need of the individual.

Parents' right to withdraw: Special Academies

Will follow the Meridian Trust Primary and Secondary academies processes.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with the Academy Council, Staff, Students and Families. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review: the PSHE Leaders group gathered together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.
2. Staff consultation: all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
3. Family/stakeholder consultation: parents, families and any interested parties were invited to contribute to the policy.
4. Student consultation: we investigated what exactly students want from their RSE through rigorous quality assurance.
5. Ratification: once amendments were made, the policy was shared with the academy council and the Executive Principals, before becoming ratified.

4. Definition

RSE is delivered in all Meridian Trust secondary academies and provides the statutory relationships and sex education defined.

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

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

Our secondary curriculum framework is set out as per Appendix 1 and 3, on occasion we may need to adapt it as and when necessary. The curriculum is additionally supplemented, where appropriate, with drop down days, assemblies, visitors and visits.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents/carers, students and staff, considering the age, needs and feelings of students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner, so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

For more information about our RSE expected curriculum outcomes, see Appendix 3.

6. Delivery of RSE

Relationship, Sex Education (RSE) related topics within the secondary curriculum are age appropriate and have considered the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs. Since September 2020, Relationship Education, Health Education and Relationship & Sex Education became compulsory in England. From September 2021 schools are expected to teach an RSE Curriculum that meets DfE guidance. 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.

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum and other aspects are included in philosophy and religious education (PRE).

The delivery of relationships education and RSE is complemented in delivery through parents, families, health professionals, youth workers, peer educators, the police and the wider community. Students may receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by trained external professionals.

The Lead Teacher will work closely with colleagues delivering RSE sessions and ensure appropriate training, guidance and support.

PSHE, in the context of Relationships Education and RSE, will reflect content appropriate to the age of the students and their religious backgrounds. This education will likely focus on:

Secondary academies

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

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health. For more information about our RSE curriculum, see App3.

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 and 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 Meridian Trust Executive

The Meridian Trust Executive will approve the RSE policy and be adopted by each secondary academy. The Academy Council to hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from components of RSE (see section 8 and App4).

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 students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

7.4 Students

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

8. Parents' right to withdraw

Meridian Trust Secondary Academies:

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 4 of this policy and addressed to the Headteacher.

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

Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education and they will be appropriately supervised for the duration of the specified time.

9. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The headteacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Meridian Trust Curriculum Review & Quality Assurance processes.

Both trust quality assurance reviews and peer reviews support the quality of education, along with internal academy monitoring arrangements, such as planning scrutinies, learning walks, lesson observations, book looks, student voice etc.

Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of internal assessment systems.

Appendix 1: Meridian Trust Secondary Curriculum Framework: KS3 &4 Thematic Model and the KS5 programme builder adopted from the PSHE Association

Secondary Programme Builder: Thematic model

Our [Programme Builders \(.pdf version\)](#) include links to the quality assured resources for each area of PSHE education and advice on using the tools effectively. These Programme Builders are updated as soon as new resources are available, so we would encourage you to check in regularly to see the latest recommended resources.



Terms of use:

The PSHE Association reserves the right to request the removal of any content which infringes on its terms of use policy as outlined in the [terms and conditions of membership](#). Commercial use or publication of this material (including reproduction, storage, modification and distribution) without the prior written consent of PSHE

Association is prohibited. You are free to use and share this material non-commercially within your school only.

Please note that publication of the one-page long-term overview (or your adapted version of it) on your school website is permitted. However, publication of the medium term grids, or adapted versions of them, is not permitted.

SECONDARY PSHE EDUCATION: LONG-TERM OVERVIEW — THEMATIC MODEL

	Autumn 1 Health & wellbeing	Autumn 2 Living in the wider world	Spring 1 Relationships	Spring 2 Health & wellbeing	Summer 1 Relationships	Summer 2 Living in the wider world
Year 7	Transition and safety Transition to secondary school and personal safety in and outside school, including first aid	Developing skills and aspirations Careers, teamwork and enterprise skills, and raising aspirations	Diversity Diversity, prejudice, and bullying	Health and puberty Healthy routines, influences on health, puberty, unwanted contact, and FGM	Building relationships Self-worth, romance and friendships (including online) and relationship boundaries	Financial decision-making Saving, borrowing, budgeting and making financial choices
Year 8	Drugs and alcohol Alcohol and drug misuse and pressures relating to drug use	Community and careers Equality of opportunity in careers and life choices, and different types and patterns of work	Discrimination Discrimination in all its forms, including racism, religious discrimination, disability, discrimination, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia	Emotional wellbeing Mental health and emotional wellbeing, including body image and coping strategies	Identity and relationships Gender identity, sexual orientation, consent, 'sexting', and an introduction to contraception	Digital literacy Online safety, digital literacy, media reliability, and gambling hooks

Year 9	Peer influence, substance use and gangs Healthy and unhealthy friendships, assertiveness, substance misuse, and gang exploitation	Setting goals Learning strengths, career options and goal setting as part of the GCSE options process	Respectful relationships Families and parenting, healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and relationship changes	Healthy lifestyle Diet, exercise, lifestyle balance and healthy choices, and first aid	Intimate relationships Relationships and sex education including consent, contraception, the risks of STIs, and attitudes to pornography	Employability skills Employability and online presence
Year 10	Mental health Mental health and ill health, stigma, safeguarding, health, including during periods of transition or change	Financial decision making The impact of financial decisions, debt, gambling and the impact of advertising on financial choices	Healthy relationships Relationships and sex expectations, myths, pleasure and challenges, including the impact of the media and pornography	Exploring influence The influence and impact of drugs, gangs, role models and the media	Addressing extremism and radicalisation Communities, belonging and challenging extremism	Work experience Preparation for and evaluation of work experience and readiness for work

Year 11	Building for the future Self-efficacy, stress management, and future opportunities	Next steps Application processes, and skills for further education, employment and career progression	Communication in relationships Personal values, assertive communication (including in relation to contraception and sexual health), relationship challenges and abuse	Independence Responsible health choices, and safety in independent contexts	Families Different families and parental responsibilities, pregnancy, marriage and forced marriage and changing relationships	
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Key stage 5 PSHE education Programme Builder – long term plan for the academic year

KS5 PSHE EDUCATION: LONG-TERM OVERVIEW

	Autumn 1 Health & wellbeing	Autumn 2 Living in the wider world	Spring 1 Relationships	Spring 2 Living in the wider world	Summer 1 Relationships	Summer 2 Health & wellbeing
Year12	Mental health and emotional wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health and emotional wellbeing Managing stress Body image Healthy coping strategies 	Readiness for work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career opportunities Preparing for the world of work 	Diversity and inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living in a diverse society Challenging prejudice and discrimination 	Planning for the future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring future opportunities Post-18 options The impact of financial decisions 	Respectful relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent Assertive communication Positive relationships and recognising abuse Strategies for managing dangerous situations or relationships 	Health choices and safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independence and keeping safe Travel First aid The impact of substance use

Year13	Independence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible health choices Managing change Health and wellbeing, including sexual health, into adulthood 	Next steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application processes Future opportunities and career development Maintaining a positive professional identity 	Intimate relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal values, including in relation to contraception and sexual health Fertility Pregnancy 	Financial choices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing money Financial contracts Budgeting Saving Debt Influences on financial choices 	Building and maintaining relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New friendships and relationships, including in the workplace Personal safety Intimacy Conflict resolution Relationship changes 	
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In addition to the PSHE Association KS5 topic areas, our P16 Curriculum Leads have identified the following to be mapped and or enhanced:

• Study Skills & Revision	Emotional health and wellbeing
• Careers & UCAS	• Identity / respect, with a focus on sexual orientation
• Festivals, travelling, spiking, drug awareness	• Sexual health
• FGM and 'honour' based violence	• Consent
• Human Rights, Prejudice & Discrimination	• Risk & Safety
• Radicalisation & Hate Crime	• Economic well-being & finance, payslips, taxation, loans and credit
• Parliament & Democracy	• Money Mules & Scams
• Digital Literacy	• Independent living & budgeting
• Gambling	• Healthy & Abusive Relationships

Appendix 2: Meridian Trust curriculum framework summary PSHE, Relationships and sex education, Careers, PRE, Values

1. We have adopted The PSHE Association thematic model KS3 & 4 and the KS5 programme builder. Each programme builder meets statutory guidance for Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education for each phase, within a comprehensive PSHE education programme. It considers progression and development of students' understanding of the overarching concepts and development of essential skills and attributes.
2. Topic areas are arranged into half term 'chunks', which can be adapted to suit each Meridian Trust Academy planning requirements: there is no 'correct order'. Each Academy should select the content that ensures opportunities to explore the overarching concepts and to develop knowledge, skills and attributes, through a programme that is relevant and appropriate to the ethos of their school and the needs of their students.
3. We support the Sex Education Forum 12 point statement which explains what is needed for good quality RSE, based on research evidence. They are supported by a wide range of partners including NSPCC, Barnardo's, The Children's Society and NCB, and the following education unions: ASCL, NASUWT, NEU, NAHT, UNISON and Voice.
4. We are using the Gatsby 8 Pillars to inform our Careers Programmes, supported by the online platform UNIFROG, which will be woven into the secondary PSHE Programme of study:
 - A stable careers programme
 - Learning from career and labour market information

- Addressing the need of each student
- Linking curriculum learning to careers
- Encounters with employers and employees
- Experiences of workplaces
- Encounters with further and higher education
- Personal guidance

5. We will incorporate the national requirements for religious education into the planning model, where PRE is not taught explicitly. As a MAT we do not have to follow the LA SACRE guidance, but we are choosing to use the guidance to support a comprehensive model. The recommended minimum time is set out in the Dearing Review (1996) as KS1: 36 hours per year, KS2&3: 45 hours per year, KS4: 5% of curriculum time or 70 hours across the key stage. The Primary Academies have a bespoke Meridian Trust Syllabus across all phases.

6. Meridian Trust values will be reflected throughout the plan and individual Academies values picked out accordingly.

The planning model can be taught in any order or style for each year group.

A careers overlay is matched over each year group.

PRE is taught either discretely as Ethics or through skills led topics in the secondary phase.

Appendix 3: RSE: by the end of secondary school students should know

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there are different types of committed, stable relationships • How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children • What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony • Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into • The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships • The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting • How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
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Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g., how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help • That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control • What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable • The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal
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TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online • Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them • What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online • The impact of viewing harmful content • That specifically sexually explicit material e.g., pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners • That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships • How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)
TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship • That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g., physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing • The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women • That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others • That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available • The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage • That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help) • How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing • About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment • How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour • How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

Appendix 4: Secondary Parent/Carer form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE.

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/CARER			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			

Parent signature	
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TO BE COMPLETED BY THE ACADEMY

Agreed actions from discussion with parents	<p><i>Include notes from discussions with parents and agreed actions taken.</i></p> <p><i>E.g.: Joe Bloggs will be taking part in all relationships lessons and during the sex education lessons, he will be working independently on a project in the House Hub/R12 classroom</i></p>