RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY AND PROCEDURE

2024/2025

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Our Vision

Unified Academy is aware that children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive.

All teachers are teachers of RSE, regardless of their subject.

Aims

The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage, civil partnership or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed. Alongside being taught intimate relationships, students will also be taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult.

Teaching of RSE at Unified Academy will enable students:

- to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful;
- to understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect and to understand that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing;
- to believe they can achieve goals and that in order to achieve those goals they must stick at the tasks despite the challenges they may face;
- to be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way;
- to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for themselves or others at risk;
- to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and when to report issues to keep them safe online;
- to, within the law, be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives in the future, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs.

Statutory Guidance

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 make Relationships Education compulsory for all students receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all students receiving secondary education. The regulations also make Health Education compulsory at Unified Academy.

Delivery of the programme

Unified Academy acknowledges that high-quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching can help students prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life as well as promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of students both at school and in society.

RSE will be set in the context of a wider whole-school approach to supporting students to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school. The curriculum on relationships and sex will complement and be supported by, Unified Academy's wider policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, anti-bullying and safeguarding. RSE will sit within the context of Unified Academy's broader ethos and approach to developing students socially, morally, spiritually and culturally; and its pastoral care system.

The curriculum on health education will similarly complement, and be supported by, Unified Academy's education on healthy lifestyles through physical education, food technology, science and its sport, extra-curricular activity and school food.

Unified Academy will deliver the content set out in Appendix 1 and 2 in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. Effective teaching will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to students, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme of lessons. Teaching will include sufficient well-chosen opportunities and contexts for students to practise applying and embedding new knowledge so that it can be used skilfully and confidently in real life situations. The lead teacher in each subject area will work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education programmes complement each other and do not duplicate, content covered in national curriculum subjects such as citizenship, science, computing and PE.

Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education will be accessible for all students. High quality teaching is differentiated and personalised, this is the starting point to ensure accessibility for all students. Unified Academy will also be mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes as set out in the SEND code of practice, when preparing these subjects for students with SEND.

Unified Academy is aware that some students are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education can also be a priority for some students, for example some with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs or learning disabilities.

For some students there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meeting the specific needs of children at different development stages.

Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team

The Principal/Deputy Principal/Assistant Principal will ensure that:

- All staff are informed of the policy and the responsibilities included within the policy;
- All teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support subjects;
- The subjects are staffed and timetabled in a way to ensure Unified Academy fulfils their legal obligations;
- The teaching of RSE is monitored to ensure that it is delivered in ways that are accessible to all students with SEND;
- Unified Academy works with parent/carers when planning and delivering RSE to students.
- Clear information is provided to parent/carers on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.

Staff

All staff will ensure that:

- Ground rules are negotiated with the group before embarking on lessons of a sensitive nature so that both the staff and students can work together in a supportive atmosphere in which all members can speak with confidence and without fear of embarrassment, anxiety or breach of confidentiality;
- All students are offered the opportunity to explore ideas, situations and feelings in an atmosphere of confidence and support;
- At all times teaching will take place in the context of an explicit moral framework;

- All points of view they may express during the course of teaching RSE are unbiased;
- The teaching of RSE is delivered in ways that are accessible to all students with SEND;
- The emphasis of teaching RSE will always be the importance and understanding of personal relationships and the right of the individual to make informed choices;
- Issues of stereotyping, sexual equality, harassment, rights and legislation underpin the teaching of RSE;
- Where appropriate they direct students to seek advice and support from an appropriate agency or individual. It is inappropriate for staff to give students personal advice on matters such as contraception;
- Where a student has embarked on a course of action likely to place them at risk, the member of staff will ensure that the student is aware of the implications of their behaviour. The member of staff should refer any potential concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead of any of the Unified Academy safeguarding team.

Parent/Carers

Unified Academy acknowledges the key role that parent/carers play in the development of their children's understanding about relationships. Parent/carers are the first educators of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.

All Parent/Carers will be:

- Given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education and RSE;
- Encouraged to participate in the development of Relationships Education and RSE;
- Able to discuss any concerns directly with Unified Academy.

Right to be excused from sex education

Parent/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Unified Academy, before granting any such request, will require the Principal/Deputy Principal to discuss the request with the parent/carer/carer and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

Following the discussions, except in exceptional circumstances, Unified Academy will respect the parent/carer/carers request to withdraw their child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

The Principal/Deputy Principal will ensure that where a pupil is excused from sex education, the pupil will receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from the national curriculum.

Working with external agencies

Unified Academy is aware that working with external partners will enhance the delivery of RSE and will only bring in external agencies with specialist knowledge to implement different ways of engaging with young people.

Where Academies use external agencies, they will check the credentials of the visiting organisation and any visitors linked to the agency. Academies will also ensure that the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with the planned programme ant the published policy.

Schools will work with external agencies to ensure that the content delivered is age-appropriate and accessible for all students. Any materials that are used as part of the delivery must be approved by Unified Academy in advance of the session.

Unified Academy will ensure that the visitor is aware of aspects of confidentiality and understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy.

Safeguarding, reports of abuse and confidentiality

Unified Academy recognises that at the heart of RSE, the focus is on keeping children safe, and acknowledges the significant role schools have in preventative education.

At Unified Academy, we will allow children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children will be made aware of the processes to enable them to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This will also include processes when they have a concern about a peer or friend.

In line with the document Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), all staff are aware of what to do if a child tells them that they are being abused or neglected. Staff are also aware of need to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those that need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and children's social care. A member of staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this is not in the best interests of the child. The involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (a member of the safeguarding team) will ensure that trusted, high quality local resources are engaged, links to the police and other agencies are utilised and the knowledge of the any particular local issues it may be appropriate to address in lessons.

Families and people who care for me	**Students should know:** • that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability. • the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives. • that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care for them. • that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up. • that marriage/civil partnership represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong. • how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
Caring friendships	**Students should know:** • how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. • the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties. • that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. • that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right. • how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.

Respectful relationships	**Students should know:** • the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs. • the conventions of courtesy and manners. • the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. • 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 those in positions of authority. • about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help. • what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. • the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.
Online relationships	**Students should know:** • that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not. • that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous. • the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. • how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. • how information and data is shared and used online.
Being safe	**Students should know:** • what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). • about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe. • that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact. • how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter who they do not know. • how to ask for advice or help for self and for others, and to keep trying until they are heard, including having

	the vocabulary and confidence to report concerns or abuse. • where to get advice from e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

Relationships and Sex Education Content (Secondary)**: Appendix 2**

Unified Academy will continue to develop knowledge on topics specified and cover the following content by the end of secondary:

Families	**Students should know:** • 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 and civil partnerships are, including their legal status e.g. that marriage and civil partnerships carry 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 parent/carers/carers with respect to the raising of children. • how to: determine whether peers, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationships is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
Respectful relationships, including friendships	**Students should know:** • the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (both on and offline) including: trust, respect, honesty, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship. • 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 tolerance and respect to others and others' beliefs, including people in positions of authority. • 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.
Online and Media	**Students should know:** • their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply online and offline. • 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 often 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 against the law. • how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
Being safe	**Students should know:** • the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment and domestic abuse 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 (on and offline).
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	**Students should know:** • 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 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. • how 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.