Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

Changing lives Orion Academy Building futures

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This policy sets out our approach to relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) across The Gallery Trust.

This Central Policy has been adapted to reflect the circumstances in Orion Academy

1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSHE) in our trust 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, and to cultivate positive characteristics such as kindness and integrity
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct terminology to describe themselves and their bodies

The RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education) policy is closely aligned with the ethos and values of the Gallery Trust, which centre on inclusion, belong, believe, embrace, achieve and the holistic development of every individual. By promoting positive relationships, emotional wellbeing, and informed decision-making, the RSHE policy supports the Trust's commitment to nurturing students who are prepared for life beyond the classroom. It reinforces the importance of dignity, diversity, and mutual respect, ensuring that all students feel safe, valued, and empowered. In doing so, the policy reflects the Trust's vision of creating supportive environments where every member of the community can thrive both personally and socially.

2. Statutory requirements

In relation to our primary school students, we must provide relationships education to all students as per section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This legislation also requires us to provide RSHE to all students at our secondary academies.

We do not have to follow the National Curriculum, but we are expected to offer all students a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including requirements to teach science. This would include the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum at primary level.

In teaching RSHE, we're 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 also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 404 to 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At Orion Academy we teach RSHE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents/carers. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – the RSHE lead pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance

2. Staff consultation – staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations in a staff meeting

3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents/carers and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy at their respective schools

4. Student consultation – a session was led by each tutor on the policy where pupils were encouraged to consider what they wanted from RSHE. This was fed back to the RSHE lead

5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with local governors and the board of trustees for ratification

4. Definition

For the purpose of this policy:

- RSHE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.
- RSHE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.
- RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Relationships Education (Primary & Secondary): Focuses on the fundamental building blocks of positive, safe, and respectful relationships. It covers family, friendships, healthy online/offline relationships, and respecting boundaries.

Sex Education (Secondary RSE): Focuses on the biological, emotional, and social aspects of human reproduction, including conception, contraception, and sexual health. It is designed to prepare young people for healthy intimate relationships and to understand sexual consent.

5. Curriculum

Our RSHE curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents and carers, students and staff, and taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that students are as fully informed as they can be.

We will share any curriculum resources and materials with parents and carers on request.

6. Delivery of RSHE

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

The trust will make sure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of manageable size
- The required content is communicated to students clearly, in a carefully sequenced way and within a planned scheme of work
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for students to embed new knowledge, so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations

- Teachers will follow the PSHE association guidance for safe and effective lessons outlined below

- **Agree ground rules**

Ground rules establish how pupils will behave towards each other in discussion, exploring the values and opinions of others in a respectful way. They are paramount to effectively managing discussions that might elicit strong opinions from pupils. They also help to minimise inappropriate and unintended disclosures and comments of a negative nature made towards others. To be most effective, negotiate them with your pupils to create a shared sense of ownership, whilst ensuring safe discussion principles are covered, then test and amend them as necessary

- **Openness**

We will be open and honest but will not discuss directly our own or others' personal/ private lives. We will discuss examples but will not use names or descriptions which could identify anyone.

- **Keep the conversation in the room**

We know that our teacher will not repeat what is said in the classroom unless they are concerned we are at risk, in which case they will follow the school's safeguarding policy. The 2025 RSHE guidance states, in relation to this area, "It is… important that children understand how confidentiality will be handled in a lesson and what might happen if they choose to make a report, about themselves or a peer."

- **Non-judgmental approach**

It's okay for us to disagree with another person's point of view but we will not judge, make fun of, or put anybody down. We will 'challenge the opinion, not the person'.

- **Right to pass**

Taking part is important. However, we have the right to pass a question, or to choose an alternative activity, and we will not put anyone 'on the spot'.

- **Make no assumptions**

We will not make assumptions about people's values, attitudes, behaviours, identity, life experiences or feelings. We will listen to other points of view respectfully and expect to be listened to ourselves.

- **Use appropriate language**

We will use correct terms rather than slang terms, as they can be offensive. If we are not sure what the correct term is, we will ask our teacher. Handling complex issues safely in the PSHE education classroom

- **Ask questions**

We are encouraged to ask questions, and they are valued by our teacher. However, we do not ask personal questions, or anything intended to embarrass someone.

- **Seek help and advice**

If we need further help or advice, we know how and where to seek it — both in school and in the community. We will encourage friends to seek help if we think they need it.

- All staff teaching RSHE are supported by the RSHE lead

For our primary aged students, relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful, kind relationships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe

The guidance recommends that primary schools teach sex education in years 5 and/or 6, in line with content about conception and birth in the science curriculum, but it is not compulsory. It is up to you to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of students.
Add brief information about any sex education you provide in addition to what's covered in science

Primary sex education will focus on:

- Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings
- How a baby is conceived and born

RSHE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships, including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

It is important for secondary students to know what the law says about certain topics covered in RSHE, particularly in relation to the law and young people. This will help students identify what is right and wrong, and can provide a foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion. These topics include, but are not limited to:

- Marriage, including forced marriage and civil partnerships
- Consent, including the age of consent
- Domestic abuse, stalking, rape, sexual offences, female genital mutilation (FGM), 'virginity testing' and hymenoplasty
- Sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation, including public sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour, and online behaviours

- Online behaviours including image and information sharing (including sexual imagery, youth-produced sexual imagery and including AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes). students should understand the law about online sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, including grooming and sextortion
- Pornography
- Abortion
- The protected characteristics
- The age of criminal responsibility

Our staff will make sure that all students' views are listened to and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Staff will answer questions sensitively, honestly and appropriately for the ages and SEND of our students.

The programme will be designed to focus on boys as much as girls, and activities will be planned to make sure both are actively involved.

The trust will make sure that all teaching and materials are appropriate for the ages and needs of the students taking into account their individual SEND.

The needs of all pupils will be catered for. As a special school we ensure our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of our pupils and adapted to ensure their EHCP are adhered to. The fact that the curriculum will be delivered in most cases by class teachers or those who work within the Key stage mean all pupils will be known to staff and their additional needs catered for

As a school we follow the Jigsaw curriculum as outlined in the appendix 1. A curriculum map which outlines when sex education is taught will be available on the school website from Sept 2026.

The materials used will be primarily from Jigsaw which is a well-established scheme which is used widely and well-respected. Materials will be shared with class teachers who will assess their suitability for their class and make any necessary adaptations,

The school will consult parents and carers, and their views will be valued.

Pupil will on occasions use worksheets to develop their thinking but many of the lessons will be discussion based to allow pupils to explore the topics. Each will end with a post-it response from each pupil to the big question posed at the start.

For more information about our RSHE curriculum, see Appendix 1

RSHE complements several other subjects. Where appropriate, our school will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching. The RSHE program will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff.

Staff will make sure that students understand the importance of equality and respect, and learn about the law relating to the protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, by the end of their secondary education. The curriculum is designed to include students of all gender identities, and activities will be planned to make sure all are actively involved.

Staff will make sure that all students' views are listened to, and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively, honestly and appropriately for the ages of the students.

The trust will make sure that all teaching and materials are appropriate for the ages and needs of the students including any additional needs, such as special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

At all points of delivery of the curriculum, the school will consult parents and carers, and their views will be valued. What will be taught and how will be planned in conjunction with parents and carers.

Students will be assessed through their contributions to discussions but also using the Jigsaw end of unit assessments.

For more information about our RSHE plan, see Appendix 1.

We may amend our curriculum content to respond to the needs and context of our students, to discuss issues affecting them in an age-appropriate manner. We will inform parents and carers of any deviation from our published policy in advance, and share any relevant materials on request.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (i.e. families can include single-parent families, same-sex parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers among other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children, young carers or kinship carers).

Across our trust, we will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property or hate crime.

7. Inclusivity

Our schools will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of students will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all students' experiences
- During lessons, makes students feel:
    - Safe and supported
    - Able to engage with the key messages

They will also make sure that students learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:

- A whole-class setting
- Small groups or targeted sessions
- 1-to-1 discussions
- Digital formats

Careful consideration is always given to the level of differentiation needed

8. Use of resources

Throughout each year group we will use material to assist learning, such as:

- Diagrams
- Videos
- Books
- Games
- Discussions and practical activities

Our schools will consider whether any resources they plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSHE guidance
- Would support students in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are appropriate, given the age, need and maturity of the students
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our RSHE plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to students' experiences and won't provoke distress

9. Use of external organisations and materials

Across our trust, we will make sure that any agency and any materials used are accurate, appropriate and unbiased and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

Our schools **will**:

Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSHE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:

- Are age-appropriate
- Are in line with students' developmental stage
- Comply with:
    - This policy
    - The Teachers' Standard
    - The Equality Act 2010
    - The Human Rights Act 1998
    - The Education Act 1996

Only work with external agencies where they have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses

Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum

Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with

Be clear on:

- What they're going to say
- Their position on the issues to be discussed

Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use

Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow usual safeguarding procedures for these people

Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to the school, or to parents and carers

Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session

Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session

Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers

Inform all external organisations that the school is legally obliged to share all content with parents and carers

Share all external materials with parents and carers

Our schools **won't**, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme
- Work with agencies who don't allow their material to be shared with parents and carers

10. Roles and responsibilities

10.1 The board of trustees

The board has delegated the approval of this policy to the Schools and Education Sub-committee of the board (SEdCom)

10.2 Local academy boards and rapid improvement boards (LAB and RIB)

LAB's and RIB's are responsible for supporting the implementation of the policy at their school and reporting issues to the Designated Safeguarding Manager, Alison Cox if they have concerns

10.3 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for making sure that RSHE is taught consistently across their school, for making sure that all resources and materials are shared with parents and carers, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory components of RSHE

10.4 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a way that is sensitive, high-quality and appropriate for each year group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSHE

- Modelling positive behaviour and avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and being conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that students may make as a result of the subject content to the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) [insert DSL name here]

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

All teaching staff may teach RSE.

10.5 Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSHE and, when focussing on issues related to RSHE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

11. Parents' right to withdraw

Primary aged students' parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSHE. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix of this policy and addressed to the headteacher of the school.

Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

Secondary aged student's parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSHE up to and until 3 terms before the student turns 16. After this point, if the student 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 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher of the school.

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

In exceptional circumstances, for example because of a safeguarding concern or a student's specific vulnerability, the headteacher can refuse a request to withdraw the student from sex education.

Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

12. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE 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 RSHE.

12. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery, progress and impact of RSHE is monitored by Rani Tandon.

This will be monitored through learning walks, work scrutiny, discussion in teacher meetings and pupil feedback (overseen by the RSHE lead). Students' development in RSHE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.