

## **Relationships education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy 2021**

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). All Members of the Board of Trustees of are Directors of the company as well as Trustees of the exempt charity; the term 'Trustee' used in this Policy also means Director. This Policy applies to all academies within the Link Academy Trust.

### **Statutory Requirements**

Up until September 2020 RSE has not been compulsory in primary schools. In March 2017, the government announced that it is amending the Children and Social Work Bill to allow the secretary of state to make RSE statutory through regulations. As of September 2020, Relationships Education will be compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools, as well as making Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools.

It explains:

- The subjects would be made part of the basic school curriculum. All primary schools (maintained, academies or independent) will be required to provide relationships education and will retain their current choice to teach age-appropriate sex education.

### **Objectives for this Policy**

The Board of Trustees of The Link Academy Trust have decided that sex and relationships will be taught as part of our curriculum, beyond the elements contained in the science curriculum. We consider sex and relationships education to be a fundamental part of our pupils' personal, social and health education, and wish our pupils to be able to make responsible and well-informed age appropriate decisions, based on respect for themselves and for others. We will follow legislated guidance on parents' right to withdraw their children from all or part of the SRE programme.

The Local Board and Academy Head will monitor effective implementation of this Policy and share unsolicited feedback from parents and pupils with Trustees, through:

- Responses to occasional surveys of parent and pupil opinions.
- Monitoring numbers of pupils who are withdrawn from non-science sex and reproduction education.
- Considering any safeguarding/child protection incidents that the effective implementation of the policy should have influenced.

### **Delegation**

The PSHE Curriculum Group and their representative lead in each academy will take on monitoring of the effective implementation of this Policy, and future reviews, and will report to the Academy Head and Governing Body annually.

### **Definition**

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, 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.

## **The Legal Position**

RSE is currently not compulsory in primary schools. However, primary schools are required to teach the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum. At The Link Academy Trust, we consider sex and relationships education to be a fundamental part of our pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE), the aims, values framework and delivery of which are set out below.

## **Policy development**

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

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all academy staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – all parents and any interested parties were emailed a feedback document about the policy.
4. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE.
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and trustees and ratified.

## **The Right to Withdraw**

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of RSE. Section 45 of the RSE Policy gives parents the right to withdraw their child from all or part of Sex Education delivered at part of statutory RSE.

## **This excludes those parts of the syllabus that are required by the National Curriculum for Science.**

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Academy Head. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Academy Head will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from RSE.

## **Rationale**

### **What is Relationship and Sex Education?**

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is the name used to encompass Sex Education, Birth Education and many aspects of the Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) curriculum involved with the ways in which individuals relate to each other.

Relationships and Sex Education "is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health."

Effective relationships and sex education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. It should contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school.

**Aims:**

The aims of relationship and sex education (RSE) at our academies are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality, gender identity and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

**The Teaching of RSE**

RSE offers a place within the curriculum where children and young people can learn the knowledge and skills they need to make the increasingly complex transition through childhood and adolescence, into adulthood. Children are protected from teaching materials that would be considered inappropriate when bearing in mind the age, religion and culture of the pupils.

At the Link Academy Trust, RSE will be taught in a safe manner recognising that children's individual circumstance and experiences may have an emotional impact. We will seek to provide every child with an equally supportive view of themselves and their choices and beliefs without prejudice or bias.

**Responsibilities:** The Board of Trustees will approve the RSE policy and hold the Academy Head to account for its implementation.

The Local Board governors work with the Academy Head and Teachers to 'Learn, Support and Challenge' the teaching and learning set out in this curriculum area through visits, book scrutiny and personnel/ pupil interviews as a minimum.

The Academy Head is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE.

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive manner
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Monitoring progress
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about RSE are encouraged to talk to their Academy Head.

We believe that the provision of RSE should be seen as a partnership between parents and academies. This partnership approach would help ensure that: children receive accurate information; that they benefit from informed adult perspectives on the issues that they face; and so that they can understand and respect other people's values. Therefore, parents will be informed as far in advance as possible and supported to understand how the syllabus will be delivered at their child's academy.

All parents were emailed a feedback document to share their comments on the new RSHE policy. 83.7% of parents understood and agreed with the policy and 95.9% of parents recognised the importance of teaching PSHE. PSHE leads spoke to parents from their academies if questions were raised. As a result of the feedback, a letter will be sent to parents in advance of teaching relationships and sex education so parents can prepare for these conversations.

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

### **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 PSHE Lead Teacher will also invite visitors from outside the academy, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the lead PSHE Teacher and Academy Head through: learning walks, talking to the children, book scrutinies etc. Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems and governors and trustees have oversight of this monitoring.

### **Confidentiality and Child Protection**

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for children or their parents. Should any individual be in possession of information that staff feel may indicate a child is at risk of harm in any way they will always report this to the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in confidence who will deal with it in line with the academy's policy. Other information, views or beliefs will be kept within the confines of the classroom where they are discussed or between the individuals who are discussing them.

RSE may sometimes bring about disclosures of child protection issues and staff should always ask for advice or support if they are in any doubt of procedure or the importance of a disclosure from their Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **Delivery of RSE**

### **Objectives of our RSE syllabus are:**

- To enable pupils to develop knowledge, communication skills and understanding in order to facilitate personal decision-making
- To enable pupils to understand the impact of external factors, such as the media, Internet, peer groups and remain independent decision-makers
- To enable pupils to develop the ability to form positive, non-exploitative relationships
- To enable pupils to be aware of personal, psychological, emotional and physical changes in themselves and others
- To enable pupils to understand the process of human reproduction
- To emphasise the role and the value of family life
- To enable pupils to know what is and what is not legal in matters relating to sexual activity
- To inform pupils of where they can go for further information, support and advice

### **Skills:**

Across the Key Stages, pupils will be supported with developing the following life skills:

- Negotiation
- Making choices based on probable outcomes
- Assertion
- Listening
- Recognising pressures from other people and to how to assess them and resist them if needed
- Dealing with and challenging prejudice
- Seeking help from adults - including parents, carers and professionals
- Differentiating between accurate and inaccurate information
- Empathising with others
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making

#### Attitudes and Beliefs:

- Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations
- Learning the value of family life, marriage and stable and loving relationships for the nurture of children
- Learning the value of respect, love, acceptance and care and that everyone should be seen as worthy individuals
- Understanding everyone has rights over their own bodies
- Learning that there are different lifestyles, and everyone has the right to choose for themselves
- Understanding that they have choices
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas

#### **Values Framework**

RSE is always taught with due regard to moral and legal considerations and with the explicit values of family life and supportive relationships. Care needs to be taken that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances. When discussing families and relationships all contributions from children will be equally valued.

When discussing sexual intercourse staff will present it as part of a committed and stable relationship. At no time will children explore or learn issues of a sexual nature free from a context that supports this.

Among the values promoted are:

- Respect for oneself and other people
- Taking responsibility for one's actions in all situations
- Honesty and loyalty in relationships
- The importance and responsibilities of the family unit for all members
- Sensitivity towards the needs and views of others
- To recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications and risks of certain types of behaviour
- The importance of protecting themselves and ask for help and support
- Being prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- Recognise that the internet can portray unrealistic pornographic images, which are not always a true reflection of relationships. Children should be aware that pornography is not a genuine image of sex and relationships between people

#### **Dealing with Questions**

Clear parameters of what is appropriate & inappropriate will be established within the ground rules. Questions will be answered in a sensitive manner, using simple, accurate and straightforward language. The answers given will always be honest but may not be, on

occasion, everything there is to know. The age of the child will always be taken into consideration as will their level of maturity.  
Should a sensitive issue arise or a question that leads a staff member to suspect an inappropriate knowledge, curiosity or experience; this will be reported to the parent and / or Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL)

### **RSE Curriculum Map**

Each academy within The Link Academy Trust will teach this using their own scheme. Please consult the academy's website for their Curriculum map and how this is delivered.

### **Links with other policies**

Other policies that relate to RSE include:-

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- PSHE policy

This Policy is reviewed by the Standards & Curriculum Committee on a 3-yearly cycle.

Reviewed: **15 September 2021**

Approved by the Board of Trustees: **11 October 2021**