



## Relationships and Sex Education Policy

This policy is underpinned by the commitment of Discovery Schools Academy Trust to ensure the entitlement for all pupils to be taught the statutory relationships and sex curriculum and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn and achieve.

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
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### Document History

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| V0.1    | March 2019      | Liz Braithwaite | Draft policy created   |
| V0.1    | April-July 2019 | Liz Braithwaite | Consultation with Trust Board, Parents and Pupils  |
| V1.0    | September 2019  | Liz Braithwaite | Changes made to policy in light of consultation comments. Final version presented to Trust Board and approved                        |
| V2.0    | June 2023       | Zack Minton     | Review and restructure of policy. To be further updated in line with KCSIE23 and then put forward to trustees so it can be ratified. |

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of Discovery Trust's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy is to promote the well-rounded development of pupils by ensuring the provision of high-quality, age-appropriate education on sex, relationships, and health. Our aim is to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make responsible and informed decisions in their lives, while preparing them for the challenges and opportunities of adulthood. By complying with national guidelines and local regulations, we strive to create a safe and inclusive learning environment that fosters the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental, and physical growth of our pupils. Additionally, this policy seeks to provide relevant information and signpost students to external services that can offer further support.

## 2. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) in our trust 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 and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

## 3. Legal Framework

In our primary academies, we must provide relationships education to all pupils as per section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#). This legislation also requires us to provide RSE to all pupils at our secondary academies.

We do not have to follow the National Curriculum, but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is like 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 RSE, 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 406 and 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 Discovery Trust we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

#### **4. Policy Development**

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

- Review – a member of staff or a working group of staff from each school/central trust education team pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
- Staff consultation – staff across all schools were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
- Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy at their respective schools
- Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE
- Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with our Advisory Boards and the Board of Trustees for ratification

#### **5. 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 and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

#### **6. Organisation of Curriculum**

Our RSE 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, pupils, and staff, and considering the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

Primary sex education is taught in Year 6, linked to the science curriculum. The curriculum focuses on:

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

For more information about our curriculum, see our curriculum map in Appendix 1.

##### **6.1. Primary Schools**

6.1.1. Each Trust primary school is required to deliver statutory relationships education and health education.

6.1.2. "Relationships education" is defined as teaching pupils about healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online.

6.1.3. “Health education” is defined as teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing, focusing on recognising the link between the two and being able to make healthy lifestyle choices.

## **6.2. Secondary Schools**

6.2.1. Each Trust secondary school is required to deliver statutory relationships & sex education and health education.

6.2.2. Relationships & sex education (RSE)” is defined as teaching pupils about developing healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, and helping them to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.

6.2.3. “Health education” is defined as teaching pupils about how they can make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, and how physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked.

6.3. The curriculum for RSE, relationships education and health education will be available on each Trust school’s website.

## **7. Delivery of Curriculum**

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 religious education (RE).

Across our primary academies, 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 relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

Across our 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 Appendices 1 and 2.

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, LGBT parents, 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).

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

7.1. Curriculum development and delivery will adhere to the DfE (2020) 'Teaching about relationships, sex and health' guidance.

7.2. The RSE, relationships education and health education curriculum will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff, using units such as; the DfE CPD RSE training units.

7.3. The curriculum will proactively address issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on pupil's physical, emotional, and sexual development, as relevant.

7.4. RSE, relationships education and health education will be delivered in a non-judgemental, age-appropriate, factual, and inclusive way that allows pupils to ask questions in a safe environment.

7.5. The school will integrate LGBTQ+ content into the RSE curriculum in secondary schools. LGBTQ+ content will be approached in a sensitive, age-appropriate, and factual way that allows pupils to explore gender identity and the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships.

7.6. Classes may be taught in gender-segregated groups dependent on the nature of the topic being delivered at the time, and the cultural background of pupils where it is only appropriate to discuss the body in single gender groups.

7.7. Throughout every year group, appropriate diagrams, videos, books, games, discussion, and practical activities will be used to assist learning. Inappropriate images, videos, etc. will not be used, and resources will be selected with sensitivity given to the age and cultural background of pupils.

7.8. Pupils will be prevented from accessing inappropriate materials on the internet when using such to assist with their learning. The prevention measures taken to ensure this are outlined in the school's Acceptable Usage policies.

7.9. Teachers will establish what is appropriate for one-to-one and whole class settings and alter their teaching of the programmes accordingly.

7.10. Teachers will ensure that pupils' views are listened to and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively and honestly.

7.11. Schools are responsible for ensuring that speakers, tools, and resources do not denounce capitalism or undermine the fundamental British values of democracy; the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

7.12. Schools should not under any circumstances use resources produced by organisations that take extreme political stances on matters. This is the case even if the material itself is not extreme, as the use of it could imply endorsement or support of the organisation.

## **8. Equality and accessibility**

8.1. The school will comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure the curriculum does not discriminate against pupils because of their; Age, Sex, Race, Disability, Religion or belief, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy or maternity, Marriage or civil partnership, Sexual orientation.

8.2. The school will consider the backgrounds, gender, age range and needs of its pupils and determine whether it is necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with the above protected characteristics.

8.3. The school understands that pupils with SEND are entitled to learn about RSE and health education, and the curriculum will be designed to be inclusive of all pupils.

8.4. The school is aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND – teachers will understand that they may need to liaise with the SENCO and be more explicit and adapt their planning or work to appropriately deliver the curriculum to pupils with SEND.

8.5. Where there is a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the needs of pupils at different developmental stages, the school will ensure the teaching remains sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and is delivered with reference to the law.

8.6. The school will take steps to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between all pupils and provide an environment which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic.

8.7. The school will be actively aware of everyday issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture within which these are not tolerated. Any occurrences of such issues will be identified and tackled promptly.

8.8. The school will make clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Any reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be handled in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

## **9. Use of external organisations and materials**

Any agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

We remain responsible for what is said to pupils. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools, and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Our academies **will**:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
  - Are age-appropriate
  - Are in line with pupils' developmental stage
  - Comply with:
    - This policy
    - The [Teachers' Standards](#)
    - 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

Our academies **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

## 10. Roles and responsibilities

### 10.1 The board of trustees



The board of trustees will approve the RSE policy at Trust level.

## **10.2 Advisory Board**

Advisory Boards are responsible for supporting the implementation of the policy at their school and reporting issues to the Head of Safeguarding and CEO if they occur.

## **10.3 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across their school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE (see section 11).

## **10.4 Staff**

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science 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. Year 5 and Year 6 teachers will lead the RSE curriculum, Naomi Fielder and Rosina Palmer respectively.

## **10.5 PSHE Lead**

The role of the PSHE Lead at our school includes the responsibility of reviewing and evaluating the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme. The PSHE Lead will report to the Head Teacher regarding this task.

To support staff in their planning and delivery of the 'Curriculum for RSE,' the PSHE Lead will assist by providing lesson plans and activities for colleagues. They will also gather assessments, liaise with PSHE advisors, plan INSET to meet staff needs, and coordinate with visitors who support the RSE curriculum.

## **10.6 Pupils**

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

## **11. Parents' right to withdraw**

**11.1** Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE (secondary schools only).

**11.2.** Parents do not have a right to withdraw their child from the relationships or health elements of the programmes.

**11.3.** Requests to withdraw a child from sex education must be made in writing to the headteacher or nominated deputy.

**11.4.** Before granting a withdrawal request, the headteacher (or nominated deputy) will discuss the request with the parents and, as appropriate, the child, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

**11.5.** They will inform parents of the benefits of their child receiving RSE and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have.

**11.6.** All discussions with parents will be documented. These records will be kept securely.

**11.7.** Following discussions with parents, the school will respect the request to withdraw their child up to and until three terms before the child turns 16, except in exceptional circumstances. After this point, if the child wishes to receive RSE rather than be withdrawn, the school will plan to provide the child with RSE.

**11.8.** Pupils who are withdrawn from RSE will receive appropriate, purposeful education during the full period of withdrawal.

**11.9.** For requests concerning the withdrawal of a pupil with SEND, the headteacher may take the pupils' specific needs into account when making their decision.

## **12. Safeguarding and Confidentiality**

12.1. All pupils will be taught about keeping themselves safe, including online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

12.2 To meet DfE best practice advice, the DSL will be involved in the formulation of safeguarding-related areas of the curriculum, as the knowledge and resources may help to address safeguarding issues more appropriately and effectively.

12.3. When teaching issues that are particularly sensitive for pupils of all ages, e.g. self-harm or suicide, teachers will be made aware of the risks of inadvertently encouraging, or providing instructions to, pupils. Teaching of these subjects will always prioritise preventing self-harm or suicide as a central goal.

12.4 Confidentiality within the classroom is an important component of RSE and health education, and teachers are expected to respect the confidentiality of their pupils as far as is possible.

12.5 Teachers will, however, understand that some aspects of RSE may lead to a pupil raising a safeguarding concern, e.g. disclosing that they are being abused, and that if a disclosure is made, the DSL will be alerted immediately.

12.6 Pupils will be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report, and how their report will be handled – this includes the process for when they have a concern about a peer.

### **13. Training**

13.1. Training will be provided by the RSE and health education subject leader, alongside other school leaders and selected outside agencies.

13.2. Training will be delivered to the relevant members of staff on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date with the RSE and health education curriculum.

13.3. Training materials will be based on the Department for Education RSE CPD units.

13.4. Training will be focussed on both subject knowledge and pedagogical theory relating to methods of delivery e.g. distancing techniques.

13.5. Training will also be scheduled around any updated guidance on the curriculum and any new developments, which may need to be addressed in relation to the curriculum.

13.6. Appropriately trained staff will be able to give pupils information on where and how to obtain confidential advice, counselling, and treatments.

## Appendix 1: Curriculum map

### Relationships and sex education curriculum map

|        | Autumn 1   | Autumn 2                                   | Spring 1                                     | Spring 2                            | Summer 1   | Summer 2  |
|--------|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Year 1 | What is the same and different about us?         | Who is special to us?                      | What helps us stay healthy?                  | What can we do with money?          | Who helps to keep us safe?   | How can we look after each other and the world? |
| Year 2 | What makes a good friend?                        | What is bullying?                          | What jobs do people do?                      | What helps us to stay safe?         | What helps us grow and stay healthy?   | How do we recognise our feelings?               |
| Year 3 | How can we be a good friend?                     | What keeps us safe?                        | What are families like?                      | What makes a community?             | Why should we eat well and look after our teeth?   | Why should we keep active and sleep well?       |
| Year 4 | What strengths, skills and interests do we have? | How do we treat each other with respect?   | How can we manage our feelings?              | How will we grow and change?        | How can our choices make a difference to others and the environment?                     | How can we manage risk in different places?     |
| Year 5 | What makes up a person's identity?               | What decisions can people make with money? | How can we help in an accident or emergency? | How can friends communicate safely? | How can drugs common to everyday life affect health?                                     | What jobs would we like?                        |
| Year 6 | How can we keep healthy as we grow?              |  | How can the media influence people?          |                                     | What will change as we become more independent?<br>How do friendships change as we grow? |   |

## Appendix 2: By the end of primary school pupils should [know](#)

| TOPIC                                 | PUPILS SHOULD KNOW   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Families and people who care about me | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> |

| TOPIC                    | PUPILS SHOULD KNOW  |
|--------------------------|---|
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong</li> <li>• How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed</li> </ul>   |
| Caring friendships       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends</li> <li>• The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties</li> <li>• That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed</li> </ul>  |
| Respectful relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</li> <li>• The conventions of courtesy and manners</li> <li>• The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive</li> <li>• The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults</li> </ul> |
| Online relationships     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them</li> <li>• How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met</li> </ul>  |

| TOPIC      | PUPILS SHOULD KNOW  |
|------------|---|
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How information and data is shared and used online</li> </ul>  |
| Being safe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact</li> <li>• How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know</li> <li>• How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult</li> <li>• How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard</li> <li>• How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so</li> <li>• Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources</li> </ul> |

#### Appendix 4: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

| TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS   |  |       |  |
|--|--|-------|--|
| 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                      |  |       |  |
|  |  |       |  |

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
|                  |  |
| Parent signature |  |

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Agreed actions from discussion with parents | Include notes from discussions with parents and agreed actions taken.<br>Eg: 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 Year 5 classroom |
|   |  |