



MacIntyre Academies

Venture Academy

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Version	Purpose/Change	Responsibility	Date
1	New Policy	Principal	March 2021
2	Review of Policy, no changes required at this review.	Principal	Dec 2024

Person Responsible: Principal
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Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Intent

At Venture Academy we are committed to the health and wellbeing of our students, now and in the future. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) provides students with opportunities for acquisition of the skills, understanding and emotional tools required to make safe, informed choices in a full range of personal relationships and life situations. A positive self-image - coupled with appreciation of the importance of a healthy, responsible lifestyle - encourages students to develop their ability to develop and manage fulfilling, meaningful and mutually respectful relationships with others. We also understand the importance of students developing a clear understanding of what is private, what is public and how to keep themselves both healthy and safe now and in the future. In RSE we expect that pupils, over their time in the school will learn about sex, sexuality, gender identity emotions, relationships, sexual health, sexual safety and ourselves. Information regarding the RSE program will be available to parents and carers throughout the year via the website.

Legislation

- Schools have a statutory duty to promote the well-being of pupils under Section 38 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 and to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002.
- We consider RSE to be an entitlement for all of our young people and our provision is inclusive regardless of gender, cultural background, special educational needs and sexual orientation, taking full account of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 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 pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education.⁴
- Within the remit of the Education Act (1996), the 'sex education' elements of Science National Curriculum are mandatory; this includes anatomy, puberty and the biological aspects of sexual reproduction. An up-to-date policy must be in place and the RSE programme should include information about STIs and HIV / AIDS at a minimum.

Governing Guidance

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers (DfE 2019)

Parents can have the right to withdraw pupils from Sex Education outside NC science and should communicate this in writing to the Principal. The 2019 DfE Guidance (Page 17) states the following considerations:

- Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request it would be good practice for the head teacher to discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Schools will want to document this process to ensure a record is kept.
- Good practice is also likely to include the head teacher discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal

might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although the 18 detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead).

- Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the 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.
- This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. The approach outlined above should be reflected in the school's policy on RSE.
- Head teachers will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered in primary schools, other than as part of the science curriculum.
- If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

A Shared Duty

The policy will be distributed to all members of staff at the school and made available to parents upon request. Staff professionalism surrounding all aspects of the delivery of Relationships and Sex Education is of paramount importance. Please see Teachers' Standards 2012, Personal and Professional Conduct e.g.

'Treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position;'
'Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.'

We expect all staff, at all levels to reinforce the importance of positive, mutually respectful relationships, through modelling them in their interactions with all members of the school community.

At every review of this policy there will be a parental consultation.

Implementation

The teaching team is committed to achieving the following in respect of the RSE programme:

- To provide a safe, nurturing, mutually respectful environment where students can share their thoughts, opinions and values without fear of ridicule or judgement;
- To empower students with the confidence to explore their understanding and awareness of their own sexuality;
- To develop a positive framework of morals and values that will shape students' ability to develop safe, meaningful, non-coercive relationships with others;
- To encourage students to challenge stereotypical assumptions and resist pressure from others, including the media;
- To encourage students to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene and preventative care, such as self-examination and smear testing as they grow;

- To provide signposting and access to external organisations for students, where necessary - as well as developing students' knowledge of services available to them;
- To equip students with the ability to develop and maintain a healthy self image (including body image and self esteem) and a positive outlook towards meaningful relationships;
- To develop students' knowledge and understanding of the fundamental biology surrounding anatomy, sex, sexual intercourse, pregnancy and birth;
- To make students aware of the prevention, signs, symptoms and risks associated with sexually transmitted infections (STI's) including HIV and AIDS;
- To encourage students to make reasoned, informed decisions and take personal responsibility for their own actions and attitudes;
- To help students to recognise and manage risky situations, and equip them with the confidence and emotional tools required to make the safe, informed decisions required to keep themselves and others safe;
- To help students to recognise unhealthy and/or abusive relationships, and to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to enable them to access appropriate help and support where needed;
- To ensure that young people understand the laws surrounding sexual activity and the importance of mutual consent;
- To encourage students to communicate effectively in an adult manner, through the use of appropriate language and terminology;
- To explore the interaction between friends, culture, family and faith when developing personal attitudes towards different relationships;
- To encourage students to explore the importance of equality within different relationships and the value of stable relationships;
- To enable students to explore the idea of 'readiness' for sex and that decisions about sexual activity are a personal choice, rather than being determined by others or influenced by the media;
- To enable students to feel confident about exploring different types and levels of intimacy, as alternatives to sexual intercourse;
- To explore what 'Trust' is and why it is important when forming and maintaining relationships with others.
- To develop a clear understanding of sex, sexuality and gender identity and the differences between these terms.

Overall Organisation, Delivery and Content of RSE

Relationships and Sex Education at Venture Academy is delivered through the Science and PSHE curriculum. Aspects are also covered through the Citizenship programme. Parts of the RSE curriculum may be taught in any other subject, where necessary to support the curriculum.

The PSHE curriculum is delivered to students by qualified teaching staff and the consistent in-class support of dedicated teaching assistants. We recognise that some delicate subject matter requires a trusted adult who may not be a qualified teacher to take the lead in some circumstances in order to put pupils more at ease. In addition to the school's dedicated staff specialist external agencies continue the delivery of the RSE programme where appropriate. Currently, these agencies include:

- School Nursing Team (WCC)
- Therapeutic Team
- The Sexually Harmful Behaviour Team (SIBS)
- CAMHS

- Educational Psychologist
- Community Police Team

We have a measured approach to the use of external agencies to support our curriculum and the following questions are used to help make decisions about the rationale for the use of these agencies, in partnership with teaching staff:

- What 'additionality' will this agency bring to the learning experience for our students? How will we capture that as enhanced outcomes?
- What specialist skills or knowledge will the agency bring to the learning experience beyond that which the teacher alone can provide?
- How far is the support provided by this agency sustainable and part of our planned PSHE programme?

Both male and female members of staff are involved in the delivery of RSE and appropriate mixed gender lessons or single sex lessons will be delivered where apt.

Our overview curriculum content is outlined in appendix 1 & 2 of this policy.

We aim to ensure that every young person at the school feels confident to ask questions pertaining to relationships and sexual health of any trusted adult within the school. Where they are unsure of facts, students should feel comfortable to ask questions about relationships and sex without fear of admonishment, embarrassment, ridicule or judgement.

It is paramount that students always receive a positive, factually accurate response. Staff should seek to answer questions from students in a supportive way that provides factually accurate information and signposting to other services where appropriate.

Questions of a personal nature, whether asked by students or adults, are always deemed to be inappropriate. Where, on occasion, staff feel that they may not be 'best placed' to answer certain questions, they should seek to consult with the PSHE lead HLTA, DSL Team or another professional who is confident in speaking with the student.

We use the following strategies to ensure a consistent approach to supportively responding to student questions:

- Thanking the student for the question and clarifying the meaning e.g. "That's a really interesting question; could you help me to understand your question a little bit more?"
- Thanking the student for the question and acknowledging that you need to think about it e.g. "That's a really interesting question; I need to think about that. Can I come back to you later?" This provides an opportunity for staff to consider their response, possibly with a colleague. It is important to come back to the student within an agreed timeframe.
- Explore the issue together as a class e.g. "That's a great / interesting question, what do we all think and know?"
- Rely on scientific language and facts to shape your supportive response.

The use of professional judgement is imperative when considering responses to sensitive questions, and Child Protection procedures should always be considered and adhered to.

All Child Protection concerns should be referred to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, in line with WSC Partnership and school procedures. To support this, staff should consult the school's Child Protection Policy and WSCB protocols, including the Multi-Agency Protocol for Identifying and Responding to Cases of Harm Arising from Under Age Sexual Activity.

Confidentiality & Safeguarding

All schools are required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to 'promote the well-being of pupils at the school'. We are committed to the well-being of our pupils and we therefore actively signpost confidential support services that can be accessed by our students. In the classroom, the aim is to strike a balance between helping pupils to feel respected, safe and able to participate fully and openly, while still protecting privacy and safeguarding students.

Effective teaching and learning in PSHE / RSE actively encourages pupils to share thoughts and voice opinions. It is therefore important to establish boundaries and clarify at the outset with pupils what will happen to any personal information they might disclose in the classroom.

Within school, the following protocol must be followed in line with our safeguarding policy:

- Staff in school can never promise unconditional or absolute confidentiality;
- All RSE planned learning will take place within a safe learning environment, underpinned by negotiated and agreed ground rules in the classroom (including each student's signed RSE contract);
- Ground rules need to make explicit to students that staff have a duty to protect young people from significant harm.
- All materials should be checked in advance (such as online video content) to ensure it or supporting adverts are age appropriate
- It may be necessary to give 'trigger' warnings on some RSE content in a way pupils and staff can respond to

As a school, we and our partners work within MacIntyre Academy Trust and WSCB agreed protocols with regard to confidentiality whereby we are all expected to:

- Provide supportive opportunities for pupils to talk
- Only talk in a professional manner about pupils and their families
- Never promise unconditional confidentiality (keeping a secret) to a pupil
- Where other professionals work to their own codes of practice, confidentiality must be clearly explained to pupils from the outset
- Where worries exist about a pupil's safety and where there is a need to discuss this with another adult, initial discussions would maintain anonymity. Where this is no longer possible, the pupil would always be informed of the need to share and be appropriately supported
- Potential safeguarding issues i.e. risk of significant harm, are always referred to the designated member of staff for Child Protection.

Impact

Putting this policy into practice is the responsibility of all members of the school community in their daily contact with students.

The Governing Body, as well as the PSHE Co-ordinator and Safeguarding Lead, have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the policy is adhered to.

The PSHE subject leader is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of RSE. This is to be achieved through lesson observations, focussed discussions with staff and with students, assessment strategies, scrutiny of annotated planning and evaluations by staff and by students. Subsequently, this will feed into the planning cycle to enhance provision and to meet the needs of our young people.

Appendix 1 – RSE in the Primary Curriculum

Primary Pupils Should Learn	
Families and people who care for me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, kindness, generosity, 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, • Managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
Respectful relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know. • How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. • How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. • How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. • Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

Appendix 2 – RSE in the Secondary Curriculum

Secondary Pupils Should Learn	
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. <p>How to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) • Seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
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.
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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).
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 and menopause. • 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.