



Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Policy

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Legislation

Rowan Education must provide Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) to all students as per section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we are required to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

This policy covers our approach to relationships and sex education (RSE) as set out in the [Department for Education Statutory Guidance for RSE in Secondary schools 2019 \(to be updated 1st September 2026\)](#).

What is Relationships and Sex Education?

RSE Defined: RSE involves learning about relationships, healthy lifestyles, diversity, personal identity and sex education, it involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of any sexual activity. RSE fits in with our whole school ethos and promotes respect for self and others. At Rowan Education, we believe that with a growth mind-set all our students will be able to make positive life choices and decisions which will be beneficial to their overall wellbeing now and in the future. We can learn and succeed together.

Principles and Values

We believe that RSE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people regardless of background or circumstance.
- Encourage every student to grow and learn.
- Be set within the wider school context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of differences.
- Foster the values of love, respect, equality and caring for each other.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- Recognise that parents/carers are the key people in teaching their children about relationships, sex and growing up. We aim to work in

partnership with parents/carers and students, consulting them about the content of programmes.

- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers where necessary.

Relationships and Sex Education within Secondary Schools at Rowan Education has three main elements:

Attitudes and Values

- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices;
- Learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships, marriage and civil partnerships;
- Learning about the nurture of children;
- Learning the value of respect, love and care;
- Exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- Developing critical thinking as part of decision-making;
- Challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour.

Personal and Social Skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- Learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice;
- Developing an understanding of the consequences of choices made;
- Managing conflict within relationships and about them;
- Empower students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter).

Knowledge and Understanding

- Learning about the experience of being a young person as a potential partner/parent;
Laws relating to sex, relationships, consent and rape, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion and harassment and recognition and protection of the LGBTQ+ community, (both on- and offline);
- Forced marriage;
FGM (female genital mutilation);
- Pornography and explicit material as a distorted image of body image, relationships and sex;
- Internet safety and harms;

- LGBTQ+ awareness – individuals and relationships should be respected by all;
- Understand when and how to report issues.

Aims

The aim of RSE is to provide balanced factual information about relationships and sex, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSE programme aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour;
- Have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships.
- Avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
- Communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues.
- Develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity, in line with The Equality Act 2010.
- Understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity.
- Understand the reasons for having protected sex.
- Have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from unwanted sexually transmitted infections.
- Be aware of possible links between relationships and sex on mental health, and how to deal with them.
- Be aware of sources of help and support, and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary.
- Know how the law applies to relationships.

Organisation and Content of RSE

Rowan Education will develop the elements of RSE embedded into the PSHE curriculum, but also incorporated into Science, PE and Computing specifically at KS3. We will teach age appropriate material, as set out in the 2020 Statutory Guidance on Relationships and Sex Education. We do, and will continue to, work with outside agencies to help support the delivery of RSE - this may include the School Nurse team and other relevant organisations and charities.

The RSE curriculum will be available on request and published on the school website.

Inclusion

Ethnic and Cultural Groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it is not culturally appropriate for them to be taught particular items in mixed groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns as appropriate.

Religion

RSE is sensitive to and recognises the religious teachings from all faith backgrounds represented in our schools, and this is made explicit in our lessons and students of faith are signposted to their religion to find out more when needed.

Students with Special Needs

We will ensure that all young people receive relationships and sex education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary.

Sexual Orientation and Gender identity

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with questions of sexual orientation and gender identity, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality or gender identity, need to feel that relationships and sex education is relevant to them.

Right of Withdrawal of Students from Relationship and Sex Education

Some parents/carers prefer to assume the responsibility for aspects of this element of education. They have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education programme except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (i.e. in Science lessons).

Parents/carers will have a right to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE in secondary schools which, unless there are exceptional circumstances, should be granted up to three terms before their child turns 16. At this point, if the child themselves wishes to receive sex

education rather than be withdrawn, school will make arrangements for this to happen in one of the three terms before the child turns.

There is no right to withdraw from relationships education. This is in line with the DFE Statutory Guidance for RSE (sections 45-50): [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education](#).

Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss their decisions with School staff at the earliest opportunity.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing to the Head of School. The request must include the following information:

- Name of child,
- Form and Year,
- Name of person making the request,
- Date of the request,
- Reason for requesting withdrawal,
- Any other information that the person making the request believes important.

The Head may request further discussion in relation to any request.

Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues

Teachers and other staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality to any of their students.

In a case where a teacher learns from an under 16-year-old that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

- The young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice.
- Child protection issues will be considered, and referred if necessary to our Child Protection officer under the school's procedures.
- The young person will be properly counselled about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first. This is in line with our [Safeguarding & Child Protection policy](#).