

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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1.0 Policy statement

Dixons Academies Trust is committed to ensuring that all students should be offered the opportunity of receiving a comprehensive, well-planned programme of relationships and sex education. Dixons believes that high quality relationship and sex education is an essential part of schooling which supports young people's development and prepares them for adult life in order for students to make responsible and well-informed decisions in their lives.

The DfE's guidance, 'Relationships, Sex and Health Education Guidance 2019', defines this programme as: 'Learning about physical, moral and emotional development; understanding 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 health.' The programme will be taught objectively and does not promote any form of sexual orientation. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is taught in RE, science and our through pastoral curriculum. We are fully supportive of the DfE's concern about growing child sexual exploitation and we believe that, as such, RSE is more important than ever. There are planned opportunities for RSE; however, teachers will address questions from students, as and when they occur, if they are deemed pertinent to understanding and age-appropriate. Schemes are entirely sensitive and age-appropriate and may be adapted in each academy according to the national and local context. Major world religions and their beliefs about relationships are taught in Religious Education (RE) which is a compulsory part of our curriculum offer.

2.0 Scope and purpose

- To promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical developments of students so that they may make healthy and safe life choices.
- To prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life so that they may make a positive contribution to society.
- To consider a range of values and moral issues, including the importance of family life.
- To help students understand the biological facts related to human growth and development, including reproduction.
- To focus on the importance of healthy relationships.
- To demonstrate and encourage personal responsibility and positive and informed choice.
- To encourage high self-esteem and respect for others.

3.0 Legislation and department for education guidance

Our policy is underpinned by and compliant with:

- DfE Relationship, Sex and Health Education Guidance 2019
- Children and Social Work Bill 1 March 2017 which will come in to full effect from September 2019 (making relationship education statutory)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- Equality Act 2010

4.0 Procedures

All our academies have an on-going programme of RSE throughout Year 7 to 11. Sex education is a compulsory part of the science curriculum. Our programme is regularly updated and reviewed. The programme will be delivered through National Curriculum Science lessons and through the academy tutorial and guidance programme / personal development studies. RSE is taught in an age-appropriate manner with an emphasis on facts rather than staff opinion or belief.

5.0 Covers

As well as the biological aspects of sex education as covered in the science curriculum, families may expect the following to be covered in an age-appropriate way:

- different types of relationships including friendships, family relationships, dealing with strangers and, at secondary school, intimate relationships
- how to recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, including self-respect and respect for other; commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent; how to manage conflict; and also how to recognise unhealthy relationships
- how relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health
- healthy relationships and safety online
- factual knowledge around sex, sexual health and sexuality
- healthy bodies and lifestyles including keeping safe, puberty, drugs and alcohol education
- healthy minds including emotional wellbeing, resilience, mental health

6.0 Information through other curriculum subjects

6.1 Parents must be aware that, through other curriculum subjects such as English, drama, history and RE, controversial issues may come up and, therefore, require a certain amount of discussion. As long as any discussion takes place within the context of the subject, it will not be deemed to be part of the RSE programme and, therefore, not subject to parental right of withdrawal. Staff will deal both sensitively and professionally with any issues which arise in the classroom.

6.2 A number of these issues are mentioned below:

- birth, contraception, child socialisation, abortion and technological developments which involve consideration of attitudes, beliefs, values and morality
- awareness that feeling positive about sexuality and sexual activity is important in relationships and understanding the changing nature of sexuality over time and its impact upon lifestyles
- awareness of partnerships, marriage and divorce and the impact of loss, separation and bereavement
- discussion of issues such as sexism and sexual harassment in terms of their effect on individuals

7.0 Working with parents

7.1 Our Trust values our close working relationship with parents; our three-way partnership is a corner-stone of our on-going success. By working closely with parents, we have convinced them of the value of sex education for their children. We are optimistic that this situation will continue as our Trust grows. Withdrawal from PSHSE in our academies is extremely rare.

7.2 Parents currently have the right to withdraw their children from sex education within PSHSE, but not relationships education and not from those elements which are in the formal science curriculum. If a parent wishes to discuss sex education and possible withdrawal from those classes, they are expected to discuss it with the Principal, Vice Principal or other senior leader to be clear about what the student will do when withdrawn and a realistic expectation of supervision that can be provided. It should be made clear, however, that if students who are withdrawn from sex education ask questions at other times, these questions will be answered honestly by staff, if age-appropriate.

8.0 Students with special educational needs

All academies will ensure that all aspects of RSE is tailored to the needs of all children. Staff are mindful that a particular need may leave a young person more vulnerable to exploitation and, therefore, preparation for adult life will be particularly important.

9.0 Roles and responsibilities

All science staff deliver sex education through the curriculum. Class teachers, form tutors / advisors, year heads, senior staff and the school nurse may deliver aspects of the RSE programme.

10.0 Use of outside visitors

It is anticipated that professionals from outside our academies will be involved in teaching the RSE programme at certain times. Every visitor or professional speaker involved in this programme will be made aware of the RSE policy of the academy.

11.0 Confidentiality and safeguarding

Teachers understand that, to some extent, confidentiality during RSE lessons must be acknowledged so that young people feel that they are in a 'safe space' where they can ask questions. Staff understand, however, the need to report immediately (in line with the Child Protection Policy) any concerns such as children displaying age-inappropriate knowledge or interest in sex, or expressing views that may indicate a lack of respect for the safety and self-esteem of others.

12.0 Promoting positive behaviour and equality

As well as formally teaching children about the Equality Act (2010) and the rights of people recognised as having protected characteristics, our academies will constantly promote a positive of equality. Sexism, homophobia and any form of discrimination will not be tolerated and young people will be challenged to communicate in appropriate language and have regard for the rights of others. All staff will constantly role-model the highest professional standards, having equal unconditional positive regard for all individuals.

13.0 Monitoring and reviewing

RSE will be monitored by the Vice Principal / senior leader and the Heads of Year continually and adjusted as necessary to reflect the local and national context. The policy will be formally reviewed on an annual basis and any changes will be communicated to the Local Governing Body.