



The Burgess Hill Academy

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

2026-27

Version:	v1		
Ratified by:	TBHA LGB	Date:	September 2026
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1. Purpose

The Burgess Hill Academy is committed to providing high-quality Relationships and Sex Education that gives students the knowledge, vocabulary and confidence they need to develop healthy relationships, make informed decisions, recognise unsafe or abusive behaviour and seek support.

Relationships and Sex Education forms part of the academy's wider Personal Development curriculum and supports our vision of creating a community where students thrive.

The curriculum will be:

- accurate and evidence-based;
- age and developmentally appropriate;
- carefully sequenced;
- inclusive and accessible;
- sensitive to students' experiences;
- grounded in the law;
- responsive to emerging risks;
- taught by appropriately trained staff;
- open and transparent to parents and carers.

Relationships and Sex Education is not intended to encourage early sexual activity. It helps students understand relationships, boundaries, consent, sexual health, safety and the reasons why many young people choose to delay sexual activity.

2. Aims

The academy's Relationships and Sex Education programme aims to help students:

- understand the characteristics of healthy friendships, family relationships and intimate relationships;
- develop self-respect, confidence, empathy and respect for others;
- understand consent, boundaries, privacy and personal autonomy;
- recognise unhealthy, coercive, exploitative or abusive relationships;
- understand how power imbalances can affect relationships;
- distinguish between healthy relationships and distorted or harmful representations of relationships;
- understand puberty, reproduction, contraception, pregnancy and sexual health;
- understand the law relating to relationships, sex and online behaviour;
- challenge prejudice, misogyny, sexual harassment and harmful stereotypes;
- understand risks arising from pornography, online content, deepfakes, artificial intelligence and sexual-image sharing;
- develop strategies for resisting pressure and avoiding placing pressure on others;
- know how and where to seek help;
- make informed, responsible and safe decisions.

3. Statutory framework

The academy must provide Relationships and Sex Education to all students receiving secondary education.

This policy has regard to:



- the Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019;
- sections 403, 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996;
- section 80A of the Education Act 2002;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- the Human Rights Act 1998;
- the Children and Families Act 2014;
- the SEND Code of Practice;
- current safeguarding guidance;
- the Department for Education's revised statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, effective from 1 September 2026.

The academy will maintain an up-to-date written policy, consult parents when developing and reviewing it, publish it and make it available free of charge.

4. Related academy policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Personal Development Policy;
- Curriculum Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Behaviour for Learning Policy;
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report;
- Equality Information and Objectives;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Mobile Phone Policy;
- Health Education Policy;
- Drugs Education Policy;
- Concerns and Complaints Policy.

5. Definition

Relationships and Sex Education is learning about the emotional, social, physical, cultural and legal aspects of relationships, sex, sexuality and sexual health.

It includes learning about:

- families;
- friendships;
- committed relationships;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- respect and kindness;
- consent and personal boundaries;
- online relationships;
- sexual orientation and gender identity;



- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- domestic abuse and coercive control;
- intimate relationships;
- reproductive and sexual health;
- contraception and pregnancy;
- sexually transmitted infections;
- online sexual content;
- exploitation, grooming and abuse;
- the law and sources of support.

RSE involves the teaching of accurate knowledge, the development of practical skills, discussion of values, choices and consequences, critical evaluation of media and online influences, and preparation for adult life. It is not the promotion of sexual activity or any particular lifestyle.

6. Principles

6.1 Respect and safety

Teaching will be based on respect, kindness, equality, personal autonomy and safety. Students will learn that healthy relationships require care, honesty, communication, mutual respect and attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of others.

6.2 Factual and impartial teaching

The academy will teach facts and the law accurately. Where subjects involve different personal, religious or ethical perspectives, students will be taught the applicable law, the existence of a range of lawful perspectives, how to discuss disagreement respectfully and that others have the right to make lawful choices and hold different beliefs.

6.3 Family life

Teaching will recognise that families can take different forms. No student will be stigmatised because of their family circumstances.

6.4 Equality and inclusion

The academy will comply with the Equality Act 2010. Students will learn about equality, protected characteristics, respect and the damaging effect of prejudice and stereotypes. Sexual orientation and gender identity will be taught at a timely point, factually, sensitively and respectfully.

6.5 Faith and belief

The academy recognises that families may hold different religious and ethical beliefs about relationships and sex. Teaching will reflect the law, be respectful of faith and belief, avoid presenting contested personal views as fact and ensure that all students receive their statutory entitlement.

7. Curriculum organisation

RSE is taught through:

- timetabled Personal Development lessons;



- science;
- computing and online-safety education;
- assemblies and tutor time;
- other curriculum subjects where appropriate;
- targeted workshops or specialist input.

The Personal Development Lead will work with relevant subject leaders to ensure that content is sequenced, not unnecessarily duplicated, taught before students are likely to encounter significant risks, revisited with increasing depth, linked to prior knowledge and assessed appropriately. The curriculum map in Appendix 1 provides the planned overview.

8. Core curriculum content

8.1 Families and committed relationships

Students will learn about:

- different types of committed, stable relationships;
- how healthy relationships contribute to wellbeing;
- marriage, civil partnership and other long-term relationships;
- parenting and responsibilities;
- recognising unsafe family relationships and seeking help.

8.2 Friendships and respectful relationships

Students will learn about:

- healthy friendships, trust, respect and kindness;
- boundaries, privacy and conflict resolution;
- bullying, prejudice and bystander responsibility;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- legal rights and responsibilities relating to equality.

8.3 Consent and boundaries

Students will learn about:

- communicating and respecting boundaries;
- freely and actively given consent;
- withdrawal of consent;
- why silence, clothing, intoxication or a previous relationship do not constitute consent;
- power imbalances;
- resisting pressure and not pressuring others;
- consent in friendships, online communication, romantic and sexual relationships.

8.4 Unhealthy and abusive relationships

Students will learn about:

- coercive and controlling behaviour;



- emotional, physical and sexual abuse;
- domestic abuse, grooming, stalking and exploitation;
- harassment, rape and sexual assault;
- forced marriage, honour-based abuse, FGM, virginity testing and hymenoplasty;
- strangulation and suffocation as dangerous criminal behaviour;
- identifying risk and seeking help.

8.5 Intimate and sexual relationships

Students will learn about:

- legal age and readiness;
- healthy intimate relationships;
- sexual pressure;
- alcohol, drugs and decision-making;
- the option to delay sex or enjoy intimacy without sex;
- communication, care and respect.

8.6 Contraception, pregnancy and sexual health

Students will learn about:

- fertility, menstruation and menopause;
- contraception and condom use;
- emergency contraception;
- pregnancy, miscarriage and choices relating to pregnancy;
- parenting, adoption and abortion;
- STIs, including HIV, prevention, testing and treatment;
- local and national sexual-health services.

8.7 Online relationships and sexual content

Students will learn about:

- online and offline standards of conduct;
- privacy, images, videos and data sharing;
- deepfakes and AI-generated content;
- sexual-image sharing, sextortion and online sexual scams;
- technology-facilitated stalking, coercion and control;
- reporting harmful material and seeking help.

8.8 Pornography

Students will learn about:

- pornography as created media rather than a guide to healthy relationships;
- distorted representations of bodies, sex and relationships;
- links to harmful, degrading, violent or misogynistic behaviour;
- effects on consent and expectations;



- how to seek help after exposure to disturbing content.

8.9 Misogyny and harmful online influences

Students will learn about:

- sexism and misogyny;
- harmful influencers and online communities;
- incel ideology and sexual entitlement;
- positive and respectful models of masculinity and femininity;
- the gendered nature of much sexual violence without stereotyping all boys or girls.

9. Age and developmental appropriateness

Content will be sequenced according to students' age, maturity, prior knowledge and likely exposure to risk.

Age-appropriate does not mean avoiding difficult topics until students have already encountered harm. It means presenting essential safeguarding knowledge at the right time, at a suitable level of detail, using clear language, without unnecessary graphic content and with appropriate support.

The academy may adapt timing where safeguarding concerns, emerging risks or significant incidents require this. Parents will be informed in advance where practicable when there is a significant departure from the published sequence.

10. Teaching approaches

Teachers will:

- establish clear ground rules;
- use accurate and appropriate vocabulary;
- avoid asking students to disclose personal experiences;
- use distancing techniques and fictional scenarios;
- make clear that confidentiality cannot be promised;
- provide opportunities for anonymous questions;
- correct myths and misinformation;
- challenge discriminatory, misogynistic or harmful comments;
- avoid stereotyping;
- signpost support;
- follow safeguarding procedures.

Teaching may include direct instruction, discussion, scenarios, case studies, media analysis, quizzes, knowledge checks and written reflection. Students will not be asked to participate in activities that unnecessarily expose private information or cause avoidable embarrassment.

11. Managing questions

Students will be encouraged to ask appropriate questions. Teachers will answer honestly, factually, at an age-appropriate level, within the law and in a way that supports safeguarding. A teacher may answer later or individually, refer a student to another member of staff, or decline to answer publicly where content is inappropriate for the group. Questions suggesting risk will be managed through safeguarding procedures.



12. Safeguarding and disclosures

RSE lessons may prompt disclosures. Staff must listen, avoid promising confidentiality, avoid leading or investigative questions, reassure the student, report the concern immediately and record it accurately. Teachers must not investigate allegations or provide therapeutic support themselves. The DSL will determine the response.

13. SEND and accessibility

RSE must be accessible to all students, including those with SEND and disabilities. The academy will consider communication, cognition, sensory needs, developmental stage, social understanding, physical access, vulnerability and prior experience.

Adjustments may include:

- adapted vocabulary and visual resources;
- pre-teaching and repetition;
- small-group teaching;
- additional adult support;
- alternative recording methods;
- adapted scenarios;
- individual follow-up.

Adaptation will not mean removing essential safeguarding knowledge or lowering expectations unnecessarily. The SENDCo and Personal Development Lead will work together to secure access.

14. Sexual orientation and gender identity

Teaching will be factual, sensitive and respectful; explain relevant legal protections; challenge homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying; avoid requiring personal disclosure; distinguish between biological sex, sexual orientation and gender identity where relevant; recognise lawful and respectful differences of view; and ensure that all students understand equality and respect. The curriculum will not promote any particular sexual orientation or gender identity.

15. Resources

Before use, leaders will consider whether resources meet learning objectives, are accurate, age appropriate, accessible, sensitive, lawful, impartial and free from unnecessary graphic content. Each resource will be checked for the particular lesson and cohort. Parents will be given access to examples of planned resources as part of consultation and transparency arrangements.

16. External organisations and visitors

External organisations may enhance but do not replace teaching by academy staff. Before a session, the academy will check the organisation and presenter, review lesson plans and materials, confirm learning outcomes, check accessibility, agree safeguarding and confidentiality arrangements, clarify questions and disclosures, and review data, photography and recording arrangements.

An academy teacher will remain present throughout every session. Any visitor without an appropriate DBS check will be supervised at all times while on site. The academy remains responsible for what is taught and may stop a session if content is inappropriate.



17. Roles and responsibilities

17.1 Sussex Learning Trust

- ensure statutory compliance;
- provide governance and assurance;
- support implementation;
- challenge insecure provision.

17.2 Local Governing Body

- approve or recommend approval in line with the scheme of delegation;
- monitor implementation and accessibility;
- ensure parents receive clear information;
- hold the Headteacher to account.

17.3 Headteacher

- ensure consistent teaching;
- secure staffing, time and resources;
- approve curriculum and significant resources;
- ensure consultation and transparency;
- manage withdrawal requests;
- ensure effective safeguarding.

17.4 Vice Principal responsible for Inclusion and Personal Development

- provide strategic oversight;
- align RSE with safeguarding, inclusion and behaviour;
- line manage the Personal Development Lead;
- monitor impact and support vulnerable students.

17.5 Personal Development Lead

- plan and sequence the curriculum;
- maintain schemes and resources;
- train and support staff;
- review visitors and materials;
- communicate with parents;
- monitor teaching and learning;
- work with the SENDCo and DSL;
- evaluate annually.

17.6 Designated Safeguarding Lead

- advise on sensitive content;
- ensure reporting procedures are understood;
- support staff and students after disclosures;
- review emerging safeguarding themes.



17.7 Teachers

- deliver the agreed curriculum;
- use approved materials;
- maintain professional boundaries;
- establish a safe learning environment;
- challenge harmful attitudes;
- make agreed adjustments;
- report concerns.

17.8 Students

- participate appropriately;
- respect privacy and views;
- use respectful language;
- follow ground rules;
- report concerns;
- avoid seeking personal disclosures.

Staff do not have a right to withdraw from teaching RSE. Staff with concerns should discuss these with their line manager or the Personal Development Lead so that support or training can be provided.

18. Parents and carers

Parents and carers are the first educators of their children in relation to relationships, values and family life. The academy will work openly by publishing the policy and curriculum, giving advance information about significant units, explaining statutory and withdrawable content, making example resources available, providing opportunities for questions, consulting parents and responding to reasonable concerns.

19. Right to request withdrawal

19.1 What parents may request withdrawal from

Parents may request that their child is withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of RSE. They may not withdraw their child from Relationships Education, Health Education, science curriculum content, safeguarding education, teaching about the law, or teaching about consent, safety, abuse or online risk where this forms Relationships or Health Education.

19.2 Process

Requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher using Appendix 2. The Headteacher will meet with the parent or carer to understand the request, explain the curriculum, clarify eligible lessons, discuss benefits and possible effects, consider the student's views where appropriate and explain alternative education. Except in exceptional circumstances, the academy will respect a parental request until three terms before the student turns 16. After that point, where the student wishes to receive sex education, the academy will arrange this during one of those terms.



19.3 Alternative provision

A withdrawn student will receive purposeful alternative education and will not be punished or unnecessarily singled out.

20. Staff training

Staff delivering RSE will receive training appropriate to their responsibilities. This may cover statutory content, consent, sexual harassment, misogyny, pornography, online sexual abuse and sextortion, sexual-image sharing, domestic abuse, SEND and accessibility, managing questions, disclosures, pregnancy choices and sexual health, and political impartiality. New staff will receive relevant induction.

21. Assessment

Assessment will identify what students know, understand and can apply. It may include baseline questions, knowledge checks, scenarios, discussion, written tasks, end-of-unit assessments and reflection. It will not require disclosure of personal experience or belief. Leaders will use assessment to identify misconceptions, gaps and areas needing stronger teaching or support.

22. Monitoring and quality assurance

Implementation will be monitored through curriculum reviews, lesson visits, students' work, student voice, staff and parent feedback, assessment information, safeguarding themes, SEND reviews, line management and governor monitoring. Quality assurance will check that agreed content is taught, teaching is accurate and age appropriate, students remember key knowledge, support is accessible and follow-up actions are completed.

23. Policy development and review

The policy will be developed and reviewed through legislation review, curriculum audit, consultation with staff, students and parents, consideration of safeguarding, SEND and equality implications, governance approval and annual evaluation. It will be reviewed annually and sooner where guidance, safeguarding evidence, curriculum provision or implementation changes materially.



Appendix 1: RSE curriculum overview

The detailed curriculum will continue to be refined during 2026-27 to ensure full implementation of the revised statutory guidance.

Year 7

- healthy friendships and relationships;
- kindness, respect and conflict;
- consent, boundaries and appropriate physical contact;
- bullying and sources of support;
- different family structures;
- identity, equality and diversity;
- gender stereotypes and introductory teaching on misogyny;
- puberty, menstruation, personal hygiene and body changes;
- online relationships and personal information;
- grooming, cyberbullying and reporting;

Year 8

- consent and the law;
- healthy and unhealthy relationships;
- commitment, love and stable relationships;
- pressure and communication;
- sexual orientation and gender identity;
- body image and online comparison;
- online bullying and harassment;
- misinformation and online influence;
- sharing content and the law;
- grooming and exploitation;
- introductory contraception;
- puberty, health and emotional wellbeing;

Year 9

- romantic and intimate relationships;
- unwanted attention and harassment;
- sexual consent and pressure;
- coercive and controlling behaviour;
- family relationships;
- contraception and STIs;
- sexual-health advice;
- body confidence;
- online relationships and strangers;
- criminal exploitation and grooming;
- harmful online communities and influencers;



- deepfakes and AI-generated content;
- sexual-image sharing and reporting;

Year 10

- healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships;
- sexual consent and the law;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- coercive control and domestic abuse;
- contraception and reproductive health;
- STIs and testing;
- pregnancy choices;
- pornography and distorted representations;
- misogyny and sexual entitlement;
- sextortion;
- sharing nude or semi-nude images;
- AI-generated sexual imagery;
- strangulation and suffocation;
- accessing services and support;

Year 11

- consent, boundaries and communication;
- managing conflict and recognising abuse;
- intimate relationships and readiness;
- long-term relationships, marriage and civil partnership;
- parenting;
- reproductive health and fertility;
- contraception and condom use;
- sexual-health services;
- harassment, exploitation and online risk;
- pornography and harmful sexual norms;
- preparation for adult relationships;

Sequencing may be adjusted where student need, safeguarding evidence or curriculum review indicates that another order would be more effective.



Appendix 2: Parent request for withdrawal from sex education

To be completed by the parent or carer

Student's name	
Tutor group	
Parent or carer's name	
Date	
Sex-education content from which withdrawal is requested	
Reason for the request	
Other information for the academy to consider	
Parent or carer signature	

To be completed by the academy

Date of discussion	
Staff member leading discussion	
Content clarified with parent	
Student's views considered, where appropriate	
Decision	
Alternative education to be provided	
Date arrangements will be reviewed	



Document Version Control

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September 2026	v1		TBHA LGB	Headteacher