Walthamstow Primary Academy
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Part of United Learning

United Learning Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy Guidance for Primary Academies

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Overview:

This policy applies to all United Learning schools. It should be considered in conjunction with the Statutory Guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, available here.

While the statutory requirements vary depending on phase and sector, United Learning's policy is that Sex Education is taught – in an age-appropriate way – in all our schools. All our schools also teach Health Education. All aspects of this policy apply to the education of pupils of any sex. Policy templates to help schools prepare their own policies are available (see appendix).

United Learning is committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the Equality Act 2010. Further details are available in United Learning's Equalities Guidelines, which can be found in the Policies Index on United Hub.

The policy is reviewed annually or as events or legislation require.

There are additional materials available on the Hub to support schools to strengthen their policy and practice in this area.

Policy Statement

United Learning is committed to high-quality, evidence-based RSHE that supports children and young people to build positive relationships, protect their wellbeing and keep themselves and others safe. Our RSHE is values-led and promotes kindness, respect, honesty, integrity, courage and trustworthiness.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) gives children and young people the skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need to be safe and healthy, to make responsible decisions about their life, to learn to respect themselves and others and to move with confidence from childhood into adolescence and adulthood. It is centrally concerned with supporting children and young people through their physical, emotional and moral development, helping to ensure they develop resilience, know how and when to ask for help and where to access support.

Guiding principles

- Engagement with pupils to ensure the curriculum is relevant, inclusive and regularly reviewed.
- Engagement and transparency with parents, including access to all RSHE materials.
- Explicit teaching of carefully sequenced knowledge, with ample opportunity to practise skills and apply knowledge in different scenarios.
- Careful sequencing so pupils are prepared before issues arise, and so that

knowledge builds over time.

• Relevant and responsive to local need and age/stage appropriate.

• Skilled, participative delivery by trained staff and/or appropriately vetted external contributors.

• A whole-school approach aligned with behaviour and safeguarding policies.

School Relationships and Sex Education Policies

All United Learning schools must have in place an up-to-date written policy for RSHE which meets both the statutory requirements (summarised at **Annex A**) and the needs of their pupils and parents, and reflects the community they serve. The policy, and any related procedures, must make clear how the school effectively delivers RSHE in their local context and meets relevant statutory and regulatory requirements. We have developed a template to support this process (Appendix 1). The policy must be published on the school's website and made freely available to anyone who asks for a copy.

Schools must consult parents in developing and reviewing their RSHE policy. At primary, this must include consultation on the aspects of sex education (beyond the national curriculum for science) that will be taught. Schools should also ensure effective consultation of staff, which should include a robust audit of any training needs. Where needs are identified, the school must ensure that adequate support and guidance is put in place and its effectiveness evaluated before delivery of content. Schools must engage pupils to ensure that provision is appropriate in meeting their needs; it is good practice to consult regularly with pupils throughout the course of each academic year. Leaders should ensure that the pupils consulted on their RSHE experience reflect the school demographic. In particular, leaders must consider the accessibility of the curriculum and delivery model for key groups, including SEND.

Ownership of the school's RSHE policy and programme should be at senior leader level.

Key requirements of Primary and Secondary RSHE

All United Learning schools must:

- Design a graduated, age- and development-appropriate RSHE Programme that meets the expectations of this policy and is consistent with statutory requirements (summarised at **Annex A**).
- Ensure that the religious background of all pupils is considered when planning teaching, so that content is handled appropriately.
- Ensure that staff are appropriately trained so that the programme is delivered effectively.
- Ensure that staff understand the importance of neutrality and balance when delivering RSHE, and are equipped with the tools and techniques to remain so.
- Ensure that parents are made aware of their right to withdraw their child from sex education, and are given clear guidance on how to exercise this right. This must include the specific details of which content constitutes sex education as opposed to relationships education[1].
- Ensure that staff recognise the increased likelihood created by RSHE subject matter of pupils making a disclosure or behaving/speaking in a way that warrants a safeguarding referral. Staff must be alert to these and follow the school's safeguarding policy.

- Ensure that pupils are aware that their contributions in RSHE are subject to the same rules around confidentiality as any other disclosure, and that any initial rule/boundary setting with a class during sessions does not give the illusion of an entitlement to confidentiality.
- Develop appropriate mechanisms for monitoring the delivery of RSHE, including the effectiveness of delivery, curriculum coverage and sequencing, and pupil experience and impact.
- Ensure that RSHE is given sufficient time and resource within the curriculum model to be delivered effectively.

RSHE Programmes of Study: Core Expectations

Schools may use programmes of study developed by third parties, their own programmes, or a combination.

Resources and materials used in delivering RSHE must be appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils. Schools must discuss their chosen materials and approach with their Regional Director (or Head of Independent Schools) and Local Governing Body, to ensure that they meet the needs of pupils and the community, and are in line with the expectations of this policy. All schools should consider curriculum and delivery choices through the lens of children with SENDs as a matter of course.

Whatever the source, all RSHE programmes of study in United Learning schools should demonstrate:

- Progression: as pupils get older and mature physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially, language, concepts and content will increase in depth and complexity.
- Relevance and adaptation: teachers, in being aware of the levels of development of their pupils, will identify existing knowledge and needs and build on them appropriately.
- Integration: RSHE will be integrated into a broader programme of personal and social and education, and into other relevant areas of the curriculum.

Morals and morality are essential dimensions of relationships and sexuality. RSHE programmes in United Learning schools will respect individual differences, including those relating to cultural, religious, ethnic and family backgrounds, and will endeavour to promote those values of respect and dignity for human life that are common to all faiths and societies. In doing so, the ethos of the school should be given particular emphasis.

Programmes of study must blend the teaching of powerful knowledge with provision of frequent opportunities for pupils to practise and refine skills in the safe space of the classroom. This practice work is likely to employ fictional scenarios and case studies, which create a safe distance for pupils to explore complex ideas and feeling.
Frequent practice work increases the likelihood that pupils will be able to draw upon such skills when necessary throughout their lives.

Programmes of study should aim to:

- Support pupils to form and sustain positive, healthy relationships that are rooted in mutual respect, kindness and care, including toward those with different backgrounds, identities and beliefs

- Teach pupils how to recognise, set and respect healthy boundaries, and understand that each person's body belongs to them
- Equip pupils with skills to recognise risks and harms, including bullying, abuse (emotional, physical, sexual) and discrimination, online and offline, and to understand that victims are never at fault
- Promote self-esteem, resilience and emotional regulation; encourage pupils to seek help early for themselves or others
- Give pupils regular access to examples of different families and relationships, emphasising the primary importance of commitment and stability in these relationships
- Develop pupils' ability to critically evaluate online interactions, manage peer influence, and understand the risks of sharing personal information and images
- Promote a positive relationship with oneself, developing independence, identity and the confidence to make informed, ethical decisions
- Reinforce that kindness, care, and attention to others' needs are essential in respectful relationships, and that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent
- Ensure content is age- and stage-appropriate, inclusive, accessible for SEND pupils, and sequenced before risks emerge.
- Support pupils to access help and report concerns with confidence, knowing where support is available and understanding how the school will respond.

For older pupils, and in an age-appropriate way, programmes of study should additionally aim to:

- Prepare pupils for the physical and emotional changes of puberty, including menstruation and personal hygiene
- Enable young people to understand consent clearly, including the ethics of consent and enthusiastic participation, withdrawal of consent, and sensitivity to any inherent power dynamics
- Ensure young people understand the laws around consent, sexual harassment, sexual violence, intimate image sharing, coercive control, forced marriage and exploitation, and how these can protect us
- Ensure that young people are able to recognise peer on peer abuse, and have the skills to advocate for themselves and others
- Help young people recognise unsafe or harmful behaviours (e.g. misogyny, online harassment, controlling behaviour), challenge stereotypes and prejudices, and understand how inequalities of power can affect relationships.
- Provide medically accurate knowledge of sexual health and safer sex, contraception, STIs and pregnancy options, emphasising that many people wait until they are older and that sex should only occur when a person feels ready and is over the legal age of consent.
- Build skills for ending or managing relationships respectfully, and coping with difficult emotions.

Teaching of RSHE

Where external specialists are brought in to support RSHE they will be required to conform to the school's RSHE Policy, and leaders must take necessary steps to ensure that this happens.

Staff must ensure that at all times they act in accordance with United Learning Safeguarding policies. They must encourage pupils to seek advice from parents and/or general practitioners or appropriate health professionals where relevant and follow the school's safeguarding policy to ensure that the relevant pastoral staff are aware when such advice has been given.
The teaching of both related and apparently unrelated topics may occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour. Provided that such a discussion is relatively limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it will not necessarily form part of the sex education programme. In event of this, it is good practice for teachers to inform the PSHE/RSHE Lead or relevant member of SLT of the discussion, and to follow the school's safeguarding policy if appropriate. If there are pupils who have been withdrawn from sex education present, especial consideration needs to be given, and it is likely to be more appropriate to redirect the discussion. If appropriate, the teacher may clarify that the question can be discussed in depth at a later date.

Teachers have always taken a pastoral interest in the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people and will continue to do so in these matters. Teachers must take care, however, in counselling and giving advice to individual pupils, particularly with regard to their sexual behaviour, and must not trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities. Knowing when to counsel and when and how to refer for specialist counselling and support requires skilled judgement, and staff must err on the side of caution.

There are some specific areas that should be treated with especial sensitivity, including:

- Contraception and safer sex: teachers should not give personal, individual advice on contraception and safer sex to young people and may never do so to those under 16 years of age, for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. RSHE must teach young people about safer sex and contraception in an objective and distanced way, and can signpost local agencies who can give more personalised help and advice.
- Abortion: any teaching of abortion must recognise that it is an emotive issue, and present a balanced view that respects a range of religious beliefs and considers the law in this area. In teaching this topic, schools should aim to establish fact, clarify thinking and explore values and beliefs. Leaders should ensure that teachers are confident and prepared to do so.
- Sexuality: an evolving sense of one's sexuality is an important element in RSHE, as is the recognition that it is common to find this confusing and even distressing at times. It is equally important that pupils are respectful of others' sexuality and are given the language to support a respectful understanding of diversity. By integrating different relationships, including LGBTQ+ relationships, into all aspects of the curriculum, schools can help pupils to challenge any perspective that marginalises or stigmatises LGBTQ+ relationships, ensuring that diversity is recognised as a natural part of the world around them. For this reason, standalone lessons about diverse sexualities can be counterproductive insomuch as they can reinforce heteronormative values.
- Gender: schools should not teach as fact that all people have a gender identity and must approach any teaching of the subject of gender with great care and deliberateness. Guidance on the coverage of gender is available on the Hub.

Schools should have the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in RSHE and Heath Education as for other curriculum areas. Schools need to give consideration as to how they can assess outcomes in these subjects, such as tests, written assignments or self-

evaluations, to capture progress. A strong curriculum will build on the knowledge pupils have previously acquired, including in other subjects, with regular feedback provided on pupil progress.

Working with Parents; Parental Rights to Withdraw Pupils from Sex Education

The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding of relationships is vital: they have the most significant role in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships. United Learning schools should work closely with parents when planning and delivering RSHE programmes, both during and after consultation. Schools must also ensure that their website supports parents in understanding exactly what their child will learn in RSHE, and which content is subject to the right to withdraw. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSHE, up and until three terms before their child turns 16. There is no right to request a child be withdrawn from relationships education, or from the science curriculum, which includes teaching about the human body (including puberty) and human reproduction.

Upon parental requests for withdrawal of their child from sex education, United Learning schools should follow the process outlined below. This should also be included in the school's policy on RSHE:

Primary Headteachers must automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education other than that delivered as part of the science curriculum. It may be helpful to share an overview of content with parents so they understand what their child's classmates will learn, with a recognition that children may discuss what they have learned about in peer groups. Parents of children who have been withdrawn can then make more informed choices about when to talk to their own child about this content.

Staff must be made aware of any pupils who have been withdrawn from sex education; leaders must ensure that this information is shared sensitively and discreetly.

SEND should not be a consideration in considering parental requests for withdrawal from sex education. Content must be adapted to ensure that it can be accessed and understood by all pupils, including those with SEND.

If a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Links with Other Policies

RSHE is fundamentally concerned with keeping children safe. Each school's RSHE Policy should be read in conjunction with their Safeguarding Policy and Anti Bullying Policy, and these policies should include how the school challenges the use of sexist, homophobic and other sexually discriminating language or behaviour.

Schools' RSHE policies and programmes must comply with the Equality Act 2010, including taking account of relevant protected characteristics.[2] Provisions within the Act allow schools to take positive action where it can be shown that it is proportionate to deal with particular disadvantages affecting one group because of a protected characteristic. Schools should be

[2] The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying or sexual violence for example, and as such they may want to consider taking positive action to support particular groups where necessary.

SEND and RSHE

RSHE must be accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Each school's RSHE Policy should be read alongside their SEND Policy and/or SEND principles. The RSHE policy must outline how materials may be adapted and what methods may be used to ensure accessibility for pupils with SEND, including those with learning difficulties, communication needs, or social, emotional and mental health needs.

It is good practice for schools to ensure that quality assurance of SEND provision includes RSHE within its scope. This reflects the increased vulnerability of some pupils with SEND to exploitation, abuse, and other harms, and recognises the protective and empowering impact that high-quality RSHE can have.

The adaptations used to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the RSHE curriculum fully must be communicated within the policy.

Annex A: Summary of DfE requirements for Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education, and Health Education

This is taken from the Statutory Guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education, available here.

Relationships Education

Primary relationships education should focus on teaching the foundational skills and knowledge needed for positive relationships. This helps children grow into respectful, caring individuals who can keep themselves and others safe. Early education is essential for preparing pupils for more complex topics at secondary level. For example, learning to manage emotions like anger or disappointment in friendships lays the groundwork for handling more challenging relationships later on.

Teaching should be sensitive to pupils' diverse family backgrounds, including single parents, same-sex parents, grandparents, young carers, kinship carers, adoptive and foster families. Lessons should present a wide range of family structures positively and avoid stigmatising any child based on their home life.

Children should be taught about positive relationships and how to stay safe, including recognising and reporting abuse and risks, both offline and online. This includes understanding boundaries, privacy, bodily autonomy, and personal information.

Pupils should be able to identify emotional, physical and sexual abuse, and trust their instincts when something feels wrong. They should also understand bullying, including the use of derogatory language related to sex, race, disability or sexual orientation.

Children must know how to report concerns and seek help. Teaching should make it clear that abuse is never the child's fault. Protective and preventative content should be introduced in a way that avoids causing unnecessary alarm or normalising risky behaviour. For example, schools may address issues like pressure to share nude images or exposure to pornography if relevant to their pupils.

All teaching should be age-appropriate and respectful of children's varied experiences. Parents should be informed in advance of any changes to the school's published RSE policy and be given access to relevant materials on request.

Sex Education

Sex education is not mandatory in primary schools, but it is recommended that it be taught in Years 5 and/or 6, aligned with the national science curriculum content on conception and birth.[3]

The science curriculum also includes related topics such as external body parts, human development from birth to old age (including puberty), and reproduction in some plants and animals. Schools can cover human reproduction in the RSHE curriculum, but this should be in line with the factual description of conception used in the science curriculum.

Primary schools must consult parents about any sex education content, offering support to help them discuss these topics with their children.

Schools should also inform parents of their right to request withdrawal from sex education lessons.

By the end of Primary School (Relationships):

Families and people who care for me	**Curriculum content:** 1. That families are important for children growing up safe and happy because they can provide love, security and stability. 2. The characteristics of safe and happy family life, such as 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. 3. That the families of other children, 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. 4. That stable, caring relationships are at the heart of safe and happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up. 5. That marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.

[3] It is United Learning policy that all primary schools deliver an age appropriate sex education within R[S]HE.

	6. 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	**Curriculum content:** 1. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. 2. That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. Pupils should learn skills for developing caring, kind friendships. 3. That not every child will have the friends they would like at all times, that most people feel lonely sometimes, and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it. 4. The characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties. 5. That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened. 6. How to manage conflict, and that resorting to violence is never right. 7. How to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to get support when needed.
Respectful, kind relationships	**Curriculum content:** 1. How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others, including in families and friendships. Pupils should be encouraged to discuss how we balance the needs and wishes of different people in relationships and why this can be complicated. 2. The importance of setting and respecting healthy boundaries in relationships with friends, family, peers and adults. 3. How to communicate effectively and manage conflict with kindness and respect; how to be assertive and express needs and boundaries; how to manage feelings, including disappointment and frustration. 4. Pupils should have opportunities to discuss the difference between being assertive and being controlling, and conversely the difference between being kind to other people and neglecting your own needs. 5. That they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and the importance of respecting others, including those who are different (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices, or have different preferences or beliefs. 6. Practical steps they can take and skills they can develop in a range of different contexts to improve or support their relationships.

	7. The conventions of courtesy and manners. 8. The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. Pupils should have opportunities to think about how they foster their own self-esteem and build a strong sense of their own identity, including through developing skills and interests. 9. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult), and how to get help. 10. What a stereotype is, how stereotypes can be unfair, negative, destructive or lead to bullying and how to challenge a stereotype. 11.How to seek help when needed, including when they are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.
Online safety and awareness	**Curriculum content:** 1. That people should be respectful in online interactions, and that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including where people are anonymous. For example, the importance of avoiding putting pressure on others to share information and images online, and strategies for resisting peer pressure. 2. How to critically evaluate their online relationships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. For example, that people sometimes behave differently online, including pretending to be someone else, or pretending to be a child, and that this can lead to dangerous situations. How to recognise harmful content or harmful contact, and how to report this. 3. That there is a minimum age for joining social media sites (currently 13), which protects children from inappropriate content or unsafe contact with older social media users, who may be strangers, including other children and adults. 4. The importance of exercising caution about sharing any information about themselves online. Understanding the importance of privacy and location settings to protect information online. 5. Online risks, including that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once a picture or words has been circulated there is no way of deleting it everywhere and no control over where it ends up. 6. That the internet contains a lot of content that can be inappropriate and upsetting for children, and where to go for advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online.
Being safe	**Curriculum content:** 1. What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including online). This can include learning about boundaries in play and in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources etc. 2. The concept of privacy and its implications for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe. 3. That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe contact, including physical contact. 4. How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online), including those they do and do not know. 5.

	How to recognise when a relationship is harmful or dangerous, including skills for recognising who to trust and who not to trust. 6. How to report abuse, concerns about something seen online or experienced in real life, or feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. 7. How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

Health Education: Physical Health and Wellbeing

The goal of health and wellbeing education is to help pupils make informed decisions about their health, understand the connection between physical and mental health, recognise when something is wrong, and seek support.

Schools should help pupils build self-regulation, perseverance and resilience.
Teaching should reduce stigma around health issues, especially mental health, and discourage negative language. Schools should promote openness so pupils feel comfortable asking questions and seeking help.

Puberty and menstruation education should be supported with practical arrangements, such as access to period products. Schools should use language like "period pads" or "menstrual products." The Department for Education's Period Products Scheme is available for state-funded primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges in England.

In primary, health education begins with the importance of physical activity, nutrition, sleep and emotional awareness. It should highlight the link between physical and mental wellbeing and the benefits of outdoor activity. As in all of RSHE, care should be taken to avoid exposing pupils to concepts which are not appropriate for them. Schools should continue to build on the primary health and wellbeing curriculum content in secondary.

By the end of Primary School (Health):

General wellbeing	**Curriculum content:** 1. The benefits of physical activity, time outdoors, and helping others for health, wellbeing and happiness. Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family, as well as hobbies, interests and community participation. 2. The importance of promoting general wellbeing and physical health. 3. The range and scale of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) that they might experience in different situations. Pupils should understand that worrying and feeling down are normal, affect everyone at different times, and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition. 4. How to recognise feelings and use varied vocabulary to talk about their own and others' feelings. 5. How to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.

	6. That isolation and loneliness can affect children, and the benefits of seeking support. 7. That bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing and how to seek help for themselves or others. 8. That change and loss, including bereavement, can provoke a range of feelings, that grief is a natural response to bereavement, and that everyone grieves differently. 9. Where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including who in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online). 10.That it is common to experience mental health problems, and early support can help.
Wellbeing online	**Curriculum content:** 1. That for almost everyone the internet is an integral part of life. Pupils should be supported to think about positive and negative aspects of the internet. 2. Pupils should be supported to discuss how online relationships can complement and support meaningful in-person relationships, but also how they might be in tension, and the reasons why online relationships are unlikely to be a good substitute for high quality in-person relationships, looking at the pros and cons of different ways of using online connection. 3. The benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing. 4. How to consider the impact of their online behaviour on others, and how to recognise and display respectful behaviour online. 5. Why social media, some apps, computer games and online gaming, including gambling sites, are age restricted. 6. The risks relating to online gaming, video game monetisation, scams, fraud and other financial harms, and that gaming can become addictive. 7. How to take a critical approach to what they see and read online and make responsible decisions about which content, including content on social media and apps, is appropriate for them. 8. That abuse, bullying and harassment can take place online and that this can impact wellbeing. How to seek support from trusted adults. 9. How to understand the information they find online, including from search engines, and know how information is selected and targeted. 10. That they have rights in relation to sharing personal data, privacy and consent. 11. Where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online.
Physical health and fitness	**Curriculum content:** 1. The characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle. 2. The importance of building regular physical activity into daily and weekly routines and how to achieve this; for example, walking or cycling to school, a daily active mile or other forms of regular, moderate and/or vigorous physical activity. 3. The risks associated with an inactive lifestyle, including obesity.

	4. How and when to seek support including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health.
Healthy eating	**Curriculum content:** 1. What constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content). 2. Understanding the importance of a healthy relationship with food. 3. The principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals. 4. The characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health).
Drugs, alcohol and tobacco	**Curriculum content:** 1. The facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, vaping, alcohol use and drug-taking. This should include the risks of nicotine addiction, which are also caused by other nicotine products such as nicotine pouches.
Health protection and prevention	**Curriculum content:** 1. How to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss, or unexplained changes to the body. 2. About safe and unsafe exposure to the sun, and how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer. 3. The importance of sufficient good quality sleep for health, the amount of sleep recommended for their age, and practical steps for improving sleep, such as not using screens in the bedroom. The impact of poor sleep on weight, mood and ability to learn. 4. About dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, cleaning between teeth, and regular checkups at the dentist. 5. About personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and treated, and the importance of handwashing. 6. The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination and immunisation. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils
Personal safety	**Curriculum content:** 1. About hazards (including fire risks) that may cause harm, injury or risk and ways to reduce risks. 2. How to recognise risk and keep safe around roads, railways, including level crossings, and water, including the water safety code.
Basic first aid	**Curriculum content:** 1. How to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary, including the importance of reporting incidents rather than filming them. 2. Concepts of basic first aid, for example dealing with common injuries and ailments, including head injuries.
Developing bodies	**Curriculum content:** 1. About growth and other ways the body can change and develop, particularly during adolescence. This topic should include the human lifecycle, and puberty should be discussed as a stage in this process. 2. The correct names of body parts, including the penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples. Pupils should understand that all of these parts of the body

	are private and have skills to understand and express their own boundaries around these body parts. 3. The facts about the menstrual cycle, including physical and emotional changes, whilst the average age of the onset of menstruation is twelve, periods can start at eight, so covering this topic before girls' periods start will help them understand what to expect and avoid distress.

Guidance Review Date:

	Date	Name of owner/author
Authorised:		
Next Annual Review Date:		

Policy Template

Policy Development, Consultation and Aims

Development of the Policy

This policy has been developed in consultation with *pupils, parents and staff*. It reflects the statutory requirements set out in the Department for Education (DfE) Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Statutory Guidance 2025.

Consultation

Walthamstow Primary Academy consults with parents by:

- Annual curriculum workshop
- Inviting participation by email
- Offering follow-up clinics or one-to-one meetings for parents with specific concerns

Walthamstow Primary Academy consults with pupils through:

- Pupil Leadership Group review
- All-pupil termly pupil voices (upper KS2)

Walthamstow Primary Academy consults with staff by:

- Holding dedicated CPD and sessions where teachers can review resources, signpost potential risks or barriers (including for SEND and faith sensitivities), and propose adaptations.

- Ensuring non-specialists have access to planning templates, vocabulary banks and subject knowledge materials.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- set out the school's approach to Relationships and Sex Education in line with the DfE statutory guidance (2025);
- promote pupils' physical, mental and emotional wellbeing through an age-appropriate, evidence-informed RSE curriculum;
- ensure pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to build positive, safe and respectful relationships, including online;
- support safeguarding by teaching pupils to recognise risks, seek help and report concerns;
- ensure content is inclusive of all pupils and respectful of diversity while not presenting contested views as fact;
- promote transparency by explaining how parents can access curriculum materials, identifying which material constitutes sex education, and how withdrawal from sex education works;
- clarify how RSE is delivered, who is responsible and how teaching is monitored and reviewed.

Statutory Requirements

Walthamstow Primary Academy delivers Relationships Education (RSE) in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance (updated July 2025, effective September 2026). Relationships Education is a compulsory part of the curriculum, ensuring all pupils receive accurate, age-appropriate and inclusive teaching on relationships and sex. Provision promotes resilience and respect for diversity, as well as addressing safeguarding priorities, including staying safe online and identifying unsafe behaviour and abuse. Relationships Education is taught within a safe, supportive environment by trained staff, with clear communication to parents and carers, and is regularly reviewed.

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools. However, it is United Learning policy that primary schools deliver suitable sex education before children reach the end year 6 to ensure children are suitably prepared for transition to secondary school. Any sex education taught in Walthamstow Primary Academy is appropriately tailored to the age, physical and emotional maturity of our pupils.

Working with Parents

Walthamstow Primary Academy recognises the importance of parental involvement in their child's education; parents are a child's first and most enduring educators, providing the foundational learning, emotional support, and guidance that shape their development from birth.
It is vital that parents are confident in the content and messaging of the RSE their child receives, with particular regard to sex education. It is equally important that parents feel equipped to discuss sex education with their child.

With that in mind, as part of the consultation process, Walthamstow Primary Academy will provide guidance to parents on talking to their children about sex and linking this with what is being taught in school.

Walthamstow Primary Academy will ensure that parents are consulted on RSE policy and have access to what their child will learn in RSE.
Overviews of content can be found on the RSHE page of the school website Here, and the student-facing lesson content can be accessed on request by contacting Inclusion Lead info@walthamstowprimary.org.uk. Walthamstow Primary Academy will endeavour to respond to requests within 5 working days but if parents have immediate concerns, please contact the school office 020 3475 3490 this is important in scenarios where the child is due to access the lesson imminently and an email response could take too long.

Parental Right to Withdraw Children

Walthamstow Primary Academy acknowledges the right of parents to withdraw their child from some or all of the sex education provided (except from sex education taught under the science curriculum), but not from relationships education.
Parents wishing to discuss the withdrawal of their child from some or all of the sex education provided should contact info@walthamstowprimary.org.uk, outlining this request.
The Principal will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education, other than as part of the science curriculum, and will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Topic	**Can parents withdraw?**
Relationships Education	❌ No
Health Education	❌ No
Science curriculum (including puberty and reproduction)	❌ No
Sex Education taught beyond the science curriculum	✅ Yes

Definitions: Relationships Education

Relationships education is designed to help pupils build and maintain positive relationships while also recognising potential risks and harms. As part of this, teaching may cover issues such as recognising sexual abuse or avoiding the sharing of inappropriate material online, without the need to describe any sexual activity in detail.

In line with safeguarding best practice, pupils should also learn the correct names for different parts of the body and be able to use these terms confidently and accurately. These terms can be taught without any reference to, or details of, sexual activity.

Relationships education is compulsory, and parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships education or health education.

Relationships education includes teaching about:

- families, including diverse family structures
- friendships and respectful relationships

- safe, caring and healthy relationships
- harmful relationships and identifying sexual abuse
- boundaries, consent and communication
- online behaviour, digital safety, harmful online attitudes and image-sharing
- recognising and reporting unsafe behaviours

Relationships education does not describe the detail of sexual activity.

Definitions: Sex Education

Sex education in primary contexts is teaching about:

- specific details of sexual activity

When sharing overviews of content in upcoming units, all content that is considered "sex education" and subject to the right to withdraw will be clearly indicated with a (W).

Curriculum Content and Organisation

Walthamstow Primary Academy uses RSE materials which are created *by 1Decision which are then adapted by our own teachers to meet the needs of our pupils.*

The majority of RSE lessons at Walthamstow Primary Academy are delivered *by our own teaching staff. The senior team plan a programme of teacher CPD, and more bespoke training is delivered when lessons cover especially complex or sensitive materials. All teachers receive annual safeguarding training*.

Walthamstow Primary Academy uses external providers to supplement the curriculum *at various points throughout the year.* When external providers are invited to work with students, parents will be informed about the provider and the nature of the session via Arbor and/or email and/or school newsletter.

Parents can request to see all student-facing lesson materials by contacting info@walthamstowprimary.org.uk FAO: Inclusion Lead. Walthamstow Primary Academy will endeavour to respond to requests within 5 working days but if parents have immediate concerns, please contact the school office on 020 3475 3490 this is important in scenarios where the child is due to access the lesson imminently and an email response could take too long.

The objectives that are covered on 1Decision in each year group are as follows: a specific description of the content which will be covered within relationships and sex education, taking into account the age of pupils.

Sex education taught through our RSE curriculum includes:

- Sex refers to physical acts involving the genitals.
- Some sex, when a man's penis enters a woman's vagina, can lead to a baby being conceived.

This content is currently delivered in Year 6, Summer 2.

Sex education taught through the science curriculum includes:

- Sexual reproduction involves two parents – usually male and female – creating a new organism by mixing their genomes.
- Sexual reproduction begins with fertilisation of an egg, which mixes the genes from two parents. Fertilisation can be internal or external.
- Male sex cells are called sperm.
- Female sex cells are called eggs.
- After an egg is fertilised, an embryo will develop. Embryos develop inside the body in the gestation period for viviparous animals. Embryos develop outside the body in eggs for oviparous animals.

This content is delivered in Year 5, Spring 1, in the context of reproduction and life cycles.

Teaching and Learning

RSE at Walthamstow Primary Academy is delivered in a way that:

- is appropriate to age and stage
- is scientifically factual, objective and legally accurate
- equips pupils with communication and decision-making skills
- encourages open discussion while setting safe boundaries
- promotes respect, inclusivity and safeguarding
- avoids teaching contested views as fact
- maintains balance and impartiality

Staff will:

- use ground rules
- prepare pupils ahead of time where appropriate
- manage disclosures in line with safeguarding procedures
- balance the need for accuracy with sensitivity

Responding to Questions

Pupils may ask questions that are outside of the scope of the lesson or what is appropriate for a member of staff to discuss with them. This may be due to the fact that the child in question has been withdrawn from the sex education element of the subject.
Nonetheless, children's curiosity makes it unlikely that an unsatisfied request for information will end there, and it is highly likely that they will seek alternative sources. These are likely to be less reliable and even unsafe.

If a pupil asks a question that a member of staff cannot answer, the following steps will be followed:

- The member of staff will discreetly and sensitively reassure the pupil that it is normal to be curious and explain to the pupil why they are unable to answer the question. They may ask the pupil whether this is something they would feel able to ask a parent about, or signpost to specialist services if appropriate.
- The member of staff will follow safeguarding policies and procedures as appropriate, but even if the question posed does not constitute a safeguarding concern, the RSHE lead and/or the SLT line manager for RSHE will be informed on the same day.

- Leaders will consider the likelihood of the pupil seeking answers to their question/s elsewhere and the possible implications of this. They are may consider it appropriate to contact parents to discuss how to best support and guide the pupil.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

Pupils with SEND

All pupils, including those with SEND, have a full entitlement to RSE, and having an additional need is never a reason to restrict access to essential learning about relationships, safety, consent and wellbeing.

Research suggests that children and adults with SEND can be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Provision of high-quality, adapted RSE is a critical protective factor.

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's SEND Policy *and Teaching and Learning Policy*.

Teaching and Learning

- Teaching will be personalised through adapted resources, simplified but accurate language, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, visual supports, and highly structured routines for discussion and decision-making.
- Lessons will be paced carefully, use multi-sensory approaches and provide extra processing time.
- Staff will maintain high expectations of dignity, age-appropriate content and respect, ensuring materials reflect diverse families, relationships and identities, including those of young people with SEND.
- As appropriate, planning will be trauma-informed and sensitive to pupils who may have experienced adversity, with clear routes for help-seeking at appropriate points in units. These adaptations support access without lowering ambition or omitting statutory content.

Pupils' Religious and Faith Backgrounds

RSE will respect religious and cultural diversity, uphold pupils' rights to accurate information and safety, and comply with the Equality Act. Teaching will avoid discrimination and protect pupils' dignity.

Principles

- Assume diversity, not uniformity: different pupils of the same faith will interpret teachings differently.
- Meet statutory RSE outcomes while treating faith backgrounds fairly and avoiding discrimination.
- Prioritise pupils' wellbeing, dignity and safeguarding when adapting content.
- Engage fully with parents, pupils and, where appropriate, faith leaders and members of the community when consulting on the curriculum.

Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

Teachers and leaders must balance pupils' rights to access all statutory content with sensitivity to religious and cultural diversity.

When planning lessons, Walthamstow Primary Academy will:

- **Offer neutral, balanced coverage:** RSE should be delivered in a balanced and neutral way. This is especially important where religious and cultural perspectives mean that pupils may have strong beliefs about some content. Teachers will present accurate faith viewpoints alongside secular and other perspectives, so pupils see a balanced picture.
- **Use inclusive imagery and language:** ensure visuals show religious and cultural diversity and avoid metaphors that may confuse pupils with mobility needs or ASD.
- **Manage discussions carefully:** deliver content in an objective way and use ground rules and clear boundaries to manage pupil discussion.
- **Map objectives to need**: teachers start from the required learning outcomes and identify where faith perspectives are most likely to be relevant (e.g. family, marriage, contraception, gender).
- **Build in alternatives:** consider additional consultation with parents and pupils to ensure sensitive delivery where appropriate.
- **Consider faith perspectives:** build in opportunities to reflect on RSE objectives through the lens of faith teachings when appropriate and helpful.
- **Employ distancing techniques:** use stories, role-play, third-person scenarios or case studies to explore sensitive issues safely.

Complaints

Any complaints about the Relationships and Sex Education programme should be made in accordance with the school's usual complaints procedure. This can be accessed Here.

Approval and Review

- This policy is approved by the *governing body*.
- It is reviewed **annually**, or sooner if national guidance changes or it is otherwise appropriate to make amendments.
- *The RSHE Lead* is responsible for coordinating the review process.
- The policyholder is *always a member of the Senior Leadership team*.

Policy Review Date

	Date	Name of owner/author
Authorised:		
Policy Reviewed:		
Next Annual Review Date:		

Governor responsible: