



HERITAGE ACADEMY

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

But let them who find not [the means for] marriage abstain [from sexual relations] until Allah enriches them from His bounty. Surah An-Nur (24:33)

Written/ updated: September 2026	Next Review: September 2027 (or sooner if required)
Person Responsible Approved by	Headteacher Proprietor Body

This policy should be read in conjunction with our:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Curriculum Policy

1 Purpose and statutory basis

Heritage Academy provides relationships and sex education (RSE) for all pupils in Years 7–11 to help them build healthy, respectful relationships, understand their changing bodies, make informed decisions and recognise harm and seek help. Teaching promotes kindness, self-respect, responsibility and care for others. Teaching does not encourage or normalise early sexual experimentation and supports pupils to resist pressure and make informed choices.

Our Islamic ethos informs teaching about marriage, family life, chastity and personal responsibility. Religious beliefs are identified as such and distinguished from factual, medical and legal information. All pupils and families are treated with dignity; statutory content is not omitted because of the school's faith perspective.

RSE is compulsory under the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019. We have regard to the DfE statutory guidance published in July 2025 and effective from 1 September 2026, and meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and relevant Equality Act 2010 requirements. Health education is provided through compulsory PSHE.

2 Curriculum and delivery

RSE is taught through planned PSHE lessons across Years 7–11, supported by relevant science and religious education. Our PSHE plan sets out the sequence and timing of units and, as well as being given out and discussed at consultation and information evenings, is available to parents on request. Teaching builds on primary learning, revisits key concepts and responds to pupils' maturity, needs and local safeguarding issues.

Early secondary learning develops friendships, family relationships, puberty, personal safety and consent. Year 8 develops understanding of discrimination, online influence and harmful behaviour. Year 9 includes intimate relationships, contraception, sexual health and online harms. Years 10–11 deepen learning about AI and online influence, misogyny, sexual consent, abuse, sexual health, committed relationships, fertility and pregnancy choices. Pupils are taught the relevant law factually alongside each topic, including the age of consent, marriage, abuse, sexual offences and sharing sexual images.

The programme covers all five secondary RSE areas in the DfE guidance: families; respectful relationships, including friendships; online safety and awareness; being safe; and intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health. This includes marriage and civil partnership, family diversity, parenting, consent and sexual ethics, boundaries, bullying and prejudice, pornography and misogyny, exploitation and abuse, digital risks, contraception, STIs and accurate, impartial information about pregnancy options and support.

The headteacher checks detailed lesson plans against the full DfE secondary RSE content, including newer requirements such as AI chatbots and deepfakes, sextortion, non-fatal strangulation, virginity testing and hymenoplasty, and HIV prevention through PrEP and PEP. Suggested or unavailable resources are replaced or supplemented as necessary; a resource list alone does not establish curriculum coverage.

3 Teaching and inclusion

Appropriately trained staff deliver accurate, evidence-based, age-appropriate teaching using discussion, scenarios and opportunities to practise skills. Staff establish respectful ground rules, use anonymous questions where helpful and do not require pupils to share personal experiences. Staff receive support in managing sensitive issues and safeguarding disclosures.

Teaching is adapted for pupils with SEND through suitable language, resources, pace, repetition and individual support, with reasonable adjustments where needed. Staff consider pupils' experiences and increased vulnerability to bullying, exploitation and abuse, working with parents and relevant professionals where appropriate.

Pupils learn about all protected characteristics and the facts and law about biological sex and gender reassignment. Stable and healthy same-sex relationships are addressed within the programme, and sexual health information is relevant to all pupils. Contested views are not taught as fact, including that everyone has a gender identity. Teaching avoids stereotypes and any suggestion that social transition is a simple solution to distress.

Staff challenge sexism, misogyny, homophobia and other prejudice, while avoiding language that stigmatises boys. Pupils learn that anyone can experience abuse, victims are never to blame, and relationships require kindness and care as well as consent.

4 Safeguarding and sensitive questions

Staff explain the limits of confidentiality and how pupils can seek help from school staff and appropriate external services. They never promise secrecy about abuse. Concerns and disclosures are acted on immediately under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and reported to the DSL or deputy; relevant reporting duties are followed.

Questions are answered accurately and sensitively within appropriate classroom boundaries. Where a question goes beyond planned teaching, or concerns sex education from which a pupil has been withdrawn, staff support the pupil through an appropriate private discussion, referral to a parent or trusted adult, or signposting to reliable services. Staff seek advice from the headteacher or DSL where needed and do not use questions to bypass agreed withdrawal arrangements. Safeguarding support is always provided.

5 Resources and external providers

The school remains responsible for all content and delivery. The headteacher approves resources and any external provider after checking credentials, lesson plans and materials for accuracy, age and stage suitability, accessibility, impartiality and consistency with this policy. Staff assess commercial or partisan interests, including in branded resources, before use.

Any visitors follow school safeguarding procedures. Confidentiality, disclosures and reporting arrangements are agreed before delivery, and a teacher remains present. Parents are informed about external provision. The school does not accept contractual restrictions preventing parents from viewing teaching materials. External materials about biological sex and gender reassignment are consulted on with parents in advance and checked for oversimplification, stereotypes or encouragement to question gender.

6 Parents and withdrawal

We consult parents when developing and reviewing this policy, provide a representative sample of proposed resources and invite questions and feedback. Parents may view all RSE curriculum materials on request to the headteacher, including external materials. Access respects copyright, acknowledges authorship and requires parents not to copy or share materials further except as authorised by copyright law. Copyright is not a reason to refuse access. Parents cannot veto required curriculum content.

Parents are informed in advance about sex education content and significant changes to published provision. Relationships education concerns healthy relationships and safety; sex education includes teaching about sexual activity, contraception and sexual health. Sensitive safeguarding topics may form part of relationships education without describing sexual activity. The school identifies the relevant content when considering withdrawal requests.

Parents may request withdrawal from some or all sex education within RSE. There is no right to withdraw from relationships education, health education or science topics, including puberty and sexual reproduction. Requests should be made in writing to the headteacher, identifying the content concerned; a particular form is not required.

Before deciding, the headteacher discusses the request with parents and, where appropriate, the pupil, clarifies the curriculum and considers the benefits of teaching and possible effects of withdrawal. Requests are normally granted; refusal is limited to exceptional circumstances, such as safeguarding concerns or a pupil's specific vulnerability. The discussion, decision and reasons are recorded and the outcome confirmed in writing. Withdrawn pupils receive appropriate, purposeful education.

From three terms before their 16th birthday, pupils may choose to receive sex education despite a parental withdrawal request. The school informs pupils of this option and arranges teaching during one of those terms if they choose to receive it.

7 Responsibilities and review

The headteacher developed this policy through consultation with parents, staff and pupils, for approval by the proprietorial body. The proprietorial body approves this policy and oversees implementation. The headteacher leads RSE, ensures staff training and curriculum coverage, approves resources and visitors, liaises with parents and manages withdrawal requests. Teaching staff deliver the planned curriculum, assess understanding, adapt teaching and report concerns. Pupils are expected to treat others respectfully.

The headteacher monitors lesson plans, teaching, pupil understanding and progress, parental and pupil feedback, and external-provider contributions. Findings inform support, staff development and curriculum improvements and are reported to the proprietorial body. The policy is reviewed annually, or sooner following changes in guidance or school needs, with parent consultation and appropriate staff and pupil input. It is published on the school website and supplied free of charge on request.