Staffordshire University Academies Trust		Trust Policy Document			
Approved by:	**Trust Board**	**Issue date:**	**June 2026**	**Review date:**	**Summer 2027**
Policy Owner:	**DLSI**	Page: **1 of 10**			
Audience:	**Trustees** ☑ **Staff** ☑ **Local Academy Council** ☑ **Parents** ☑ **General Public** ☑				

Staffordshire University Academies Trust
Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Policy

This policy sets out the approach of Staffordshire University Academies Trust (SUAT) to Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE). The policy applies to all of the Academies in the Trust, including our Church schools. Individual Academies are advised to attach their own appendix to this policy.

Legal context
The Children and Social Work Act 2017 made it statutory for Primary schools to teach Relationships education and Health education and for Secondary schools to teach Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education from September 2020.

The Department for Education (DfE) published revised statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education which came into force from September 2026. This guidance sets out the content that schools must teach and the principles that should underpin curriculum design, teaching and engagement with parents and carers.

The Trust and its academies will have regard to the most recent statutory guidance when developing, delivering and reviewing RSHE provision.

This policy also supports legal requirements and statutory guidance relating to:
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education Act 1996
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance (DfE)

The Trust recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure that Relationships Education, Health Education and Sex Education are delivered in a way that is inclusive, accessible and appropriate to the age, developmental stage and needs of all pupils.

The following Trust policies are relevant to this policy:
- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour
- Online Safety (E-safety)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- PSHE (where applicable)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Education

The following Church of England (CoE) documents are also relevant to this policy:
- Faith-sensitive and inclusive Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE)

- Church of England Principles and Charter for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education
- Valuing All God's Children
- Pastoral Principles for Living Well Together

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust policies and guidance documents listed above.

Definition

RSHE supports children and young people's personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It aims to help them to deal with the real-life issues that they face as they grow up and that they will encounter as adults. Their learning will support them to make informed choices both on and off-line about their safety, physical and mental health enabling them to live positive and fulfilled lives.

RSHE is enhanced by a supportive school ethos where all are valued, positive relationships are promoted and there is a safe learning environment.

Aims

The RSHE programme aims to: -

- provide accurate, age appropriate information to all children and young people
- support the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable children and young people to make informed choices
- build confidence and self esteem
- develop personal attributes
- prepare children and young people as they develop and become adults
- develop positive and inclusive attitudes to everyone, particularly to those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010
- enable children and young people to flourish as unique individuals created in the image of God.

Through RSHE, the Trust seeks to ensure that all children and young people are treated with dignity and respect, are enabled to develop healthy relationships, and are supported to flourish as individuals within their communities. In Church schools, RSHE is delivered in a way that reflects the school's Christian vision and values, while remaining inclusive and respectful of all pupils and families.

Individual Academies are advised to add additional aims to meet the needs of their community (see Academy specific information).

Guiding Principles

The Trust believes that effective RSHE should:

- be age and developmentally appropriate;
- be evidence-informed and factually accurate;
- reflect the law and promote equality;
- be inclusive of all pupils and families;
- support safeguarding and pupil welfare;
- recognise the important role of parents and carers as primary educators;
- provide opportunities for pupils to develop resilience, critical thinking and informed decision-making;
- prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and for healthy adult relationships.

Roles and responsibilities
An effective programme of RSHE requires support from the whole school community, therefore the following roles and responsibilities have been identified.

Trustees
- Oversee strategies and procedures across the Trust
- Ensure that Church Schools in the Trust follow relevant guidance and policy provided by the Church of England (CoE)

Principal/ Head teacher
- Oversee the development and delivery of RSHE in the Academy including supporting the subject leader
- Give staff the opportunity to contribute to the development of RSHE
- Discuss the development and delivery of RSHE with executive staff and provide information for Trustees as required.
- Facilitate training for the subject leader and staff as required
- Support the subject leader's work with parents/carers so that they are kept informed of current content and delivery of the RSHE curriculum
- In Church Schools, ensure that relevant CoE guidance and policy is followed

Subject Leader
- Lead the development and delivery of effective RSHE across the Academy
- Keep up to date with latest developments in the subject
- Support staff as necessary
- Monitor and evaluate RSHE and report to the Academy Principal
- Liaise with parents and carers as necessary to keep information on the subject content and delivery up to date
- In Church Schools, ensure that relevant CoE guidance and policy is followed

All staff
- Know and implement the policy relating to RSHE
- In Church Schools, follow relevant CoE guidance and policy
- Teach RSHE using the agreed academy curriculum
- Maintain positive and supportive links with parents and carers
- Respond to the needs and questions of children, young people and their families regarding the content and delivery of the RSHE curriculum
- Monitor progress
- Follow academy safeguarding procedures where concerns arise from RSHE lessons.

Parents/Carers
- Will be encouraged to engage with staff to better understand the content and delivery of the RSHE curriculum
- Will be kept up to date of any changes and/or additions to the RSHE curriculum
- Will be informed of their right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons when these are scheduled
- In Church Schools, they will be assured that relevant CoE guidance and policy is followed

Curriculum organisation

Each Academy will decide how it organises its curriculum for RSHE, however the Trust recognises established best practice approaches including: -

- That RSHE is part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE education) and is best taught within this wider context.
- In Church schools, the RSHE curriculum is shaped and delivered in line with the school's Christian vision, ensuring that teaching is faith-sensitive, inclusive and promotes respect for all.
- Regular lessons provide the best opportunity for children and young people to develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes and revisit topics when necessary.
- Lessons need to be of sufficient length to enable children and young people to fully explore topics and reflect on learning
- Focus days, visits and visitors can enhance learning but cannot replace a planned and progressive programme.
- Confident and skilled staff are best placed to deliver effective RSHE lessons particularly where sensitive or controversial issues are included
- Cross curricular links make a valuable contribution to learning and should be recognised within planning and delivery
- Teaching content will be sequenced progressively across year groups so that knowledge builds over time.
- Academies will ensure that curriculum content reflects current safeguarding risks and emerging issues affecting children and young people.
- Teaching materials will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain accurate, evidence-informed and age-appropriate.
- Pupils will be taught how to recognise and respond to harmful, coercive, exploitative or abusive behaviours both online and offline.

Curriculum content will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains compliant with statutory guidance and responsive to the needs of pupils and emerging safeguarding issues.

Curriculum Content

The RSHE curriculum will be delivered in accordance with statutory requirements and will include age-appropriate teaching relating to:

- families and caring relationships;
- friendships and peer relationships;
- respect, kindness and inclusion;
- online relationships and online safety;
- privacy, consent and personal boundaries;
- bullying, prejudice and discrimination;
- physical health and healthy lifestyles;
- mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- puberty and changing adolescent bodies;
- reproduction and human development;
- sexual health and healthy intimate relationships (secondary);
- exploitation, grooming and abuse;
- domestic abuse and coercive control;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- pornography and its potential impact on expectations, relationships and wellbeing (secondary);
- substance misuse, including drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping;
- personal safety and risk management.
- financial decision-making and economic wellbeing

Teaching and learning
RSHE is delivered in line with the Academy teaching and learning policy. In Church schools, there will be adherence to relevant CoE guidance and policy. As the subject deals with real life experiences it is important to establish a safe and positive learning environment using the following approaches:

- Establish clear ground rules in consultation with children and young people covering confidentiality, respect for others, privacy and boundaries.
- Use distancing techniques including depersonalised discussions, role play and theatre in education
- Use clear language to avoid misunderstandings
- Avoid prejudice and assumptions about children and young people's abilities, desires, background and experiences
- Deal sensitively with unexpected questions and comments
- Distinguish clearly between factual information, professional advice, personal beliefs and opinions.
- Ensure that teaching is evidence-informed and does not promote partisan political views or ideological perspectives.
- Assess and build on existing knowledge and experiences
- Ensure learning is engaging using a range of activities including structured discussion and problem solving
- Provide a range of opportunities to learn, practise and demonstrate knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Allow time for reflection
- Provide differentiated learning
- Use a variety of groupings to enhance learning
- Pupils will be made aware that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and that safeguarding concerns must be reported in line with academy safeguarding procedures.

Resources
Resources and teaching materials will be quality assured by the Subject Leader and senior leaders before use. Materials will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are factually accurate, age appropriate, inclusive and aligned with statutory guidance.

External Visitors
External visitors may be used to enrich learning but will not replace the responsibility of academy staff for planning and delivering RSHE.
All visitors will:

- work within academy safeguarding procedures;
- use materials approved by the academy;
- understand the age and developmental stage of pupils;
- be supervised where appropriate by academy staff.

Visitors will not be used as a substitute for planned curriculum provision and academy staff will remain responsible for the learning objectives and content delivered to pupils.

Equality
The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on schools to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Gender reassignment

Our Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) curriculum reflects the diversity of modern British society and promotes respect, inclusion and dignity for all. Teaching will include age-appropriate learning about diversity, equality and protected characteristics, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and statutory RHSE guidance.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted throughout Relationships Education, Health Education and age-appropriate Sex Education. Pupils will learn about physical health, mental wellbeing, healthy relationships and personal safety in ways that are inclusive, accessible and relevant to their age, stage of development and individual needs.

Lessons will be delivered sensitively and respectfully, encouraging pupils to understand and value different backgrounds, beliefs, experiences and family structures. Pupils will be supported to develop positive relationships, challenge prejudice and discrimination, and treat others with kindness and respect.
RHSE teaching will be adapted, where appropriate, to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), taking account of their age, developmental stage, understanding and communication needs.

Academies will ensure that all pupils can access the RSHE curriculum through appropriate adaptation, support and reasonable adjustments where required.

Teaching will be delivered within the context of the school's Christian vision and values, while recognising and respecting the diverse beliefs, cultures and worldviews represented within our school community**.**

Right to withdraw
Parents and carers cannot legally withdraw their child from any aspect of Relationships Education or Health Education.

Parents and carers have the right to withdraw from Sex Education apart from content that is taught within the Science National Curriculum.

Definition of Sex Education

For the purposes of parental withdrawal, each academy will clearly identify the content that it defines as Sex Education. This definition will be developed in consultation with parents and carers and will reflect the age, phase and context of the academy while remaining consistent with statutory guidance.

The academy's definition of Sex Education will distinguish between:

- Relationships Education, which is statutory and from which pupils cannot be withdrawn;

- Health Education, which is statutory and from which pupils cannot be withdrawn;
- National Curriculum Science content, from which pupils cannot be withdrawn;
- Sex Education delivered outside of the National Curriculum for which parents and carers have a right to request withdrawal.

Details of the content identified as Sex Education will be published within the academy-specific RSHE information and reviewed periodically in consultation with parents and carers.

In the Trust, Primary Principals/ Head teachers may accept this having explained to the parent/carer the potential implications for their child. In the Secondary Academies a detailed discussion will take place with the parent/carer about the potential impact of withdrawing their child from these lessons. If the parent/carer still wishes to exercise their right to withdraw the Academy will provide suitable alternative learning activities at the time the lessons are taking place.

The parent and carer right to withdraw applies up to three terms before the young person turns 16. After that point if the young person wishes to receive sex education the Academy will make the appropriate arrangements.

Academies in the Trust will inform parents/carers when sex education lessons will take place and remind them of their right to withdraw. Parents and carers must inform the academy of their intention to withdraw their child.

Safeguarding
RSHE and Health Education include sensitive topics and it is therefore possible that discussions will prompt safeguarding disclosures. Reference should be made to SUAT safeguarding policies and procedures to deal with any disclosures appropriately and sensitively.

The Subject Leader and teacher should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the academy any potentially sensitive topics. Appropriate steps must be taken to provide additional support for children and young people if required.

Staff should consider the timing of lessons to ensure that children and young people have the opportunity to report any concerns they may have either that day or the following day.

The RSHE curriculum forms part of the academy's preventative safeguarding curriculum.
Teaching will support pupils to recognise:
- inappropriate and unsafe behaviour;
- abuse, exploitation and grooming;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- coercive and controlling behaviour;
- online risks, including harmful content and inappropriate contact.

Pupils will be taught how and where to seek help and how to report concerns safely.

Monitoring and evaluating
The Principal/Headteacher and Subject Leader will monitor and evaluate RSHE in order to understand its impact on pupils' knowledge, wellbeing and personal

development, as well as to inform ongoing curriculum improvement. This could include scrutiny of planning, lesson observations, learning walks, evidence of learning, feedback from staff, parents/carers and children and young people.

Monitoring will include consideration of pupil voice to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the curriculum.

Professional development
The Principal/ Head teacher and Subject Leader will regularly assess the professional development needs of staff. Appropriate development will be provided using internal or external expertise.

Staff delivering RSHE will receive appropriate training and support to ensure they have the subject knowledge, confidence and skills required to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Communication of policy
The Trust policy will be available on the Trust website.
Individual academy policies will be available on their websites.
Copies can be requested from each academy office.

Communication with parents and carers

The Trust recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers in the delivery of RSHE.

Academies will ensure that parents and carers are informed about the RSHE curriculum, including the content to be taught and when it will be delivered. Information will be made available through academy websites and/or direct communication.

Parents and carers will be able to request access to further information about RSHE, including curriculum overviews and teaching resources, by contacting the academy. Academies will respond to such requests in a timely and transparent manner.

Where appropriate, academies will communicate directly with parents and carers in advance of the delivery of sex education to ensure they are aware of content and of their right to withdraw their child in line with this policy.

Parents and carers will be consulted when the policy is reviewed and when significant changes are proposed to RSHE provision. Academies will seek to maintain open and constructive dialogue with parents and carers regarding curriculum content and delivery.

Academy specific information
RSHE is most effective when it meets the needs of children and young people therefore each academy must set out their policy for the following:

In addition, each academy must publish:
- a year-by-year curriculum overview;
- details of resources used;
- arrangements for SEND adaptation;
- arrangements for parental engagement;
- details of external agencies and visitors used;
- procedures for handling parental requests for information;

- procedures relating to withdrawal from sex education;
- arrangements for monitoring impact and pupil voice.

Aims/Intention

- Church Schools to include reference to the CoE Principles and Charter for RSE

Context of the academy

- Intake
- Special needs
- Church School identity
- Social, cultural and religious mix
- Health and social needs – identified from data
- Links to other relevant policies

Support

- Within the academy
- External including how to refer

Curriculum content

- Overview for each year group
- Cross curricular coverage
- Key resources used
- Visits and visitors
- Definition of Sex Education for the purposes of parental withdrawal

Definition of Sex Education for the Purposes of Parental Withdrawal

In accordance with the Trust RSHE Policy, the academy has identified the following lessons and/or curriculum content as Sex Education for the purposes of parental withdrawal rights.

This definition has been developed in consultation with parents/carers and reflects the age, phase and context of the academy.

Year Group	Unit	Lesson	Withdrawable
			Yes/No

All other RSHE content forms part of statutory Relationships Education, Health Education and/or National Curriculum Science and is therefore not subject to the right of withdrawal.

Parents/carers will be informed of this content and when it will be taught.

Teaching and learning

Frequency of lessons
Who teaches RSHE
Assessment

Monitoring and evaluating
Frequency
Methods used

Appendix A Model letter to parents and carers – Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

Dear Parent/Carer,

As part of our commitment to supporting pupils' personal development, wellbeing and safety, our academy delivers Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) as part of the wider PSHE curriculum.

RSHE is designed to help children and young people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to form healthy relationships, keep themselves safe, and make informed choices, both online and offline. Teaching is age-appropriate, inclusive and delivered in a safe and respectful environment.

Information about the RSHE curriculum, including an overview of the content taught in each year group, is available on the academy website. Parents and carers are also welcome to request further information, including details of teaching resources, by contacting the academy.

In line with statutory guidance, parents and carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents and carers do have the right to withdraw their child from Sex Education (except for content taught as part of the Science National Curriculum). Further information about this is set out in the academy's RSHE policy.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss RSHE further, please contact the academy.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher/Principal]