



# RSHE Policy 2025 – 2026

**APPROVED**

## Relationships and Sex Education at Bay Learning Academy CIC

The aim of Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or another type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.

This will help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental well-being, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

Knowledge about safer sex and sexual health remains important to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life.

RSE should provide a clear progression from what is taught in primary school in relationship education. Alongside being taught about intimate relationships, students should also be taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult. This teaching should enable students to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful.

Students should understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental well-being and self-respect. Through gaining the knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, they can be empowered to identify when relationships are unhealthy. They should be taught that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental well-being.

As in primary, and secondary Relationships Education can be underpinned by a wider, deliberate cultivation and practice of resilience and character in the individual. These should include character traits such as belief in achieving goals and persevering with tasks, as well as personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility,



kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice, underpinned by an understanding of the importance of self-respect and self-worth.

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Students should be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. All students should feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Sexual orientation and gender identity should be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner. When teaching about these topics, it must be recognised that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. There should be an equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships.

It is recognised that there will be a range of opinions regarding RSE. The starting principle when teaching each of these must be that the applicable law should be taught in a factual way so that students are clear on their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Students should be well informed about the full range of perspectives and, within the law, should be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs. Key aspects of the law relating to sex which should be taught include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy.

Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, should also be addressed sensitively and clearly. Schools should address the physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM). They should also be taught where to find support and that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM or fail to protect a person for whom you are responsible from FGM. As well as addressing this in the context of the law, students may also need support to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk. Schools should also be mindful that for students who are or have experienced unhealthy or unsafe relationships at home or socially, the school may have a particularly important role in being a place of consistency and safety where they can easily speak to trusted adults, report problems and find support.

This will include how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues.

Students should have a strong understanding of how data is generated, collected, shared and used online, for



example, how personal data is captured on social media or understanding the way that businesses may exploit the data available to them.

Some students are also exposed to harmful behaviours online, and via other forms of media, which may normalise violent sexual behaviours. A focus on healthy relationships and broader relationship education can help young people understand acceptable behaviours in relationships.

Bay Learning Academy has designed a PSHE curriculum that includes the following statutory RSE curriculum and a wider coverage of Personal, Social and Health education topics.

## Statutory RSE

Statutory RSE states that by the end of secondary school students should know the following:

### Families

#### Students should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children
- what marriage is, including their legal status – for example, that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships
- the roles and responsibilities of parents concerning the raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting
- how to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships), how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others if needed

### Respectful relationships, including friendships

#### Students should know:

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as:
- trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict
- reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships



- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn, they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly regarding the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

## Online and media

### Students should know:

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- not to provide material to others that they would not want to be shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- the impact of viewing harmful content
- that specifically sexually explicit material, for example, pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves concerning others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online



## Being safe

### Students should know:

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online

## Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

### Students should know:

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- that there are choices concerning pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment



## The Law

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people, and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

**Students should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:**

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)