

# Bradford Forster Academy

## Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Bradford Forster Academy strives to provide inspirational education for all students irrespective of their background or experience. Through exposure to outstanding teaching, the expectation of exemplary behaviour, and a consistent focus on building resilience, we aim to prepare all students with the skills and characteristics required to thrive personally, professionally and within society.

We strive to reflect our academy Christian values of respect, growth, and community whilst following our strapline of **'Everything is possible for one who believes'** Mark 9:23.



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## Definition of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Bradford Forster Academy adopts the Department for Education's definition of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE):

*'RSE should provide young people with the information they need to develop healthy, safe and nurturing relationships of all kinds.'*

(Department for Education Statutory Guidance: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, 2025)

Sex education is different to relationships education. Relationships education does not involve explaining the detail of different forms of sexual activity, but can cover sensitive topics such as sexual violence in order to keep children safe.

RSE is integrated within the delivery of RSHE (Relationships, Health and Sex Education).

### 1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Enable students to learn about what makes healthy relationships, including with family, friends and online, how to recognise unhealthy behaviour in relationships and how to seek help if they feel unsafe.
- Support students to develop self-respect, confidence, and empathy.
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.

Teaching will be age appropriate and will respect the diversity of families and faith in our community.

### **RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.**

*'Effective RSE focuses on respect for oneself and others and does not encourage or normalise early sexual experimentation. By supporting confidence and self-esteem, RSE will enable young people to make their own choices about whether or when to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, once they reach the age of consent, and to resist pressure to have sex.'*

(Department for Education Statutory Guidance: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, 2025)

## 2. Policy development

The policy is based on the Department for Education's Statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education 2025 and the Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The consultation and policy development process will involve the following steps:

1. Review – a working group will pull together all relevant information including national guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff will be given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and interested parties will be invited to work with us on the development of the policy.
4. Student consultation – we will investigate what exactly students want from their RSE
5. Ratification – once amendments are made, the policy will be shared with governors and ratified

## 3. Statutory requirements

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education  
This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education issued under Section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

Schools must have regard to the guidance, and where they depart from those parts of the guidance which state that they should (or should not) do something they will need to have good reasons for doing so.

## 4. Links to other policies and curriculum subjects

The science curriculum includes teaching about reproduction in humans including the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycle, gametes, fertilisation, gestation, birth, and HIV/AIDS.

Religious education looks at family, values and morals, and the celebration of marriage in different traditions.

The Personal Development curriculum requires students to learn about the main changes, which take place in adolescence, and implications for emotional and physical health.

The curriculum for computing covers e-safety. This includes how to use technology responsibly, respectfully, and securely, how to keep personal information private, and where to go for help and support.

The content of relationships education is supported by our anti-bullying policy, equality and diversity policy, and safeguarding policy.

## 5. Delivery of RSE

RSE is inclusive for all students, sensitive to all family and faith backgrounds and students' own identities. It will be respectful of all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. The school environment reflects, values, and celebrates the diversity of our community.

Across all key stages, students will be supported with developing the following skills:

- Communication skills
- Forming positive relationships including self-respect as well as respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- Assertiveness and managing conflict and difficult emotions

Skills and knowledge are taught in an age-appropriate way. Teaching methods are a combination of sharing information and facilitating discussions and exploring issues and values. Lessons are delivered by teaching staff within school and relevant outside organisations.

The Department for Education has set out guidance on what children should learn by the end of secondary school, under a series of themes, which are set out below. Some themes recur throughout KS3 and KS4, others will be delivered in the most appropriate year only. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from lessons on sexual intimacy, sexualised behaviour, and sexual health, as detailed in section 7.

### **Statutory RSE content (Department for Education Statutory Guidance: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, 2025):**

#### **Families**

1. That there are different types of committed stable relationships.

2. How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children.

3. Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are

cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony.

4. That 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.

5. That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.

6. How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.

7. The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development.

8. How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

## **Respectful relationships**

1. The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.

2. How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal.

3. The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others.

4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs.

5. The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict.

6. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.

7. Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration.

8. The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok.

9. How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice.

10. How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others.

11. How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others.

12. Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called "involuntary celibates" (incels) or online influencers.

### **Online safety and awareness**

1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.

2. Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues.

3. The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online.

4. Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images.

5. That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils

should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime.

6. What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online.

7. About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them.

8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong.

9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.

10. How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns.

11. That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it.

12. How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

13. That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising).

14. That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion.

15. That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk.

## **Being safe**

1. How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online)

and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent.

2. That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others.

3. How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

4. How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions.

5. What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it.

6. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting.

7. The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault.

8. The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language.

9. The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.

10. That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed.

11. The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation.

12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.

13. The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible.

14. That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or

covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death.

15. That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful. 16. How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault.

## Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

1. That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive.

2. The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex.

3. Sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent.

4. That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.

5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.

6. The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision making.

7. That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help.

8. How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma.

9. The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment. 10. How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour.

11. How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms.

12. How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

### 6.1 The local governing body (LGB)

The LGB will approve the RSE policy and hold the **Headteacher** to account for its implementation.

### 6.2 The **Headteacher**

The **Headteacher** is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing any requests to withdraw students from sex education components of RSE (see section 7). The **Headteacher** is also responsible for ensuring that any young person who was previously withdrawn from sex education but wishes to receive it during the 3 terms before they turn 16 is provided with sex education.

### 6.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way, taking account of students' cultural and faith backgrounds
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE, as with any other subject
- Monitoring children's learning in order to ensure they make progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the sex education components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to **discuss these concerns with the Headteacher or the senior leader with responsibility for RSE. RSE in secondary will cover a range of topics, including topics related to abusive behaviour. While teaching children how to stay safe, including online, teachers should be clear that being a victim of abuse is never the fault of the child or young person. Different forms of abuse should be addressed sensitively and clearly at appropriate ages. For pupils who are experiencing or have experienced unhealthy or unsafe relationships, including at home, schools have an important role as a place of consistency and safety where pupils can find support.**

### 6.4 Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity, as they would be expected to in any other lesson.

## 7. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the sex education components of RSE. That means the lessons that cover physical aspects of sexual development and intimate relationships, and sexual health. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the **Headteacher**. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's file. The **Headteacher** will discuss any such request with parents and take appropriate action. ~~Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.~~

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their pupils from relationships and health education, nor can they be withdrawn from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction.

Once the process has been followed, except in exceptional circumstances, the academy will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the academy will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

This process is the same for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). However there may be exceptional circumstances where senior leaders may want to take a student's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. Records of withdrawals are managed by the Headteacher.

Alternative school work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

## 8. Training

Staff that teach RSE are trained staff. The **Headteacher** may also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide additional support and training to staff teaching RSE.

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Assistant Principal: Personal Development curriculum provision, learning walks/lesson observations and where applicable drop-down events.

Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board and the **Headteacher**.

## 10. Inclusion

The delivery of RSE content is made accessible to all pupils. We are committed to ensuring that our RSE resources are accessible and inclusive for all students, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We tailor our RSE curriculum to meet diverse learning needs through adaptive teaching as well as offering additional support where necessary with an awareness that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their

SEND. Our staff deliver RSE content in a way that is respectful and inclusive of all abilities. We also ensure that our approach aligns with the individual needs of each student, fostering an environment where every child feels valued and supported in their learning journey. The academy delivers an inclusive RSE curriculum that respects and reflects the diversity of the student body in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Protected Characteristics.