



Relationships and Sex Education

	Position / Committee	Date
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1. Aims

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

- 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.
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships.
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- Develop confident, motivated and determined young people with the knowledge, skills and qualities needed for successful lives.

2. Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy school, we must provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#). At Crawshaw Academy we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

The new statutory RSE curriculum was published in July 2025 and is compulsory from September 2026. To meet the statutory requirements schools should have started teaching the new curriculum by that date. At Crawshaw Academy, we introduced the teaching of most aspects of the new statutory curriculum from September 2025.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. **Review** – a working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.
2. **Staff consultation** – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
3. **Parent/stakeholder consultation** – parents and any interested parties were given the opportunity to respond to a survey and seek further information about RSE provision.
4. **Student consultation** – we investigated across a range of students what exactly they want from their RSE.
5. **Ratification** – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified.

4. Key changes

1. Stronger, more explicit content expectations

- The new guidance more clearly sets out **what must be taught**, especially around relationships, consent, health, and online risks.
- It expands the requirement to cover **modern risks and digital harms** such as *deepfakes*, AI-generated content, sextortion, and harmful advice from AI/chatbots.
- There is increased focus on tackling **misogyny, incel culture, and online gendered harms** (the “manosphere” influence) and encouraging pupils to challenge harmful attitudes.
- The guidance strengthens the teaching of **ethical behaviour** in relationships: not just consent but understanding that “yes” doesn’t automatically make something ethical and that consent can be withdrawn.

2. No strict minimum age for sex education content

- The 2019 guidance had some boundaries on age; the new guidance avoids rigid age ceilings. Instead, it emphasizes that content should be **age-appropriate** and responsive to pupil needs.
- The requirement is that even younger pupils may learn about relationships, respect, and early safeguarding themes (though more explicit sex content remains later).

3. Mental health, suicide prevention & safeguarding

- There is a new, clearer expectation that **suicide prevention** is addressed (in an age-appropriate, safe way) and that schools should have a plan for this.
- The guidance tightens links between RSHE and **safeguarding**, ensuring that lessons are equipped to prevent, recognise and respond to harm.

4. Greater clarity on gender, sex & identity

- Biological sex must be taught clearly and accurately; gender identity is covered, but schools must avoid presenting contested views as fact or endorsing personal beliefs.

- The guidance discourages oversimplified diagrams (e.g. “Gingerbread Person”) and cartoons that might send misleading messages or infantilise the content.

5. Stronger parental engagement & transparency

- Schools must proactively **consult and engage with parents** when developing or reviewing their RSHE policy and curriculum.
- Parents retain the right to review materials used in RSHE and, for secondary schools, have the right to request withdrawal from sex *education* content (not relationships).
- Any departure from guidance must be justified and documented.

6. Policy, evaluation & monitoring

- Schools must ensure their RSHE policy is up-to-date, transparent, accessible (published), reviewed regularly, and aligned with the new guidance.
- The guidance expects schools to **evaluate the impact** of their RSHE curriculum (e.g. via pupil voice, outcomes, safeguarding indicators).

7. Addressing equalities and protected groups

- The DfE carried out an **equality impact assessment** to ensure the new guidance addresses content fairly across protected characteristics (e.g. disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race).
- Schools must ensure that RSHE is **inclusive**, accessible, and sensitive to all pupils’ backgrounds and identities.

5. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

6. Curriculum

RSE forms part of our PSHE programme at Crawshaw Academy. Our PSHE programme is mapped and is available to view on the Crawshaw Academy website

<https://www.crawshawacademy.org.uk/seecmsfile/?id=950>

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, students and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner, so they are fully informed and don't seek answers line

7. Delivery of RSE

a. Delivery and Content

RSE is taught within PSHE lessons. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE). Online and media safety is taught within the ICT curriculum. There may however also be crossover within the PSHE curriculum to give context to a topic, recap prior knowledge or build on existing skills, knowledge and understanding.

Additional sessions and activities may be delivered as appropriate to meet the needs of different groups of students. This includes tutor time. All sessions will be delivered by a trained professional.

Students may also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

Assemblies and Tutor Time activities reinforce appropriate messages.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families.
- Respectful relationships, including friendships.
- Online and media.
- Being safe.
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

For more information about our RSE curriculum please contact

Dawn Nicholson Senior Assistant Headteacher

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These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: children who are looked after or young carers).

b. What pupils should know by the end of secondary school.

A spiral curriculum is used in PSHE. The intent is to teach pupils the life skills they need to keep themselves safe and succeed after they leave school.

In **year 7** information from primary school is reinforced ensuring that all pupils have a good foundation in relationship and sex education. Personal safety, potential grooming and exploitation scenarios are taught in an age-appropriate way.

In **year 8** healthy relationships are revisited. Risky behaviours and their consequences are studied, including sex and the law, pregnancy, contraception, STDs, alcohol and vaping. Mental health and self-esteem are also included.

Year 9 further builds on the awareness of mental health, self-esteem, healthy relationships and consent. The pupils consider how to interpret and manage their own emotions. In addition, the risks of smoking, alcohol, vaping and drugs are studied.

Staying safe both online and in the community are revisited in **Year 10**. Issues relating to drugs are further explored. Ideas about identity and gender are built on. During **Year 10** the pupils are educated about forced marriage and honour-based violence, as per the new government guidelines. The curriculum includes building an understanding of employability, financial security and planning for jobs.

The final year is spent on reviewing topics taught previously. There is an early emphasis on applying for jobs and colleges, writing CVs and study skills. Managing money and workplace expectations are covered.

c. Right to Withdraw

Parents' have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the assistant principal Dawn Nicholson (nicholsondj@ca.rklt.co.uk).

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The request will be discussed with parents and appropriate action will be taken. Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

8. Roles and responsibilities

a. The Local Governing Body

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

b. The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory/ non - science components of RSE. The principal will discuss any request for withdrawal with the parents.

Extract from GOV.UK statutory guidance for Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education:

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school should 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 school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-educationrelationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

c. Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- i. Delivering RSE in a sensitive way.
- ii. Modelling positive attitudes to RSE.
- iii. Monitoring progress.
- iv. Responding to the needs of individual students
- v. Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science 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 this with the Headteacher. Staff are provided with appropriate Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to enable them to teach RSE.

d. Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

9. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our (CPD) calendar.

Individualised training and support are available for all staff and termly briefings on curriculum intent and 'tricky' topics are offered.

The Headteacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Curriculum Leader through planning, learning walks, work scrutiny, and student voice.

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

This policy will be reviewed by the Independent Executive Board (Governing Body) on an annual basis. At every review, the policy will need to be approved by the governing body.