

The Quest Academy

Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Policy

(Updated February 2026)



1. Introduction

This policy has been developed in line with Government publication:

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education July 2019

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all students receiving secondary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) continues to be compulsory in independent schools.

2. The aims of Relationships and Sex Education

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education are:

- To give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships.
- To enable young people to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship.
- To teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. To enable young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation.
- To give young people knowledge about safer sex and sexual health in order to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life
- To support people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.
- To deliver the above in a non-judgmental, factual way and allow scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment.
- To underpin relationships education 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.

3. The aims of Health Education

The aims of health education are:

- To enable young people to understand that physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked, and it is important that students understand that good physical health contributes to good mental wellbeing, and vice versa.
- To give young people the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and

wellbeing. It should enable them to recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others and, when issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

- To promote students' self-control and ability to self-regulate, and strategies for doing so thus enabling them to become confident in their ability to achieve well and persevere even when they encounter setbacks or when their goals are distant, and to respond calmly and rationally to setbacks and challenges.
- To help young people to overcome prejudice and stigma around health issues, especially those connected with mental health.

Content of the Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Programme

Teaching will build on primary content and will introduce new content to older students at appropriate points.

Content will be derived from the Government guidance on what schools are expected to teach in this part of the curriculum (Appendix 1)

Delivery, Teaching Methods and Staffing

Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education is delivered to students across all Key Stages in the Academy through a variety of My Quest Journey (MQJ) lessons, the tutorial programmes, The Quest Seven Year Journey Programme, assemblies and activities week. Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education complement several national curriculum subjects including PE, Science, RS and computing. Opportunities will be sought to draw links between the subjects and integrate teaching where appropriate. It is taught by a team of teachers from different subject areas. They will at times be supported through additional and specialist delivery of themes by outside agencies and speakers, the Pastoral Director, Form Tutors and members of the leadership team.

The MQJ lessons and RSHE aspects of the tutor programme are designed, created and resourced by the RSHE Coordinator, following the government guidance. The RSHE Coordinator has designed a spiral curriculum so key topics are revisited at the age-appropriate level throughout the students' time at the Academy.

To review the effectiveness of the programme, the RSHE Coordinator reviews the weekly contributions to discussions from each tutor group on Google Classroom; this is used to inform further planning so the programme is designed to be flexible and respond to the needs of the students in our community. In MQJ, teachers assess the comprehension of the issues covered through questioning and discussing topics with the students as well as through written work.

Outside speakers are invited where appropriate.

How will we decide if a topic or activity is age-appropriate?

We will use the tool at Appendix 1 when selecting a topic or resource to check that it is age-appropriate.

It may be necessary to deliver a topic earlier than planned in response to students' needs – for example, if there is a need to respond to local or national events that are causing concern. Similarly, we may need to repeat a topic with older students if we feel that they need more guidance in understanding it.

Staff Development

Any member of staff can request appropriate Continuing Professional Development for the development of this knowledge of Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education and its delivery.

Right to withdraw students from lessons

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships and Sex education. Nor is there any right to withdraw from Health education. This is because the topics covered, such as respect, safety and friendships are important if students are to grow up into happy and healthy adults.

Parents of students in secondary schools do have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education that is delivered as part of statutory Relationships and Sex Education. However, from three terms before their 16th birthday, a child can decide for themselves that they want to take part in sex education and in these cases the child's request will be granted.

Parents who do wish to withdraw their child from sex education should contact the Executive Principal to discuss the matter. This will allow them to talk through their concerns and to ask any questions they may have. It will also allow the Executive Principal to explain the curriculum and the benefits that their child will gain from taking part in the lessons. A record will be made of the meeting, but such requests will be granted and students provided with alternative learning whilst sex education is being delivered.

Specific Issues

Confidentiality: Any information of a confidential nature given by a student to a member of staff is passed on to the designated member of staff for Child Protection and is recorded on CPOMs (the school's alert programme).

Child Protection Procedure: Members of staff are NOT permitted to initiate conversations with individual students about sexual or any other type of abuse. If approached, staff can only listen and then pass the information on to the designated member of staff for Child Protection.

Equal Opportunities

The teaching programme is offered to all students. Where appropriate this may also require a differentiated curriculum.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy

The RSHE Coordinator will evaluate the effectiveness of the programme through meeting with Heads of Year about the tutor programme, and meeting with the MQJ teachers from monitoring the discussions and work that takes place in the lessons and how these develop as the students gain knowledge in the topics. The Coordinator also monitors the weekly discussion feedback recorded on Google Classroom by each tutor.

Review meetings are held to discuss the current syllabus and any alterations or adaptations that might be necessary.

Appendix 1

Secondary school

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

<p>Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 e.g. 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 with respect to 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); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
<p>Respectful relationships, including friendships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: 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 (e.g. 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, 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable. • the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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 e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing. • the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the
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	<p>potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, efficacy and options available. • the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage. • that there are choices in relation to 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/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.
Mental wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary. • that happiness is linked to being connected to others. • how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns. • common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression). • how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health. • the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.
Internet safety and harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image), how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online. • how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or

	<p>harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.</p> <p><i>Eating disorders and extreme weight loss are a specialised area and schools should use qualified support or advice as needed. Schools may consider accessing support from the NHS or local specialist services who may be able to provide advice and CPD for teachers.</i></p>
Physical health and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress. • the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardio-vascular ill-health. • about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.
Healthy eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.
Drugs, alcohol and tobacco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions. • the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances. • the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood. • the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency. • awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks. • the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.
Health and prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics. • about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist. • (late secondary) the benefits of regular self-examination and screening. • the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination. • the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.

Basic first aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• basic treatment for common injuries.• life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR. (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation is usually best taught after 12 years old.)• the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.
Changing adolescent body	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing.• the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.