



ST. MARY'S  
ACADEMY TRUST

# St Mary's Academy Trust

## Relationships, Sex and Health Education Strategy

**Date agreed by Performance and Standards committee: November 2022**

**Date to be reviewed: November 2023**



## **Principles**

We believe that Relationships, Sex and Health Education is vital for the personal, social and emotional development of our pupils. It equips children and young people with the knowledge, skills and values they need to develop safe, respectful and enjoyable relationships and empowers them to take responsibility for their physical health and mental well-being. St. Mary's Academy Trust believes that all children and young people have a right to a holistic, inclusive and needs-led Relationships, Sex and Health Education. Through our key values of care, collaboration, integrity and respect, our schools are committed to ensuring equality for all of our children and to celebrate difference. We recognise that at the heart of this curriculum is a focus on keeping children safe, and our schools can play an important role in preventative education.

We believe that Relationships, Sex and Health Education is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects.

This strategy was produced in consultation with our staff, pupils, parents, Local Governing Body and Board of Trustees We will ensure the strategy is effectively communicated to staff and parents, including through publishing the strategy on our school website.

The information below complies with our statutory obligations to deliver Relationships Education under sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It will have due regard for the DfE's statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance (2019) and other relevant guidance.

## **Strategy Aims**

- To ensure that all schools follow the statutory guidance and implement the curriculum as outlined in Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (2019).
- To ensure that parents and carers are provided with every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of our Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum.
- To ensure that in all of our schools, the teaching of Relationships, Sex and Health Education is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content.
- To ensure that all of our schools promote equality and celebrate difference so that all of our pupils understand the importance of equality and respect.



**This strategy should be read in conjunction with:**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- St. Mary's Academy Trust Behaviour Policy
- The school's Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy
- SEND code of practise
- Online Safety Policy
- Our school curriculum, in particular the Science, Physical Education, Computing and PHSE curriculums

**Definition of Relationships Education:**

Relationships Education in primary schools is the teaching of the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other peers and adults.

**Definition of Sex Education**

Sex Education gives young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds. It supports people throughout life to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships at the appropriate time.

**Definition of Health Education:**

Health Education in primary schools is the teaching of the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. Teachers should be clear that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.

**Curriculum Principles**

St. Mary's Academy Trust expects each school to design its own Relationships, Sex and Health Education Curriculum which follows the guidance and the specific content outlined in the DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance (2019). Each school should determine how to deliver the curriculum content in the context of their school's curriculum.

Each school will follow the principles outlined below in designing their curriculum.

Schools will:

- teach the statutory content from Relationships Education and Health Education;
- design a curriculum which coordinates and compliments their existing curriculum content, for example Science, Computing, Physical Education and PHSE, looking for opportunities to draw links between National Curriculum subjects and integrate teaching

where appropriate. Relationships and Health Education does not need to be taught as a separate subject and content does not have to be repeated if covered in other parts of the curriculum however this should be reflected in the school's curriculum map;

- develop the teaching of Relationships and Health Education as part of a wider whole school approach to ensuring that our pupils are happy, healthy, safe and secure and our commitment to developing our children and young people socially, morally, spiritually and culturally;
- design a curriculum which is carefully structured and sequenced, providing pupils with opportunities to embed new knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real life situations;
- demonstrate commitment to an inclusive curriculum (including LGBT+ and SEND) through high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised where appropriate to meet the needs of all pupils and enable all pupils to access the curriculum. Schools should also be mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes as set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching these subjects to those with SEND;
- design and implement a curriculum which is both age and developmentally appropriate including considering that pupils of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to differing types of questions or behaviours. Teaching methods should take account of these differences, including the use of discussion and teaching on a one-to-one basis or in small groups;
- use assessment effectively to inform future teaching, identify where pupils may require additional support and to provide regular feedback on pupil progress;
- consider what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting when designing and implementing the curriculum, in particular in answering questions that are better not dealt with in front of a whole class;
- ensure that all members of staff involved in the delivery of Relationships and Health Education lessons are given appropriate training and support in the delivery of lessons and in how to respond to pupils' comments and questions;
- ensure that any visitors into school used to delivery part of, or enhance the delivery of the curriculum, follow this policy and that a class teacher is present at all times in order to be able to follow up and respond to any pupils' comments or questions as necessary and appropriate. Before delivery, the visitors resources and planning must be checked in advance to ensure it is deemed appropriate for the class and meets the full range of needs;
- ensure that the curriculum is taught sensitively and inclusively;
- support pupils' personal development and pastoral needs;
- design a curriculum which supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively in the transition phase before moving to secondary school;
- design a curriculum which develops resilience and persistence in pupils and enables them to become happy, successful and productive members of society;
- design a curriculum which enables pupils to believe they can achieve academic and personal goals;
- design a curriculum which helps pupils prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities



and experiences of adult life;

- design a curriculum which develops pupils' understanding of their rights and how to ensure the protection of these throughout their lives;
- foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls and provide an environment which challenges all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promotes understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010. This should be done through these subjects and as part of a whole-school approach;
- be aware of and respond appropriately to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Staff have an important role to play in modelling positive behaviours;
- when teaching these subjects, take account of the religious and cultural background of all pupils, so that the topics that are included in the core content in this guidance are appropriately handled. Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics. All schools may teach about faith perspectives. In particular, schools with a religious character may teach the distinctive faith perspective on relationships, and balanced debate may take place about issues that are seen as contentious. For example, the school may wish to reflect on faith teachings about certain topics as well as how their faith institutions may support people in matters of relationships;
- ensure teaching reflects the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

Schools may:

- Choose to design and implement a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.
- decide to deliver the non-statutory primary content for Sex Education. All schools will cover the statutory science curriculum which includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. It will be for schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils;
- have flexibility in their curriculum to include additional relevant content to meet the needs of their current pupils.



## **Areas of Learning**

The focus in primary school should be on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults, including online.

### **Areas of Learning:**

#### **Relationships Education**

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

#### **Physical Health and Mental Well-being**

- Mental wellbeing
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy Eating
- Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco
- Health and Prevention
- Basic First Aid
- Changing Adolescent Body

#### **Sex Education**

- Sexual Orientation and development
- Transgender Issues
- Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

Pupils should be taught:

#### **Relationships:**

- how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy and personal space;
- about the features of healthy friendships, family relationships and other relationships which young children are likely to encounter in a range of contexts, including online;
- that families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children. (Families can include for example, single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by

- grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures);
- how to stay safe online and what is appropriate behaviour in a way that is relevant to pupils' lives, including how information and data is shared and used in all contexts, including online; for example, sharing pictures, understanding that many websites are businesses and how sites may use information provided by users in ways they might not expect;
- about positive emotional and mental wellbeing, including how friendships can support mental wellbeing;
- opportunities for young people to undertake social action, active citizenship and voluntary service to others locally or more widely;
- how to recognise and to report abuse, including emotional, physical and sexual abuse. This can be delivered by focusing on boundaries and privacy, ensuring young people understand that they have rights over their own bodies. This should also include understanding boundaries in friendships with peers and also in families and with others, in all contexts, including online. Pupils should know how to report concerns and seek advice when they suspect or know that something is wrong.

### **Health:**

- how to be healthy, both physically and mentally, including giving children the knowledge and capability to take care of themselves and receive support if problems arise;
- taught about the benefits and importance of daily exercise, good nutrition and sufficient sleep, and giving pupils the language and knowledge to understand the normal range of emotions that everyone experiences;
- the steps pupils can take to protect and support their own and others' health and wellbeing, including simple self-care techniques, personal hygiene, prevention of health and wellbeing problems and basic first aid;
- the positive two-way relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing, and the benefits to mental wellbeing of physical exercise and time spent outdoors;
- the benefits of hobbies, interests and participation in their own communities;
- about the benefits of rationing time spent online and the risks of excessive use of electronic devices. In later primary school, pupils should be taught why social media, computer games and online gaming have age restrictions and should be equipped to manage common difficulties encountered online;
- talk about isolation, loneliness, unhappiness, bullying and the negative impact of poor health and wellbeing.

### **Sex Education:**

- Know how and understand why close relationships are formed, especially during adolescence.
- Understand why friendship is important in the establishment of close relationships.
- Know about and understand the physical, mental and emotional changes that take place during puberty.
- Learn about sex.
- Understand why friendship is important in their establishment of close relationships.

- Know the features of a healthy relationship.
- Understand what an unhealthy relationship is and how to deal with relationship issues.
- Know about gender identifies and have an awareness of transgender issues.
- Understand the difference between transgender and cross-dresser.

## **Curriculum Implementation at St Mary's Academy Trust**

### **Curriculum Delivery:**

The PSHE curriculum is taught weekly in all year groups and these lessons are taught by class teachers. Our curriculum was planned after consultations with parents, staff and pupils. We took on board comments made by all and formed the curriculum based on these responses and based on the needs of our whole school community. Our curriculum has been planned to meet the needs of all individuals and to mirror the needs of our school community to allow a broad and balanced curriculum to be established. One that is flexible to address topics/issues that arise anytime during the year. Our curriculum has the overarching themes of Relationships Education, Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing Education and Living in the Wider World. Each term focuses on one of these key themes. For the teaching of Sex Education our school follows Dimensions curriculum. This includes well planned, sequenced lessons all resourced for staff to use and adapt if and when needed too.

PSHE curriculum content is also taught on many occasions through links with other subject areas (ICT/Computing, Science, Design Technology, Reading and Geography). The curriculum will be taught through a range of teaching methods, including class discussions, taught through story books, collective worships, whole school events and days and schools Christian Values. Our curriculum has been developed to allow progression year upon year. We will ensure the curriculum is broad and balanced by each child having a PSHE work book which will move with them each year to communicate prior learning to then be built upon. Our hope is that our curriculum will enable children to gain the fundamental principles of being happy, becoming successful and productive members of society both academic and personal, to be able take care of themselves, to have resilience and to ask for help when needed.

### **Meeting the Needs**

Our curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of all pupils including those with SEND by adapting resources and teaching strategies where necessary. Teachers will take into account targets set for those children on EHCP's or School Focused Plans and will use these to inform their teaching.

### **Managing Difficult Questions**

It is vital that we establish a safe, open and positive learning environment based on trusting relationships between all members of the class, adults and children alike, within our school. We create a safe and supportive learning environment by at the start of the year each class establishes 'ground rules' which are reinforced during every PSHE lesson. Pupils' will have opportunities to discuss and ask questions and these questions will be answered by members of staff in a supportive and informative manner. When questions arise which may be



unsuitable for a whole class setting, staff will assess if there is need for further discussion in a small group or on a one to one basis.

### **Roles and Responsibilities in School:**

The school will have leader of RSE

The curriculum will be taught by the class teacher in each year group weekly.

PSHE is monitored by the PSHE coordinator and senior leadership. These will monitor the delivery of the programme through observations, discussions with teaching staff, discussions with children and looking at children's PSHE books. Teachers in school will assess the children's work in PSHE through observing and listening to children during lessons especially through discussions, responding instantly. Teachers mark children's recorded work against the key learning objective for that lesson

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Governors and Trustees:**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to review this strategy every two years.

It is the responsibility of the Local Governing Body to hold the leadership team of the school accountable for ensuring that:

- all statutory content is delivered to pupils;
- the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned;
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of the Sex Education, if the school is delivering this; and,
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

### **Rights and Responsibilities of Parents and Carers**

We believe that successful teaching of Relationships and Health Education involves parents / carers and schools working together. We also believe that parents / carers can play an important role in the Relationships, Sex and Health Education of their children through further discussions at home, building on those that have taken place in school. The school's individual policy on Relationships, Sex and Health Education has been developed through consulting parents / carers. We work with parents / carers to ensure that they are aware of what we teach and when, including through publishing our curriculum by year group on the school's website. We will also share examples of some of the key resources we use with parents / carers to reassure them of the content and to enable them to continue the conversations started in class at home.

If parents / carers have any concerns or special circumstances the school should be aware of,

or would like any further information about the curriculum, they can contact the school directly to speak to the Headteacher.

At key stages 1 and 2, the national curriculum for science includes teaching about the main external parts of the body and changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age, including puberty. There continues to be no right of withdrawal from any part of the national curriculum. Parents / carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education. Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education.

Parents / carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of Relationships and Sex Education.

Although parents / carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of RSE, it is our aim to encourage parents to see the value of sex education and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice.

Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the headteacher to discuss their concerns. The headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum.

If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this.

We will automatically grant a parental request to withdraw their child from any sex education, other than as part of the statutory Science or Relationships and Health Education curriculum.

We will remind parents annually that the request to withdraw is still in place and invite them to confirm whether they still want it.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

### **Safeguarding Children:**

St. Mary's Academy Trust acknowledges that Relationships and Health Education is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the school and meeting our statutory obligations as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Relationships and Health Education helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and understand how to get help if they are experiencing, or have experienced, abuse. We recognise that when discussing these issues some pupils could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory

training around child protection and will follow the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

We also recognise that some children may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in Relationships and Health Education due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes to their personal life. For those children, additional support will be given to prevent them being affected by the scenarios or topics in planned lessons.

While St. Mary's Academy Trust wants to create a learning space that feels safe for children and young people to disclose, we also want to protect children's privacy. We do this by using a number of teaching techniques including the use of a working agreement, where rights respecting ground rules are created with pupils on what makes a safe and welcoming environment for all.

### **Sharing of information:**

This strategy will be available on both St. Mary's Academy Trust and each school's website. A paper copy will be provided on request.

The school curriculum by year group will be available on the school website. A paper copy will be provided upon request.

