

Relationships and Sex Education Policy – Marylebone Academy

Policy Name	Secondary PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education) Policy with Relationships and Sex Education Policy – Marylebone Academy
Author	Max Bettridge
Last reviewed	July 2026
Next review date	July 2029 (to be reviewed every three years)
Required to publish on school website	No
Statutory	Yes

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Policy Development and Aims

Development of the Policy

This policy has been developed in reflection of the statutory requirements set out in the Department for Education (DfE) Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Statutory Guidance 2025.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- set out the school's approach to Relationships and Sex Education in line with the DfE statutory guidance (2025);
- promote pupils' physical, mental and emotional wellbeing through an age-appropriate, evidence-informed RSE curriculum;
- ensure pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to build positive, safe and respectful relationships, including online;
- support safeguarding by teaching pupils to recognise risks, seek help and report concerns;
- ensure content is inclusive of all pupils and respectful of diversity while not presenting contested views as fact;
- promote transparency by explaining how parents can access curriculum materials, identifying which material constitutes sex education, and how withdrawal from sex education works;
- clarify how RSE is delivered, who is responsible and how teaching is monitored and reviewed.

Statutory Requirements

Marylebone Academy delivers Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance (updated July 2025, effective September 2026). RSE is a compulsory part of the curriculum, ensuring all pupils receive accurate, age-appropriate and inclusive teaching on relationships and sex. Provision addresses safeguarding priorities, including online risks, misogyny, violence against women and girls, harmful influences, and personal safety, while promoting mental health, resilience and respect for diversity. RSE is taught within a safe, supportive environment by trained staff, with clear communication to parents and carers, and is regularly reviewed.

Working with Parents

Marylebone Academy recognises the importance of parental involvement in their child's education; parents are a child's first and most enduring educators, providing the foundational learning, emotional support, and guidance that shape their development from birth.

It is vital that parents are confident in the content and messaging of the RSE their child receives.

Marylebone Academy will ensure that parents are consulted on RSE policy and have access to what their child will learn in RSE.

Overviews of content can be found on the RSHE [page of the school website](#), and the student-facing lesson content can be accessed on request by contacting Mr M Bettridge

(m.bettridge@maryleboneacademy.org.uk). Marylebone Academy will endeavour to respond to requests within **two working days** but if parents have immediate concerns, please contact either their child's Head of Year, or Mr Arthur (j.arthur@maryleboneacademy.org.uk).

Parental Right to Withdraw Children

Marylebone Academy acknowledges the right of parents to withdraw their child from some or all of the sex education provided (except from sex education taught under the science curriculum), but not from relationships education.

Parents wishing to discuss the withdrawal of their child from some or all of the sex education provided should contact Mr M Bettridge, outlining this request.

In considering such a request, Marylebone Academy will use the following process:

- The Principal will meet with the parent (and, if appropriate, the child) to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum and the content that will be covered.
- The Principal will discuss with the parent the benefits of the child receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child, including social or emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing from their peers what was covered (and having that content channelled through a child's voice rather than a teacher's).
- The Principal will outline provision that will be made during lessons where the child has been withdrawn from sex education, which will be appropriate and purposeful.
- Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. safeguarding concerns), Marylebone 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 school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

Definitions: Relationships Education

Relationships education is designed to help pupils build and maintain positive relationships while also recognising potential risks and harms. As part of this, teaching may cover issues such as preventing sexual abuse or avoiding the sharing of inappropriate material online, without the need to describe any sexual activity in detail.

In line with safeguarding best practice, pupils should also learn the correct names for different parts of the body and be able to use these terms confidently and accurately. These terms can be taught without any reference to, or details of, sexual activity.

Relationships education is compulsory, and parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships education or health education.

Relationships education includes teaching about:

- families, including diverse family structures
- friendships and respectful relationships
- safe, caring and healthy relationships
- harmful relationships, sexual harassment and sexual violence
- boundaries, consent and communication
- online behaviour, digital safety, harmful online attitudes and image-sharing
- recognising and reporting unsafe behaviours

Relationships education does not describe the detail of sexual activity.

Definitions: Sex Education

Sex education is teaching about:

- sexual activity and sexual decision-making
- contraception and safer sex
- sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- sexual health services
- intimate relationships and sexual consent in context

When sharing overviews of content in upcoming units, all content that is considered “sex education” and subject to the right to withdraw will be clearly indicated with a (W).

Curriculum Content and Organisation

The RSE curriculum is delivered through:

- timetabled lessons – KS3
- tutor time – KS4 and KS5
- assemblies
- expert-led workshops
- drop-down days/mornings
- cross-curricular links to Science, PE, Computing and Citizenship

Marylebone Academy uses RSE materials which are created by the central team of subject specialists at United Learning, and then adapted by our own teachers to meet the needs of our pupils.

The majority of RSE lessons at Marylebone Academy are delivered by our own teaching staff. The central curriculum is accompanied by guidance and support, and more bespoke training is delivered when lessons cover especially complex or sensitive materials. All teachers receive annual safeguarding training.

Marylebone Academy uses external providers to supplement the curriculum at various points throughout the year. When external providers are invited to work with students, parents will be informed about the provider and the nature of the session within the weekly parent newsletter.

Parents can request to see all student-facing lesson materials by contacting Mr M Bettridge (m.bettridge@maryleboneacademy.org.uk). Marylebone Academy will endeavour to respond to requests within *two working days* but if parents have immediate concerns, please contact either their child's Head of Year, or Mr Arthur (j.arthur@maryleboneacademy.org.uk).

The objectives that are covered in each key stage can be found in the following locations:

KS3: [United Learning Curriculum for PSHE and RSE](#)

KS4-5: [KS4-KS5 PSHCE Overview.docx](#)

Required objectives, as outlined in the 'United Learning Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy Guidance for Secondary Academies (Annex A):

By the end of Secondary School (Relationships):

Families	Curriculum content: 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	Curriculum content: 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	Curriculum content: 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	Curriculum content:

	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
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	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	Curriculum content: 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.

Teaching and Learning

RSE at Marylebone Academy is delivered in a way that:

- is appropriate to age and stage
- is scientifically factual, objective and legally accurate

- equips pupils with communication and decision-making skills
- encourages open discussion while setting safe boundaries
- promotes respect, inclusivity and safeguarding
- avoids teaching contested views as fact
- maintains balance and impartiality

Staff will:

- *use ground rules*
- *prepare pupils ahead of time where appropriate*
- *signpost pupils to support*
- *manage disclosures in line with safeguarding procedures*
- *balance the need for accuracy with sensitivity*

Responding to Questions

Pupils may ask questions that are outside of the scope of the lesson or what is appropriate for a member of staff to discuss with them. This may be due to the fact that the child in question has been withdrawn from the sex education element of the subject.

Nonetheless, children's curiosity makes it unlikely that an unsatisfied request for information will end there, and it is highly likely that they will seek alternative sources. These are likely to be less reliable and even unsafe.

If a pupil asks a question that a member of staff cannot answer, the following steps will be followed:

- The member of staff will discreetly and sensitively reassure the pupil that it is normal to be curious and explain to the pupil why they are unable to answer the question. They may ask the pupil whether this is something they would feel able to ask a parent about, or signpost to specialist services if appropriate.
- The member of staff will follow safeguarding policies and procedures as appropriate, but even if the question posed does not constitute a safeguarding concern, the RSHE lead and/or the SLT line manager for RSHE will be informed on the same day.
- Leaders will consider the likelihood of the pupil seeking answers to their question/s elsewhere and the possible implications of this. They may consider it appropriate to contact parents to discuss how to best support and guide the pupil.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

Pupils with SEND

All pupils, including those with SEND, have a full entitlement to RSE, and having an additional need is never a reason to restrict access to essential learning about relationships, safety, consent and wellbeing.

Research suggests that children and adults with SEND can be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Provision of high-quality, adapted RSE is a critical protective factor.

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's SEND Policy and Teaching and Learning Policy.

Teaching and Learning

- Teaching will be personalised through adapted resources, simplified but accurate language, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, visual supports, and highly structured routines for discussion and decision-making.

- Lessons will be paced carefully, use multi-sensory approaches and provide extra processing time.
- Staff will maintain high expectations of dignity, age-appropriate content and respect, ensuring materials reflect diverse families, relationships and identities, including those of young people with SEND.
- As appropriate, planning will be trauma-informed and sensitive to pupils who may have experienced adversity, with clear routes for help-seeking at appropriate points in units. These adaptations support access without lowering ambition or omitting statutory content.

Pupils' Religious and Faith Backgrounds

RSE will respect religious and cultural diversity, uphold pupils' rights to accurate information and safety, and comply with the Equality Act. Teaching will avoid discrimination and protect pupils' dignity.

Principles

- Assume diversity, not uniformity: different pupils of the same faith will interpret teachings differently.
- Meet statutory RSE outcomes while treating faith backgrounds fairly and avoiding discrimination.
- Prioritise pupils' wellbeing, dignity and safeguarding when adapting content.
- Engage fully with parents, pupils and, where appropriate, faith leaders and members of the community when consulting on the curriculum.