

Relationships & Sex Education Policy



Approved by: Governing board

Date: June 2025

Signed by: 

Position: Chair of Governing board

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Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed at bi-annually in line with DfE, HSCP, HCC and any other relevant guidance (change as appropriate).

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1. 'The Inclusion Way': A Shared Foundation

'The Inclusion Way' has been developed by Inclusion Education and is based on over ten years' experience. 'The Inclusion Way' captures our ethos to wellbeing and mental health, our pedagogical approach and all aspects that affect a learner's educational experience.

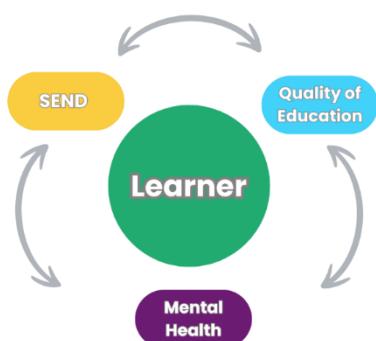
This introduction outlines how the 'Inclusion Way' is used and embedded as a shared vision and foundation across all our policies and practices at Inclusion School(s). This introduction defines who our learners are, why they are here, and how our inclusive pedagogical approach ensures our learners are supported, valued and empowered.

It is important to understand the journey our typical learner has been on before they arrive at an Inclusion School.

For example, our learners will:

- typically have a severe and chronic diagnosed mental health need. They are likely experiencing, or have experienced, self-harm, suicide ideation, depression, and high anxiety.
- have diagnosed and/or undiagnosed SEND needs related to speech, language and communication (SLCN), communication and interaction (C&I), or specific learning differences (SpLD).
- often experience significant gaps in education at primary and/or secondary level.
- have a history of non-attendance due to high anxiety and mental health needs and have been identified as emotionally based school avoiders (EBSA).
- are often working below age-related expectations in Maths, English, and Science due to disrupted education and unmet needs.
- may have experienced trauma, whether through Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) or bullying in previous educational settings.
- are young people exploring their identity and discovering who they are and who they want to be. While they may struggle with emotional regulation or academic attainment, they are not of primary-age cognitive ability, they are young adults and want to be treated as such.

At Inclusion Schools, we deliver education through a three-tiered curriculum model based on the triangulation between Mental Health, Quality of Education and SEND.



These three aspects are of equal importance and they all inform each other.

Only by working collaboratively are our learners able to make sustained and holistic progress.

'The Inclusion Way' is more than a framework: it is the heart of our schools' mission. By addressing mental health, SEND, and academic development as equally essential, we equip learners not only to succeed in education but to thrive in life. Our learners tell us this works. Their progress shows us it works.

2. Vision & Aims

At Inclusion Schools, we believe that meaningful, inclusive, and emotionally-informed Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is vital to empowering every young person to live a happy, healthy, and fulfilling life.

As mental health specialist schools, we recognise that many of our learners have faced significant personal challenges, including extended periods out of education due to chronic and severe mental health needs. Our RSE curriculum is carefully designed to meet them where they are by providing a safe, nurturing environment in which every learner feels a sense of belonging and can grow in confidence, self-awareness, and understanding of others.

Rooted in our core values – belonging, growth, acceptance, inclusion, community, respect, kindness, compassion, cooperation, and integrity – our RSE approach supports learners in developing the skills and understanding they need to build positive, respectful relationships. We promote acceptance of self and others, champion inclusion in all its forms, and nurture compassion as a foundation for human connection. Through open, age-appropriate dialogue, we encourage respect for difference, kindness in communication, and the integrity to make informed and ethical choices.

We know that healthy relationships and a secure sense of self are key protective factors for mental wellbeing. Therefore, RSE at Inclusion Schools is not a standalone subject, but a central part of our wider commitment to each learner's growth and readiness, emotional safety, and future independence. By prioritising cooperation and community, we equip our young people with the tools they need to navigate life with confidence, empathy, and a strong sense of identity.

In this way, our RSE policy reflects our belief that every learner deserves the knowledge, understanding, and support to build safe, respectful relationships and to step into adulthood prepared for both its challenges and its opportunities.

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

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare learners for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help learners develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach learners the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

3. Statutory requirements

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

In teaching RSE, we're 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](#).

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At Inclusion Schools, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

4. Policy development

Our policy has been developed in response to the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance. In creating this policy, the Headteacher has worked with our PSHE & Life Skills Learning Mentor, who has liaised with the PSHE Association and other relevant organisations.

To ensure full coverage of all the statutory RSE-related content, Inclusion Schools use an adapted version of the competency-based PSHE Association curriculum, within which the full suite of RSE statutory topics is contained. The curriculum is fully sequenced to allow learners to build on prior knowledge and to develop their awareness and understanding of the key issues over time.

This policy has been developed in consultation with parents/carers and key stakeholders and ratified by our Board of Governors.

5. Definitions

- RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of learners, 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. Delivery

At Inclusion Schools, our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum is carefully and compassionately delivered in ways that reflect the unique needs and lived experiences of our learners. As a mental health specialist setting, we recognise that many of our learners have faced significant adversity, including complex mental health challenges and trauma. For this

reason, our RSE teaching is underpinned by our core values of compassion, acceptance, kindness, and respect, and is always tailored to promote emotional safety, inclusion, and wellbeing.

RSE is primarily delivered through our dedicated World & You curriculum, which also includes learning around British Values, personal wellbeing, and social development. This subject is taught twice a week to all year groups, ensuring sufficient time and space to explore these important topics in a safe, supported, and reflective environment. We believe this approach is vital to fostering belonging, supporting growth, and helping our learners build a sense of self and identity rooted in community and cooperation.

While the RSE curriculum is planned across Key Stages to ensure developmentally appropriate progression, delivery is always flexible and responsive. Teachers adapt content and pace based on learners' readiness, engagement, and emotional wellbeing, ensuring that lessons are inclusive, respectful, and trauma informed. This approach reflects our value of integrity and ensures that every learner feels heard, seen, and supported.

RSE at Inclusion Schools covers a range of key areas to help learners understand and form healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds. These include:

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

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

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

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the schools, for sharing resources and materials with parents and carers, and for managing requests to withdraw learners from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE (see section 9).

7.3 PSHE & Life Skills Tutor

Inclusion Schools' PSHE & Life Skills Tutor is responsible for the planning and primary delivery of the schools' RSE curriculum, in conjunction with the Headteacher.

7.4 Other staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way, consistent with the schools' approach
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual learners
- Responding appropriately to learners whose parents/carers 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.

7.5 Learners

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

8. Parent and carer right to withdraw

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 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 put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the learner's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action.

Alternative learning will be given to learners who are withdrawn from sex education.

9. Training

All Inclusion Schools' staff are trained on the importance of delivering lessons appropriately, including RSE, as part of their induction.

There are also regular opportunities in the schools' professional development calendar to revisit this (e.g. CPD Hour, TeachMeet).

Inclusion Schools' PSHE & Life Skills Tutor also undertakes specialised training using partners, like the PSHE Association, to maintain ongoing professional development.

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

Appendix 1: Department for Education's expectations for the end of secondary school

TOPIC	LEARNERS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<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/carers 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

TOPIC	LEARNERS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<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 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

TOPIC	LEARNERS SHOULD KNOW
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)

Appendix 2: Curriculum Map

LONG TERM OVERVIEW – COMPETENCIES-BASED MODEL

	Autumn 1 Independence and aspirations	Autumn 2 Autonomy and advocacy	Spring 1 Choices and influences	Spring 2 Independence and aspirations	Summer 1 Autonomy and advocacy	Summer 2 Choices and influences
Year 7	Developing goal setting, organisation skills and self-awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal identity and values Learning skills and teamwork Respect in school 	Developing empathy, compassion and communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making and maintaining friendships Identifying and challenging bullying Communicating online 	Developing agency, strategies to manage influence and decision making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulating emotions Diet and exercise Hygiene and dental health Sleep 	Developing self-confidence and self-worth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puberty and managing change Body satisfaction and self-concept 	Developing assertive communication, risk management and support-seeking skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rights in the community Relationship boundaries Unwanted contact FGM and forced marriage 	Developing agency and decision making skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drugs, alcohol and tobacco Safety and first aid
Year 8	Developing risk management skills, analytical skills and strategies to identify bias: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing online presence Digital and media literacy 	Developing respect for beliefs, values and opinions and advocacy skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination Promoting diversity and equality 	Developing agency and strategies to manage influence and access support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drugs and alcohol Introduction to contraception Resisting peer influence Online choices and influences 	Developing goal setting, motivation and self-awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspirations for the future Career choices Identity and the world of work 	Developing communication and negotiation skills, clarifying values and strategies to manage influence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy relationships Boundaries and consent LGBT+ inclusivity 'Sexting' Managing conflict 	Developing agency and strategies to manage influence and access support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining positive mental health Importance of physical activity
Year 9	Developing goal-setting, analytical skills and decision making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources of careers advice Employability Learning strengths 	Developing self-confidence, risk management and strategies to manage influence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friendship challenges Gangs and violent crime Drugs and alcohol Assertive communication 	Developing empathy, compassion and strategies to access support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health (including self-harm and eating disorders) Change, loss and bereavement Healthy coping strategies 	Developing analytical skills and strategies to identify bias and manage influence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial decisions Saving and borrowing Gambling, financial choices and debt 	Developing assertive communication, clarifying values and strategies to manage influence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy/unhealthy relationships Consent Relationships and sex in the media 	Developing decision making, risk management and support-seeking skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) Contraception Cancer awareness First aid
Year 10	Developing self-awareness, goal-setting, adaptability and organisation skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing mental health and ill health stigma, safeguarding health including during periods of transition or change 	Developing empathy and compassion, strategies to manage influence and assertive communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship expectations Impact of pornography Identifying and responding to abuse and harassment 	Developing agency and decision making, strategies to manage influence and access support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid and life-saving Personal safety Online relationships 	Developing goal setting, leadership and presentation skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online presence and reputation Digital footprint 	Developing respect for diversity, risk management and support-seeking skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of committed relationships Forced marriage Diversity and discrimination Extremism 	Developing motivation, organisation, leadership and presentation skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection on work experience
Year 11	Developing resilience and risk management skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money management Fraud and cybercrime Preparing for adult life 	Developing communication and negotiation skills, risk management and support-seeking skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship values Maintaining sexual health Sexual health services Managing relationship challenges and endings 	Developing confidence, agency and support-seeking skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making safe and healthy lifestyle choices Health promotion and self-examination Blood, organ, stem cell donation 	Developing empathy and compassion, clarifying values and support-seeking skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families and parenting Fertility, adoption, abortion Pregnancy and miscarriage Managing grief and loss 	Developing confidence, self-worth, adaptability and decision making skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising and celebrating successes Transition and new opportunities Aligning actions with goals 	

Appendix 3: Parent/carer withdrawal form

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS/CARERS			
Name of child		Tutor name	
Name of parent/carer		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent/carer signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents/carers	