



Great Academy Ashton Relationships and Sex Education Policy

This policy covers our schools' approach to the teaching of relationships and sex education. It was created in consultation with parents, teachers and students in order to meet the needs of our school community and will be reviewed and updated as our context dictates.

Rationale and Ethos

At Great Academy Ashton, in order to metamorphosise the life chances of the pupils we serve, we need to ensure that we equip them with the skills, tools and knowledge needed to be successful in the wider world, and in particular in the relationships they form in this world.

We define 'relationships and sex education' as the vital information and tools our students need to help them to develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like, what makes a good friend and colleague in addition to what makes a successful marriage, civil partnership or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover body development, contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting the pressure to have sexual relationships as well as highlighting unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will allow our students to understand the effect that positive relationships have on their mental wellbeing and to understand what to do when things don't go to plan. Our policy is not about the promotion of sexual activity

We believe that good quality relationships and sex education is vital to the progress of our students. Research shows that students who have access to quality teaching in this area make better progress than those who don't because many of the barriers to their learning are removed and they are able to fully focus on their learning.

It is vital to this process that there is a partnership between home and school. Students need to be able to discuss what they have learnt and ask for support in their areas of need outside of the classroom as well as inside. For this reason, each year we offer parents the opportunity to meet with the Personal Values Lead and discuss their child's learning so that they are able to understand how best to support them. This is also a time for parents to voice any concerns and raise any issues related to the curriculum. We work with our staff, our parents and our students to ensure the curriculum closely matches their needs. Throughout the year we survey the voice of parents, staff and students to assess how well the curriculum is meeting the needs of the individual and this informs our practice moving forward.

In line with our values of 'respect' and 'together' and in accordance with the Equality act of 2010 the education received by students is inclusive and considers a range of factors such as cultural and religious background, gender, race, sexuality and disability. We ensure that people with all of the protected characteristics are represented in lessons and that lessons are adapted to meet the needs of the students in each class. We understand that students will be at different stages of development and thinking in terms of sexuality and we ensure that all lessons are an inclusive environment in which to ask questions and learn where to gain further support. Clear ground rules at the start of every lesson mean that whatever the background and perspective of the student, they are able to voice their opinions and concerns in a safe and secure environment.

The intended outcomes of our programme are that pupils will:

- Recognise the different stages of physical development for all genders – we do not separate boys and girls
- Know and understand the characteristics of safe and healthy relationships and where to turn if they have any concerns
- Understand the concept of consent and how to resist the pressures to engage in sexual activity before they are ready
- Understand a range of issues surrounding safe sexual conduct such as contraception, STI's and online safety
- Understand the importance of being ready for parenthood and the effect of parenting on the life of a child.
- Develop the skills of assertiveness, self-regulation, empathy and resilience to support them in forming healthy, happy, relationships
- Develop the attributes of tolerance, mutual respect, permission seeking, and consideration to ensure their behaviour leads to successful relationships.

Roles and Responsibilities

Relationships and sex education form a major part of our Personal Values Curriculum and is led by Mrs Lyndsey Leech- Head of Personal Values. In addition to in school line management, the faculty is held to account by our link governor.

The Curriculum is taught by a selected team of teachers from across the academy who regularly meet to consult on and improve the curriculum. For each unit taught they are offered bespoke training from the PSHE association and other local agencies such as Tameside Drugs and Alcohol service. The Quality assurance process within the faculty highlights the development needs of staff and gives them a forum to ask for training on topics they are teaching. Time is built into the school calendar for this training to take place.

The Curriculum is supplemented by form time materials and assemblies which are linked to the topics in lessons. Form tutors have access to training organised by the Personal Values Lead and this will be scheduled in response to quality assurance and by staff request. Assemblies include a good mix of internal and external speakers to give students a broad perspective on key issues. Form tutors are supported by the Personal Values Lead and members of the Senior Leadership Team during form time to ensure that materials are well delivered.

In addition to this there is a working party made up of a select number of staff from within the faculty who ensure that the curriculum is sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of SEND students. This group considers recent research as well as updates to student learning plans to ensure that all students are able to access the sensitive content in this area.

The Personal Values team are part of the GAET PSHE network, sharing good practice across the trust and they regularly meet to look at developments in the subject and how to implement these.

Legislation

We are required to teach relationships and sex education as part of the Department for Education Statutory guidance which was updated in 2021. Whilst parents do have a right to withdraw students from aspects of sex education which are not part of the science curriculum it is our hope that through

our inclusive and sensitive approach and through consultation with parents, no student at Great Academy Ashton will miss out on the opportunity to be equipped with the knowledge and skills laid out in Personal Values.

Documents that inform this policy include:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st Century (2014)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory guidance (2016)
- Children and Social work act (2017)
- Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education (Regulations 2021 DfE)

Curriculum Design

Our Personal Values programme is an integral part of all that we do at Great Academy Ashton and will cover physical and mental wellbeing, healthy relationships and life in the wider world, including careers.

To maximise the impact of the curriculum and ensure no learning time is lost we liaise with local primary schools to ensure continuity of learning and eliminate repetition. We also work on a cross curricular level with other faculties in the academy to ensure there is no duplication of learning but links are made between subjects. This is underpinned by our working party who are supported by local special schools in making adaptations to the curriculum. This Pre-work ensures that we fully utilise the learning time available to us in order to meet the needs of our students.

The RSE content in our curriculum is built up in an age appropriate manner which sees students introduced to topics in stages. Year 7 students begin with topics such as body development and build up to looking at healthy and unhealthy relationships and at the other end of the scale Years 10 and 11 look at sexual health choices and where to get support.

The programme of study is benchmarked against the statutory guidance from the DfE, ensuring that all of the statutory requirements are met and it follows the suggested format of the PSHE association to ensure good practice. In addition to this, as we hope to gain the SMSC Quality Mark for our provision, the criteria for this has been used in the design of our curriculum. We have also worked in consultation with other schools who are considered to be implementing good practice in PSHE to ensure our provision matches up.

As is appropriate for the context of our academy, the curriculum is fluid in nature and has to be reactive to the needs of our pupils as and when they arise. We use local data to inform our lessons and when this data highlights a need, the curriculum will reflect this.

In the Personal Values faculty we use a range of pedagogical tools to ensure that lessons are engaging and accessible to students. The include debate, role play, music, group work and videos. The resources have both been created by us and gathered from subject specialists to give our students the best possible experience in lessons.

Lessons are complimented by form time materials planned by the Personal Values Lead, which gives students the opportunity to dig deeper into issues they have studied that week. We also offer students a bespoke help guide which is on display in our help area and signposts students to internal and external sources of support for a range of issues from relationships to emotional wellbeing.

Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning through regular assessment. Each lesson begins with a baseline assessment in which students think about their current knowledge and ends with an estimate of how they have improved. At the end of every unit students complete an assessment lesson which allows them to showcase and celebrate their learning that half term.

We regularly report home to parents to ensure they know how their child is progressing with the intended knowledge and skills and to remind them of how they can support their child each half term. This further highlights to students the importance of learning in Personal Values.

An overview of the intended learning in each year group can be found on our school website. (Insert Link)

Monitoring and Reporting

Through rigorous line management the Personal Values Lead reflects on the quality of the curriculum and the pedagogy in the subject and is able to evidence changes made as a result. The link governor is invited in on a termly basis to see the improvements which have been made and their effects.

Teachers are supported to critically reflect on their teaching of RSE through meticulous quality assurance which includes lesson visits, student and staff voice, curriculum reviews and a CPD analysis. The findings of these reviews are used to adapt the content and delivery of the curriculum.

Students receive a report home on how they are developing the skills and attitudes in Personal Values. Information is given to parents on what the report means and how they can support to ensure it has maximum impact.

RSE Policy review date

This policy will be reviewed on 29th February 2024 by Mrs Lyndsey Leech – Head of Personal Values. This will ensure that changes in government guidance, developments in PSHE as a subject, changes in the local context and the national context are considered in order to equip students with the most up to date tools with which to approach life and relationships.