

Ascent Academies' Trust

Sex and Relationship Education Policy

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Responsible Officer	Trust Safeguarding, PDBWA Strategy and Project Lead

Index	Section
Introduction	1
Legal Obligations	5
What is Sex and Relationship Education?	5
Principles and Values	6
Aims and Objectives	8
Organisation and Content of Sex and Relationship Education	9
Inclusion	11
Confidentiality and Safeguarding	12
Monitoring and Evaluation of Sex and Relationship Education	13

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Ascent Academies' Trust demonstrates a fair and responsive approach to sex and relationships education. The Trust is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust policies and with individual academy procedures as appropriate.

- E-safety Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Policy (including child sexual exploitation)
- Equality policy
- PSHE policy
- Special Educational Needs policy
- SMSC policy
- Confidentiality Policy

This policy will be regularly reviewed and amendments can only be made following the approval of the Trust Board approval process for any changes to documents.

This policy should be read by all staff involved in promoting sex and relationship education included within the PHSE and Science curriculum.

This policy was developed in response to:

- Sex and Relationship Education Guidance DfES 2000
- Supplementary Guidance Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) for the 21st Century 2013
- Equalities Act 2010
- Not Yet Good enough: personal, social health and economic education in schools, (Ofsted 2013)
- Life Lessons: PSHE and SRE in schools: Fifth Report (house of Commons Education Committee 2015)

This document has been developed in consultation with:

- Parents/Carers
- Students
- Staff team including SLT
- Trustees

This process will involve informing Parents and carers that they have a legal right to view this policy and to have information about the Trust's SRE provision. The Trust will seek and take account of parent/carer views and endeavor to adopt a partnership approach with parents/carers. This will periodically include information/education workshops for parents/carers. The academies' approach to SRE will encourage dialogue between parents/carers and their children.

Parents right to withdraw from SRE lessons

Some parts of sex and relationship education are compulsory - these are part of the national curriculum for Science. Parents can withdraw their children from all other

parts of sex and relationship education if they want. (<https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/other-compulsory-subjects>).

Any parent wanting further information on the SRE curriculum and their right to withdraw their child from certain lessons, should contact the Head of Academy.

Some parents prefer to take the responsibility for aspects of this element of education. They have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the sex and relationship education except for those parts included in the statutory National Curriculum (i.e. in Science lessons). We would make alternative arrangements in such cases. Parents are encouraged to discuss their decisions with staff at the earliest opportunity. Parents are welcome to review any SRE resources the school uses.

Involvement of parents, pupils and staff

A draft of this policy was provided for all staff across the Academy and their input has been used to make appropriate amendments. Once adopted, this policy will be published on the Academy website and parents/carers, pupils and staff will be encouraged to provide feedback. Feedback on SRE policy and practice will be gathered informally during the variety of staff meetings, pupil meetings, discussions with parents and training opportunities provided.

2. Legal obligations

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places schools under a duty to promote the well-being of their pupils.
- The Education Act, 1996, as amended by the Learning and Skills Act 2000, requires head teachers and governing bodies to have regard to this guidance; to ensure that pupils learn of the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children, and that they are protected from unsuitable teaching and materials
- All secondary schools are required to provide SRE which includes (as a minimum) information about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Education Act 2002).
- Schools must teach the statutory requirements of SRE within the National Curriculum Science Order for all phases. This includes the biological aspects of naming body parts, puberty, reproduction and infection avoidance (see sections 2.3 and 3.6).
- All primary and secondary schools are required by section 404 of the Education Act 1996 to have an up-to-date policy for SRE. This includes special schools and pupil referral units / alternative provision. It is the responsibility of the school governors to ensure that the SRE policy is up-to-date and fit for purpose. Pupils and parents must be consulted in developing the SRE policy and the policy must be available for pupils and parents to see (see section 3.2).
- Section 405 of the Education Act 1996 provides the right of parental withdrawal from all or part of SRE provided at school except for those parts included in the National Curriculum (see sections 3.6 and 3.10).

3. What Is Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)?

SRE “is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching.” (DfE Guidance on Sex and Relationship Education, July 2000.)

The term Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is used in this policy deliberately and aims to highlight our deeply held notion that learning and provision must go beyond a simple presentation of biological information. We believe in the development of attitudes and values, positive self-esteem and the acquisition of implicit, necessary skills to enable young people to develop and manage positive relationships: sex is just one element of a positive relationship and not the focal point without which all else would falter.

4. Principles and Values

We believe it is important to teach SRE to enable children and young people to acquire accurate information, develop skills and positive values which will guide their decision making, judgements, relationships and behaviour throughout their life.

The Trust recognises that it has a sensitive role to play with regards to Relationships and Sex Education. Pupils with learning difficulties and special educational needs generally need more help in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up, they may need more help in learning what sorts of behaviours are and are not acceptable and they may need to be warned and prepared against unacceptable behaviour by adults. It is important that our pupils understand their right to say ‘No’ as they are vulnerable to abuse.

In addition, this Trust believes that SRE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all pupils
- Encourage every student to contribute to make our community and aims to support each individual as they grow and learn.
- Be set within this wider school context and supports family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. children living with step families, those living with same sex parents, children looked after, adopted children, extended family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of diversity.
- Encourage students and teachers to share and listen to each other’s views and the right to hold/ express views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual identity, without promotion of any particular family structure. The important values are love, respect and care for each other.
- Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- Recognise that parents/carers are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents, carers and students, consulting them about the content of programmes.

- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with other health and education professionals

Sex and Relationship Education in this academy has three main elements:

Key Stage 3, 4 & 5 provision

- learning to manage and managing emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- developing positive self-esteem and confidence;
- making informed choices with an absence of prejudice;
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- managing conflict;
- empower students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter)

Key Stage 1 & 2 provision

- learning to manage emotions within relationships confidently and sensitively off and online.
- developing positive self-esteem and confidence.
- developing and demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others.
- making informed choices with an absence of prejudice.
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- managing conflict.
- empower pupils with the skills to be able to recognise inappropriate/uncomfortable situations and/or behaviours with their peers and adults.

Attitudes and Values

Secondary and primary provision

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices;
- learning the value and valuing family life, stable and loving relationships, and marriage;
- learning about the nurture of children;
- learning the value of and demonstrating respect, love and care;
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour.

Knowledge and Understanding

Key Stage 3,4 & 5 provision

- learning and understanding physical, emotional and spiritual development at appropriate stages;
- understanding human sexuality, gender identity, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- learning about contraception, Sexually Transmitted Infections and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay;
- the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

Key Stage 1 & 2 provision

- learning and understanding about physical and emotional development at appropriate stages.
- learning about reproduction, human sexuality, gender identity, personal health, emotions and relationships.
- learning about where to go for help or advice in school and how to access a range of local and national support agencies

5. Aims and Objectives

Key Stage 3, 4 & 5 provision

The aim of SRE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our SRE programme aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and non-sexual relationships
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex including violence in teenage relationships
- understand the true meaning of consent
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology/language for sex and relationship issues
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; gender identity, challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity
- understand the reasons for having protected sex
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves in a variety of situations including from exploitation, abuse and violence and uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships active consent, sexting and e-safety.

Key Stage 1 & 2 provision

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within personal relationships
- avoid being pressured into uncomfortable or dangerous situations.
- communicate effectively by developing the appropriate language for sex and relationship issues

- have an understanding of consent
- develop awareness of their sexuality, gender identity, challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves in a variety of situations including from exploitation
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access advice and support if necessary.

6. Organisation and Content of Sex and Relationship Education

How Sex and Relationship Education is taught/implemented across the academy

- through the taught (modified) National Curriculum Science and PSHE Programmes of Study appropriate to the age and stage of development
- through discreet lessons or through personal care, social stories, sensory stories and social activities
- through pastoral support for students who experience difficulties
- through age and circumstance appropriate SRE
- through provision of appropriate information through adapted resources such as symbol supported or use of models/dolls
- with additional support from our multi-disciplinary team and other professionals

Our approach to SRE

SRE will be conducted within a clear morals and values framework based on the following principles:

- the value of stable and loving relationships
- respect, understanding and empathy towards others who may have different backgrounds cultures, sexuality, feelings and views
- the development of relationships, including sexual relationships, based on mutual consent, rather than coercion
- the right not to be abused by other people or be taken advantage of
- the right of people to follow their own sexuality, within legal parameters

We will aim

- to provide a secure, supportive, well organised and happy environment, where children and young people are able to flourish and develop emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually
- to work in close partnership with parents, carers and other professionals in order to promote each pupils well-being and to maximise their potential
- to provide access to help from trusted adults and helping services.

SRE involves consideration of a number of sensitive issues about which different people may hold strong and varying views. The academy's approach to SRE will be balanced and take account of, and be sensitive to, different viewpoints but will not be based on any single personal perspective.

An inclusive approach to SRE

'Mainstream schools and special schools have a duty to ensure that children with special educational needs and learning difficulties are properly included in sex and relationships education.

Sex and relationship education should help all pupils understand their physical and emotional development and enable them to make positive decisions in their lives'. DfEE SRE Guidance July 2000. Young people may have varying needs regarding SRE depending on their circumstances and background. Ascent Academies' Trust strongly believes that all students should have access to SRE that is relevant to their particular needs.

SRE curriculum

The Head of Academy is responsible for defining and producing a modified SRE curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils, in line with this policy. Our PHSE curriculum can be viewed on our website.

Links to other initiatives and subject areas

Promoting and delivering a successful SRE policy and programme of work is most effective when linked to other, relevant subject areas and national initiatives. These include:

- PSHE
- Science
- English Speaking and Listening
- Communication
- Be healthy (Every Child Matters - ECM)
 - Physically healthy
 - Mentally and emotionally healthy
 - Sexually healthy
 - Healthy lifestyles Choose not to take illegal drugs
 - Parents, carers and families promote healthy choices
- Healthy Schools

When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

Assessment is carried out, where appropriate, for example at the end of every module and involves teacher, student and peer assessment of knowledge and understanding, interpersonal skills, and attitudes.

7. Inclusion

Our approach to SRE will take account of:

The needs of boys as well as girls.

We will consider the particular needs of boys, as well as girls, and approaches that will actively engage them.

Ethnic and cultural diversity.

Different ethnic and cultural groups may have different attitudes to SRE. The school will consult students and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for, and understanding of, the views of different ethnic and cultural groups.

Varying home backgrounds.

We recognise that our students may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. They may not see positive relationships or may only have a single view of relationships

Gender, Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation.

Our approach to SRE will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. Our pastoral support will take account of the needs of gay, lesbian and bi-sexual students (LGBT). We shall also actively tackle homophobic bullying.

Special educational needs.

We shall take account of the fact that our students may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities that result in particular SRE needs.

The teaching programme for Sex and Relationship Education

We intend that all pupils, at a level which is appropriate for their age, physical development and cognitive ability, will experience a programme of sex and relationships education. For some pupils this might take the form of simple body awareness work.

Pupils who use alternative methods of communication

Some pupils have physical, visual or hearing impairments or are unable to use speech and may use signing, symbols and/or communication switches and aids. The staff will adapt their teaching of SRE to ensure that these pupils have equal access. (For example, Writing with Symbols computer programme includes 'private' body parts).

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not excluded from the programme. Using appropriate methods, they will experience most of the basic content; self-awareness, gender awareness, body recognition, privacy.

Contraceptive advice to older pupils

Pupils will be taught, in the context of sexual intimacy and safer sex, that intercourse should initially always involve using a condom. Questions about forms of contraception will be answered accurately and honestly within the student's ability to understand. If pupils need further personal advice about contraceptive use, counselling and support will be sought from appropriate agencies and personnel (Family Planning Association)

Adapting programmes and delivery for our learners

All young people are entitled to good quality SRE. There are some suggested additional reasons to consider for young people with Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND) which include:

- Understanding the barriers they may face around relationships and sex as they grow up (Physical, emotional, social etc).
- Having time, a space to explore issues specific to them such as prejudices around having children.
- Ensuring that they are clear on what is consensual and what is not and how to communicate this effectively.

- To understand public and private behaviours.
- To manage their own emotions and to recognise emotions in others.

9. Confidentiality and Safeguarding

It should be made clear to pupils that teachers and all adults in school cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality if they have any concerns about the safety and well-being of a child. This should be made clear when forming the class Ground Rules or Group Agreement. Any concerns regarding the safety and well-being of our students will be escalated to the safeguarding team.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation of Sex and Relationship Education

Monitoring of the delivery, content, teaching and assessment of SRE should be linked to the usual school monitoring procedures. This section should outline how monitoring takes place and the process by which the SRE curriculum is reviewed.

Example:

It is the responsibility of the PSHE Co-Coordinator to oversee SRE and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PSHE, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning in SRE will be monitored at least annually through each academy's monitoring and review programme. Information will be provided to the Standards committee where it will be monitored by Trustees.

From September 2015, Ofsted is required to evaluate and report personal development, behaviour, and welfare as well as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of students. This may include evaluating and commenting on the school's sex and relationship education policy, curriculum, staff development and quality of provision.

Pupil achievements in SRE will be monitored annually by the Head of Academy. Information will be provided to the Chief Executive and Trustees as part of the annual report in order that they can review Trust wide progress in SRE.

Feedback from the evaluation of the monitoring information will be provided in a timely manner in order that academy improvement plans can be adapted according to targets set.

Trustees will monitor and evaluate the impact of this policy in March 2019.