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Sex and Relationships Policy

November 2025

LINKS MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

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Sex and Relationships Policy November 2025

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Amendments

Periodically the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees will add to or revise the content within this policy. Any revision made are noted below.

Edition	Date	Revision made by	Content revised
1.0	01.01.20	Mr Fuller/Miss Stagg	New policy updated to MAT format.
2.0	01.09.21	Mr Fuller/Miss Stagg	No significant changes
3.0	13.03.23	Mr Fuller/Miss Stagg	No significant changes
4.0	20.11.24	Miss Stagg	Changes to Policy (highlighted)
			Terminology changed from students/pupils to children
5.0	17.11.25	Miss Stagg	Changes to Policy (highlighted) Pge 4 – reference to updated guidance published July 2025 Pge 5 – clarification around AI and influencers and inclusion of identifying and reporting signs of abuse; and understanding of personal safety.

Please note that for the purpose of this policy, the following terminology will apply:

Headteacher	Executive Head, Head of School, Headteacher
Trust	Links Multi Academy Trust
School	Links Academy St Albans, Links Academy Hatfield and Cedars
Parent	Parent means the person with parental responsibility and could be the carer.

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1. Aims

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

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare children for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help children develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach children the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Promote inclusivity by an awareness and acknowledgement of diversity
- Allow children to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and contextualise these within the digital age

2. Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy school, we must provide RSE to all children as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we are 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 and 80A of the Education Act 2002. This forms part of the Personal, Social, Health and Moral Education (PSHME) curriculum and is in line with the government recommendations in the Relationship and Sex Education Guidance (Sept 2020). This policy will be updated for September 2026 in response to the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance published in July 2025 which will become statutory in September 2026.

At Links Multi Academy Trust we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, children and parents. The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all children

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of children, and involves learning about healthy relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values to enable children to consider their own views, health and wellbeing and make informed choices. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity directly or indirectly.

5. Curriculum

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, children and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of children. If children ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

For more information about our curriculum, see our curriculum map in Appendix 1.

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and moral (PSHME) education curriculum which also addresses aspects of economic wellbeing. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects of health are included in the Sport and Cooking Skills curriculums.

Weekly assemblies and on occasion external facilitators with specialist knowledge in certain topics will support the delivery of RSE.

At Links Academy RSE focuses on giving young people at all stages of their education the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Identifying different types of families and diversity in a changing society
- Appreciating what a respectful relationship is, including friendships
- Developing communication skills, including how to develop and manage changing relationships and emotions
- Understanding of human sexuality and intimate relationships, including self-esteem, sexual health, pregnancy decision making and the need for consent
- Understanding the impact of online material and social media including pornography and the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and being aware of how to stay safe online with regards to AI, online influencers, misogyny, incel culture, consent, privacy, personal data and financial exploitation
- Recognising and assessing potential risks, to include grooming, radicalisation, domestic abuse and coercive behaviours, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage and being able to identify and report signs of abuse
- Exploring self-respect, empathy and equality for others, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)
- Knowledge of the law and how to stay safe and where to seek help and support when required
- Making informed decisions and consideration of different perspectives including faith
- Comprehending the importance of personal safety, including fire and travel safety, knife crime and conflict resolution

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The board of Trustees 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 school, and for managing requests to withdraw children from non-statutory components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 Staff

Staff where applicable are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual children, including special educational needs and disability (SEND) children
- Responding appropriately to children whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from sex education

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.

The PSHE Lead with responsibility for PSHE is accountable for:

- Compilation of whole school scheme of work
- Supervising provision of age-appropriate and inclusive RSE resources
- Support of tutors delivering RSE
- Monitoring of RSE delivery

7.4 Children

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

8. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-science components of sex education within RSE up to three terms before they turn 16 years old. 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 indicated during the admission meeting using the annual consent form found within the admission pack.

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

Alternative work will be given to children who are withdrawn from sex education.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for PSHE (Jon Buckland/ Sarah Stagg) through the delivery of a planned curriculum and termly learning walks. The content is evaluated by student council focus groups and teacher feedback. A question on the wellbeing survey refers to healthy relationships. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for PSHE

Appendix 1: Curriculum map

Relationships and sex education curriculum map

YEAR GROUP	TERM	TOPIC/THEME DETAILS	RESOURCES
KS3/ KS4	Autumn 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'All About Me' - Identity• Mental Health• First Aid• Racism• Sexism• Unconscious Bias• Homophobia	See PSHE SoL
KS3/ KS4	Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy Relationships• Consent• Contraception• STIs• Pregnancy Decision Making• Pornography	See PSHE SoL
KS3/ KS4	Spring 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Domestic Violence• CSE• CCE• Exploitation and Grooming• Online Safety	See PSHE SoL

YEAR GROUP	TERM	TOPIC/THEME DETAILS	RESOURCES
KS3/ KS4	Spring 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Values • The Justice System • Drugs and Alcohol • Gang Culture and Knife Crime Money and Finance • Saving and Budgeting 	See PSHE SoL
KS3/ KS4	Summer 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety • Speeding, dangerous driving and road casualties • Driving Theory Test and Hazard Perception practice • Climate Change 	See PSHE SoL
KS3/ KS4	Summer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting and Saving • The Job Market • CV writing • Interview Skills • Strengths and Transferable skills 	See PSHE SoL

Appendix 2: By the end of secondary school children should know

TOPIC	CHILDREN 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 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
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	CHILDREN 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)

TOPIC	CHILDREN SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship • 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 • The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women • That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others • That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available • The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage • That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help) • How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing • About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment • How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour • How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

Policy Review – Sex and Relationships

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Academy Academic Improvement Committee (AAIC) every year but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Academy Academic Improvement Committee and the Trustees in Mar 2026.

It is due for review in Mar 2027 up to 12 months from the above date.

Signature

Date

Mr Allen
Executive Headteacher

Signature

Date

Mrs Lynch
Chair of Trustees