George Eliot Academy
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Part of United Learning

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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Policy Development, Consultation and Aims

Development of the Policy

This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils, parents and staff. It reflects the statutory requirements set out in the Department for Education (DfE) Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Statutory Guidance 2025.

Consultation

George Eliot Academy consults with parents by:

- Feeding back decisions and next steps to all parents within two weeks of the consultation closing, including any changes made in response and how concerns were addressed.
- Offering follow-up clinics or one-to-one meetings for parents with specific concerns.
- By publishing our curriculum overview on the website so parents can see the content of study. The school will also send a letter outlining some of the key topics of study so that you can discuss with staff further.
- The school offers a number of parent support sessions, opportunities to come into school, and to link with the PSHE team on particular topics.

George Eliot Academy consults with pupils through:

- Pupil Leadership Group reviews
- Pupil voice questionnaires

George Eliot Academy consults with staff by:

- Setting a clear staff consultation window each term linked to curriculum review cycles and sharing lesson resources at least a half term in advance of delivery.
- Holding dedicated CPD and consultation sessions where teachers can review resources, signpost potential risks or barriers (including for SEND and faith sensitivities), and propose adaptations.
- Using a combination of structured questionnaires (to capture training needs/confidence) and small subject-team workshops for collaborative planning.
- Recording agreed changes, CPD actions and resource requests and sharing with SLT.

1. Aims

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at George Eliot Academy are 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.

2. Statutory Requirements

George Eliot 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.

3. Working with Parents

George Eliot 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. George Eliot 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 PSHE | Subjects | Curriculum | Learning | The George Eliot Academy, and the student-facing lesson content can be accessed on request by contacting Sophie.Smith@georgeeliotacademy.org.uk Head of PSHE. George Eliot Academy will endeavour to respond to requests within 72 hours but if parents have immediate concerns, please contact your child's Head of Year.

4. Parental Right to Withdraw Children

George Eliot 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 Sophie.Smith@georgeeliotacademy.org.uk Head of PSHE, outlining this request.

In considering such a request, George Eliot 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), George Eliot 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.

5. 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

6. 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).

7. Curriculum Content and Organisation

The RSE curriculum is delivered through:

- timetabled lessons
- tutor time
- assemblies
- expert-led workshops
- drop-down days
- cross-curricular links to Science, PE, Computing and Citizenship

George Eliot 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 George Eliot 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.

George Eliot Academy uses external providers to supplement the curriculum at various points throughout the year. The objectives that are covered each year are as follows:

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 7	7.01 Valuing Myself and Others	7.02 Responsibilities and Values	7.03 Amplifying Voices	7.04 Making Safe Choices	7.05 Growing and Thriving	7.06 Healthy Futures
Year 8	8.01 Building Perspectives	8.02 Everyday Safety	8.03 Changing Bodies	8.04 Water Safety	8.05 Responding to Risk	8.06 Intimate Relationships

Summary of DfE requirements for Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education, and Health Education

This is taken from the Statutory Guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education, available here.

Relationships and Sex Education – Secondary Schools

Secondary RSE should build on primary education by equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to form healthy, safe and nurturing relationships.

It should also prepare them to protect themselves and others, avoid sexually transmitted infections and prevent unplanned pregnancies.

The focus should be on respect for self and others, without encouraging or normalising early sexual activity. By promoting confidence and self-esteem, RSE helps pupils make informed decisions about whether and when to engage in safe, consensual and fulfilling sexual relationships, and to resist pressure.

Teaching should be interactive and participative, allowing pupils to develop skills and critically explore complex relationship scenarios. RSE should cover a wide range of topics, including different forms of abuse. Teachers must make it clear that abuse is never the victim's fault. These topics should be addressed sensitively and at appropriate ages. Schools play a vital role in supporting pupils who may be in unsafe or unhealthy relationships, including at home.

When covering sensitive issues, teachers can use strategies such as distancing techniques, setting class ground rules and using anonymous question boxes to manage discussions safely and respectfully.

Schools should continue to develop knowledge of topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

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 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.

Health Education: Health and Wellbeing – Secondary Schools

Secondary teaching should build on primary content by helping pupils understand their changing bodies and emotions, how to protect their health and wellbeing, and when to seek help for physical or mental health concerns.

Schools may choose to teach additional topics not listed in the curriculum, such as eating disorders and self-harm. These should be taught safely and sensitively, using qualified advice, reliable materials, and signposting to external support. Schools are encouraged to seek guidance or CPD from the NHS or local specialists. Teachers must be well-prepared to lead these discussions and respond appropriately to disclosures.

Suicide prevention should also be addressed carefully. Many relevant aspects are covered in the mental wellbeing curriculum, starting in primary, including recognising emotions, managing relationships, and knowing when to seek help. Teachers should discuss issues like isolation, loneliness, bullying and coping with life challenges, and ensure pupils know how to get help for themselves or others.

Before teaching suicide prevention directly, schools should consult mental health professionals and provide evidence-based training for staff. Teachers must use accurate, age-appropriate language and avoid discussing methods of self-harm or suicide, or using emotive media, to prevent exposing pupils to harmful content.

Schools should carefully consider when to introduce suicide prevention, based on pupils' age, maturity, experiences, parental views and teacher readiness. A similar approach should be taken with eating disorders, ensuring staff are trained and avoiding language that romanticises the issue or describes harmful behaviours.

If a teacher is concerned about a pupil in relation to eating disorders, self-harm or suicidal thoughts or actions, or if a pupil discloses such information, safeguarding procedures must be followed.

By the end of Secondary School (Health):

Mental wellbeing	**Curriculum content:** 1. How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary. 2. The benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness. 3. That happiness is linked to being connected to others. Pupils should be supported to understand what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel unhappy, while recognising that loneliness can be for most people an inevitable part of life at times and is not something of which to be ashamed. 4. That worrying and feeling down are normal, can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal. 5. Characteristics of common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression), including carefully-presented factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental health conditions. This should not be discussed in a way that encourages normal feelings to be labelled as mental health conditions. 6. How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall wellbeing. 7. Understanding how to overcome anxiety or other barriers to participating in fun, enjoyable or rewarding activities – that it's possible to overcome those barriers using coping strategies, and that finding the courage to participate in activities which initially feel challenging may decrease anxiety over time rather than increasing it. 8. That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others. 9. That the co-occurrence of alcohol/drug use and poor mental health is common and that the relationship is bi-directional: mental health problems can increase the risk of alcohol/drug use, and alcohol/drug use can trigger mental health problems or exacerbate existing ones. That stopping smoking can improve people's mental health and decrease anxiety.
Wellbeing online	**Curriculum content:** 1. About the benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing. 2. The similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image); how people may curate a specific image of their life online; the impact that an over-reliance on online relationships, including relationships formed through social media, can have. 3. How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours. 4. The risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt. 5. How advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online, understanding the prevalence

	of misinformation and disinformation online, including conspiracy theories. 6. The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online. 7. The serious risks of viewing online content that promotes self-harm, suicide or violence, including how to safely report this material and how to access support after viewing it.
Physical health and fitness	**Curriculum content:** 1. The characteristics of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill-health, including cardiovascular ill-health. 2. Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions. 3. That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress. 4. The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.
Healthy eating	**Curriculum content:** 1. How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease. 2. The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. 3. The impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain.
Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping	**Curriculum content:** 1. The facts about which drugs are illegal, the risks of taking illegal drugs, including the increased risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the potential health harms, including the link to poor mental health. 2. The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances. 3. The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption. What constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England. Understanding how to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol. 4. The physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency. 5. The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines. 6. The facts about the multiple serious harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so. 7. The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit.
Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system	**Curriculum content:** 1. Personal hygiene, germs and how they are spread, including bacteria and viruses, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics. 2. Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth, reducing consumption of sugar-containing food and drinks, and regular check-ups at the dentist. 3. How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals. 4. The importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening. 5. The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination, immunisation

	and antimicrobial resistance. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils. 6. The importance of sufficient good-quality sleep for good health, the importance of screen-free time before bed and removing phones from the bedroom, and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn. 7. The importance of healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy, including the importance of pre-conception health, including taking folic acid. The importance of pelvic floor health. Information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and how to access care and support. 8. How to navigate their local healthcare system: what a GP is; when to use A&E / minor injuries; accessing sexual health and family planning clinics; the role of local pharmacies; and how to seek help via local third sector partners which may have specialist services. 9. The concept of Gillick competence. That the legal age of medical consent is 16. That before this, a child's parents will have responsibility for consenting to medical treatment on their behalf unless they are Gillick competent to take this decision for themselves. Pupils should understand the circumstances in which someone over 16 may not be deemed to have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment.
Personal safety	**Curriculum content:** 1. How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around roads, railways – including level crossings - and water (including the water safety code), and in unfamiliar social or work settings (for example the first time a young person goes on holiday without their parents). 2. How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media. 3. How to develop key social and emotional skills that will increase pupils' safety from involvement in conflict and violence. These include skills to support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making, as well as skills to recognise and manage peer pressure. 4. Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about violence and/or knife crime. 5. The law as it relates to knives and violence. Content and examples should relate to the local context and avoid using fear as an educational tool. Children should be taught that carrying weapons is uncommon, and should not be scared into the perception that many young people are carrying knives (which can lead to the misconception that they need to carry a knife too). 6. The risks and signs that they may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help where there is a concern.
Basic first aid	**Curriculum content:** 1. Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments. 2. Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR 3. The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.
Developing bodies	**Curriculum content:** 1. The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health. 2. The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development.

	3. About menstrual and gynecological health, including: what is an average period; period problems such as premenstrual syndrome; heavy menstrual bleeding; endometriosis; and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). When to seek help from healthcare professionals. 4. The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.

8. Teaching and Learning

RSE at George Eliot 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

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

Teachers and leaders must balance pupils' rights to access all statutory content with sensitivity to religious and cultural diversity.

When planning lessons, George Eliot Academy will:

- **Offer neutral, balanced coverage:** RSE should be delivered in a balanced and neutral way. This is especially important where religious and cultural perspectives mean that pupils may have strong beliefs about some content. Teachers will present accurate faith viewpoints alongside secular and other perspectives, so pupils see a balanced picture.
- **Use inclusive imagery and language:** ensure visuals show religious and cultural diversity and avoid metaphors that may confuse pupils with mobility needs or ASD.
- **Manage discussions carefully:** deliver content in an objective way and use ground rules and clear boundaries to manage pupil discussion.
- **Map objectives to need**: teachers start from the required learning outcomes and identify where faith perspectives are most likely to be relevant (e.g. family, marriage, contraception, gender).

- **Build in alternatives:** consider additional consultation with parents and pupils to ensure sensitive delivery where appropriate.
- **Consider faith perspectives:** build in opportunities to reflect on RSE objectives through the lens of faith teachings when appropriate and helpful.
- **Employ distancing techniques:** use stories, role-play, third-person scenarios or case studies to explore sensitive issues safely.

12. Complaints

Any complaints about the Relationships and Sex Education programme should be made in accordance with the school's usual complaints procedure

13. Approval and Review

This policy is approved by the governing body.
It is reviewed **annually**, or sooner if national guidance changes or it is otherwise appropriate to make amendments.
The RSHE Lead is responsible for coordinating the review process.
The policyholder is always a member of the Senior Leadership team.