

# Oasis Academy Connaught

## Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy

### September 2023

#### Introduction and Aims

#### Oasis Ethos

Our ethos is rooted in what we believe and who we are.

- We have a passion to include everyone
- We have a desire to treat everyone equally, respecting differences
- We have a commitment to healthy and open relationships
- We have a deep sense of hope that things can change and be transformed
- We persevere and keep going for the long haul

Our **Education Charter** sets out our commitment to work in partnership with our communities to transform lives and create a culture of excellence for all. To help achieve this, we make great learning the cornerstone of everything that we do.

Oasis Community Learning (OCL) is committed to helping young people develop loving and respectful relationships and a responsible attitude to intimacy and sex. The Oasis Ethos is at the heart of all teaching on relationships and sexual health, including the commitment to promoting healthy and positive relationships, treating everyone equally and respecting differences. OCL recognises the breadth of human diversity and is committed to providing sex and relationship education which values this diversity. OCL also recognises that it has an obligation to take positive action to build a culture where any occurrences of sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes are identified and tackled rather than being tolerated. All adults have an important role to play in modelling positive behaviours.

The aims of this policy are:

- to clarify the statutory requirements of relationship education, sex and relationship and health education to all teachers, parents, carers and students;
- to ensure the curriculum is taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of students and parents
- provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place

- ensure that students have accurate, objective and appropriate information
- create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- to develop an understanding, for all students, of healthy relationships, acceptable behaviour and the right of everyone to equal treatment
- to foster student wellbeing and develop resilience and character, kindness, integrity, generosity, and honesty
- help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society

This policy statement is designed to be complementary to, and supportive of, the role of parents/carers in educating their children about sex, relationships and health. It recognises that the prime responsibility for bringing up children rests with parents and carers.

### Academy Aims

At Oasis Academy Connaught, our ultimate aim is to break the cycle of poverty by means of education and opportunity. Through ensuring our learners are knowledgeable, considerate, respectful and aware of the benefits and advantages of positive, healthy relationships in all their forms, we can support children in making informed decision about their own lives and relationships, thus helping them in aspire towards more positive outcomes in life. It should also help them to recognise and deal with negative or harmful relationships should they encounter them.

Furthermore, we are proud to play an integral role, both in our local community in Knowle West, and in our wider community of the city of Bristol. Knowle West and Bristol are both highly diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and social demographic. As a result, we are justifiably proud of our work on equality and diversity.

We are a **Bristol Ideal school** – we hold a zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse in all its forms.

We are a **Stonewall Champion school** – we are proud to educate pupils about different types of families and issues involving LGBTQ+ rights.

We are a **School of Sanctuary** – everyone, regardless of their backgrounds, history or nationality are welcome here.

Therefore, Oasis Academy Connaught takes its role as relationship educators very seriously, and is proud to promote its work in this area.

### Statutory requirements

As part of a multi-academy trust we must provide relationships education to all students 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](#).

Academies must follow the guidance outlined in the document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

The [Equality Act 2010](#) details some key equality provisions for the delivery of education and a duty for public bodies, such as OCL, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relationships between different groups (Public sector Equality Duty). There are three key elements:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation) and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Academies must also be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398815/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

### Definitions of terminology

Term	Definition	Statutory in Primary Schools	Parents entitled to withdraw?
Relationships education	Should form part of a planned and integrated PSHE curriculum from an early age. Teaching should provide the “fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships...”*	Yes	No
Sex education (curriculum)	Elements of learning about reproduction and other living things; usually part of the Upper Key Stage 2 Science Curriculum	Yes	No
Sex education (nominal)	Elements of learning about human reproduction and human body parts that go beyond the requirements of the Key Stage 2 science curriculum.	No – the National Guidance states that it is for schools to decide on this in terms of appropriateness, and it should be done within consultation with parents and the school community	Yes

Health education	Teaching pupils about personal boundaries, how to keep themselves safe including online, and what to do if they feel unsafe in any way.	Yes	No
------------------	---	-----	----

\*Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, DfE, 2019

### Policy development

A Trust wide policy has been developed with the support of colleagues in primary, secondary and all-through academies as well as those national leaders responsible for governance, delegated from the Trust Board. This document gives clear guidance to each academy.

### Delivery of SRE

At OAC, SRE is delivered in class by class teachers. Primarily, SRE will be delivered in one of two ways:

- Through the Science curriculum, as part of planned curriculum delivery on Human anatomy and reproduction;
- Through our Jigsaw / PSHE curriculum alongside work on relationships, self-esteem and mutual respect.

As principal practitioners, teachers may choose a range of teaching and learning styles, including exposition, discussion, video or any other technique teachers deem most appropriate to embed learning. (This is not an exhaustive list, and will differ depending on the Learning Objective and the age of the students.)

Any video / film / internet based will have been vetted prior to the lesson by the staff member, and should always be available in some format for parents to view if required.

Staff may also choose to utilize other times / methods to deliver key issues, such as LGBT+ month.

### Religion and belief

As previously mentioned, we are proud to service an ethnically and socially diverse community within the metropolitan city of Bristol. As a result, and in our position as a School of Sanctuary, we pride ourselves in being deeply knowledgeable about the different faiths and beliefs within our school.

Teachers should pay careful consideration to the nature of the subject matter they plan to deliver AND the thoughts and beliefs of members of the community when planning aspects of RSE. For example, we know from experience that some of our colleagues in other Oasis academies have faced opposition from members of the Islamic community when discussing LGBTQ+ issues. Advanced communication or discussion with members of faith communities prior to these lessons may be beneficial for all concerned.

*However, staff at all levels need to be mindful that there are some aspects of RSE which are statutory by law, and that parents and carers, whilst feeling awkward about these, are not in*

*a position to withdraw their children from learning. (Please see Definitions of Terminology – above.)*

## **Students with SEND**

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all students. This is particularly important when planning teaching for students with special educational needs and disabilities who represent a significant number of pupils in our academy.

High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility. Adults should be aware that some students are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education and RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some students; for example those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors should be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects.

For some SEND students in mainstream schools there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of students at different developmental stages. As with all teaching for these subjects, academies should ensure that their teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.

## **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)**

We are proud to be a Stonewall Champion School, promoting and celebrating LGBT+ issues in our local community and beyond. In teaching Relationships Education and RSE, we shall ensure that the needs of all students are appropriately met, and that all students understand the importance of equality and respect.

- Schools should ensure that all of their teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content.
- Teaching students about LGBT should be fully integrated programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson
- We will do this through a range of devices and techniques: implicit planning with the PSHE / relationships curriculum; participation in national events such as LGBT+ History month; assemblies and whole school events.

## **Resources**

- Schools should assess each resource that they propose to use to ensure that it is appropriate for the age and maturity of students, and sensitive to their needs
- Schools should also ensure that, when they consult with parents, they provide examples of the resources that they plan to use as this can be reassuring for parents and enables them to continue the conversations started in class at home.
- A list of resources, recommend by colleagues, can be found in Appendix A.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Principal

The Principal, in partnership with the Regional Director (RD), will ensure:

- the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned;
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all students with SEND;
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn where appropriate / statutory;
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

### Staff at all levels

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Model the correct use of vocabulary and wording, including anatomical parts, and politely discourage the use of slang or colloquialism in order to ensure clarity and transparency;
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the (non-science) components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Principal. As a supportive academy, there is no reason why colleagues cannot work collaboratively, or work in other year groups in order to provide the best provision for learners.

It may also be the case that trained and appropriately vetted visitors may have a valid contribution to make, e.g. school nurses.

### Students

Students are expected to engage fully in SRE and, when discussing issues related to SRE, treat others with respect and sensitivity. Staff at all levels will always encourage and expect students to use the correct vocabulary during any discussions.

## The role of parents and their right to withdraw

### Parents and Carers

- The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.
- All schools should work closely with parents when planning and delivering these subjects. Schools should ensure that parents know what will be taught and when, and clearly communicate the fact that parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.
- Parents should be given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education and RSE. Good communication and opportunities for parents to understand and ask questions about the school's approach help increase confidence in the curriculum.

## **Withdrawal**

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the non-science curriculum sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

- OCL expects the Principal (or Deputy) to discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Also to explain the detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child
- Academies will document this process to ensure a record is kept (see Appendix B)
- Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the academy should 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 academy should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms
- This process is the same for students with SEND. However there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision
- Principals will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered in primary schools, other than as part of the science curriculum
- If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the academy's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal
- There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education

## **Safeguarding**

At the heart of these subjects there is a focus on keeping children safe, and schools can play an important role in preventative education. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) sets out that all schools and colleges should ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

Good practice allows children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children should be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This should include processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.

Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

If teachers have concerns about a specific pupil they must follow academy safeguarding procedures.

### **Training**

Staff will require training to ensure that they feel confident to deliver the RSE and Health curriculum. Some Local Authorities are able to provide training but also organisations such as Stonewall can also be utilised to train staff accordingly.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

The delivery of SRE is monitored by the Principal and senior colleagues. Monitoring could include planning scrutinies, conversations with teachers and students as well as learning walks.

This policy will be reviewed by the National Education Team regularly. At every review, the policy will be approved by the CEO.