

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

Primary position responsible for updates to this policy: Head of College

Last review date: June 2026

Next review date: June 2027

Relevant ISI coding (if applicable)

Circulation: This policy has been adopted by the governors and is available to parents on request. It is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and applies wherever they are working with children.

‘Parents’ refers to parents, guardians and carers.

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1. Introduction

Abbey College Manchester values and respects the variety of nationalities, backgrounds and cultural traditions among its students and staff.

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of 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.

This policy follows the guidance outlined in the following documents:

- DfE Relationships, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance 2019
- The Equality Act 2010

2. Aims

To give students opportunities to learn about three key areas:

1. Attitudes and values

- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral considerations.
- Learning the value of family life and stable loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Exploring, considering and exploring moral dilemmas and developing critical thinking as part of decision making.

2. Personal and social skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- Developing self-respect and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and an absence of prejudice.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Managing conflict and learning how to recognise exploitation and abuse and developing strategies to deal with these issues.

3. Knowledge and understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.
- Understanding their own mental health wellbeing and the range of advice and support available.

- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health emotions and relationships.
- Learning about contraception 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 and sexually transmitted infections.
- Understanding the implications of on-line relationships and knowing how to manage them safely.

3. Delivery

Sex and Relationship Education (RSE) is carefully planned and delivered through:

- Timetabled, tutor-led personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) tutor times.
- Assemblies with a variety of speakers.
- Specified science lessons.
- PSHE Association and other approved resources are used to deliver content.

Assemblies and PSHE tutor sessions are a time when groups within the College meet together to learn about and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. Assemblies and PSHE take place for one session each week.

Visitors are welcomed to speak on specialist subjects from time to time (for example the Police Community Liaison Officer speaking about personal safety, a veteran on Remembrance Day and a specialist informing students about consent and Sexual Health) and will be given guidance by the SLT/Heads of Year regarding planning for these events.

Students arrive in years 10, 11, 12 and 13 and some are Compulsory School Age (CSA). The age range is 14 to 23 years and RSE provision is both age and course appropriate.

CSA, GCSE and Pre-Sessional students explore a range of topics including:

- Peer pressure.
- Puberty.
- Body image.
- Personal hygiene.
- How to have healthy friendships and relationships.
- Rights and responsibilities in relationships.
- Marriage
- How having a baby changes a relationship.
- The reality of young parenting.
- Consent and sex in the UK.
- Negotiating with adults.

- Effects of changes caused by divorce, separation, bereavement and new
- Family members.
- Mental health and well being

All students learn explore a range of topics including:

- The consequences of high risk behaviour in relation to sexual activity.
- Underage sex, the law and emotional and physical impact.
- Different cultural norms regarding sex and relationships.
- The impact of drug use on relationships.
- The dangers of date rape drugs.
- The impact of drug use on health.
- The dangers of drug use including legal highs, cigarettes and alcohol.
- STIs.
- HIV / AIDS – the global dimension.
- Contraception – making the right choices.
- Exploitation in relationships.
- Domestic violence.

4. National Curriculum Science

At secondary school age, the National Curriculum in Science requires that the following elements of RSE should be taught:

KEY STAGE 4

- The way in which hormonal control occurs, including the effects of sex hormones.
- Some medical uses of hormones, including the control and promotion of fertility.
- The defence mechanisms of the body.
- How sex is determined in humans.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The Assistant Principal DSL and SENCo/PSHEE lead research and plan the schedule and content of Assemblies and PSHEE/RSE, using external specialist support as necessary.

Teachers are given training on how to deliver the content and how to respond to difficult questions.

If a question asked is too personal or explicit, the teacher should, in consultation with the Head of Year/Assistant Principal as appropriate, refer the pupil to an appropriate agency, such as a GP.

All staff must follow the Safeguarding Policy when a disclosure is made.

SLT to send an email to parents of those students who are Compulsory School Age to explain how RSE is delivered and inform them of the content of this.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from some, or all, RSE lessons, but not statutory science lessons.

6. Procedures

The following are recommended guidelines for specific sex and relationship incidents. Each incident is unique and therefore the guidelines should be used as a reference rather than a set of rules.

Staff, students, carers, hosts, parents and anyone associated with the school community can contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with concerns regarding anyone in the community regarding sex and relationships. Staff should be alert to changes in a student's behaviour or any signs that a student may be at risk. This includes concerns on school trips, in the holidays and concerns relating to pre-admission to the school.

Staff have a duty of care to report any welfare concerns to the DSL immediately and provide a full and detailed report of the concern. This includes any disclosures from any member of the school community to staff, and disclosures must be shared immediately.

From time to time questions may be raised by students which staff may have difficulty in addressing, due to its nature and content. The staff member in question is not required to answer such questions immediately. In such cases they are advised to defer a reply and consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead before taking further action. Teachers and tutors are urged to use their skill, good sense and discretion in such situations. The recommended ground rules involve the students being able to ask anything they wish as long as they respect the right of both staff and other students not to answer questions if they do not wish to.

7. Monitoring and review

A central plan and record of the themes and content of assemblies and PSHE time is kept.

Staff must make sure that no student is pressured to join a group, club or society.

The College aims to take a common sense approach to securing balance and ensure issues are discussed in a fair and dispassionate way and that alternative viewpoints are considered.

The content is reviewed and amended annually in light of Government guidance, student/staff feedback and parental comments.

8. Related Policies and Guidance

- PSHEE Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Antibullying Policy
- Drugs Policy
- DfE Relationships, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Eductaion guidance 2019
- The Equality Act 2010