



READING BLUE COAT

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

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I. Aims

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Reading Blue Coat School are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for and guide them through puberty, giving them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Promote positive physical and mental health with respect of sex and relationships
- Provide high quality learning experiences that are engaging, and enhance student knowledge and understanding

These aims link to the RBC School values of – **aspiration, compassion, courage, integrity and service**. These core values create a common approach or outlook for discussing the topics covered in RSE.

2. Statutory requirements

As an independent secondary school we must provide RSE to all students as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we are required to have regard to the [RSE statutory guidance](#) issued by the Secretary of State as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

At Reading Blue Coat School we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy was first developed in 2020, in consultation with staff, students, and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – the Head of PSHE (replaced by the Director of Wellbeing & Futures in 2024) and Deputy Head (Pastoral) brought together all relevant information including national and local guidance.
2. Staff consultation – RBC staff were given the opportunity to look at the draft policy and make recommendations.
3. Parent consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to make any comments about the policy.
4. Student consultation – the Head of PSHE met with groups of students to gain their feedback and priorities for the teaching of RSE and RBC.
5. Ratification and publication – once amendments were made, the policy was ratified by the Governing Body and published online.

The policy has subsequently been subject to annual review by the Safeguarding Committee and Full Governing Board. The process for annual review and amendment is as follows:

1. The Director of Wellbeing & Futures gathers feedback from students and teaching staff throughout the academic year, to better understand the impact of current teaching and the levels of knowledge and understanding among students. Feedback is gathered through a mix of verbal feedback and surveys.
2. The Director of Wellbeing & Futures runs an annual survey of parents, to gather their views on RSE and the teaching at Reading Blue Coat.
3. The Director of Wellbeing & Futures meets with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) to consider any changes required by external updates (e.g., to statutory guidance) and to consider the views of the stakeholders mentioned above. Policy updates will be planned together.
4. The Director of Wellbeing & Futures will update the curriculum map as needed, included as an appendix to this policy.
5. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Director of Wellbeing & Futures will agree any updates required for the policy and issue a draft of the revised policy to the Safeguarding Committee of Governors.
6. The Safeguarding Committee will pass on any feedback to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Director of Wellbeing & Futures. Any further amendments will be made as per what is agreed with Governors.
7. The revised policy will be presented for ratification to Full Governing Board.

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

The Reading Blue Coat curriculum is set out as per Appendix I but is a flexible curriculum that is intended to adapt to circumstances and topical issues, both within the School and in wider society.

NB – in the academic year 2024-2025 the RSE curriculum is subject to review. The curriculum published here is the curriculum as it stands in June 2025. Following further review and updates, this policy may be re-published with a revised curriculum in the academic year 2025-2026.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with stakeholders, in accordance with the policy development process outlined above. This process takes into account the age, needs and feelings of students. If students 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.

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught in Wellbeing lessons (i.e., personal, social, health and economic education). Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE) lessons.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents / carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Board

The Governing Board approved the RSE policy in the first instance. It then ratifies further policy updates, following review by the Safeguarding Committee.

7.2 The Deputy Head (Pastoral)

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) is the SLT member responsible for RSE across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 The Director of Wellbeing & Futures

The Director of Wellbeing & Futures is responsible for designing and implementing the curriculum for RSE, and managing the staff who deliver it. They will work closely with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) to ensure that this policy is kept up to date.

7.4 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- 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 components of RSE, seeking guidance from the Deputy Head (Pastoral)
- Communicating effectively with the Director of Wellbeing & Futures, to ensure that they have a good overview of the teaching of RSE at Reading Blue Coat School

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 Deputy Head (Pastoral) or Director of Wellbeing & Futures.

7.5 Students

Students 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 components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. 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 put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the Deputy Head (Pastoral)

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

The School cannot manage informal, last-minute, and ad hoc requests; where parents do not follow the withdrawal procedure, their requests may not be granted.

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

9. Training

Staff who participate in the teaching of RSE receive training (usually, delivered by the Director of Wellbeing and Futures) as part of our continuing professional development calendar.

The Headmaster, Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Director of Wellbeing and Futures may invite visitors from outside the school, such as health care or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Director of Wellbeing and Futures through planning scrutiny, surveys and learning walks. Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. Feedback from parents will be sought as part of the review process and the evidence of this feedback will be kept by the Director of Wellbeing & Futures. This policy will be reviewed by the Director of Wellbeing & Futures in consultation with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) as per the process set out in Section 3 above.

Author(s):	Dr Emma Ramsey (Director of Wellbeing & Futures) and Dr Guy Williams (Deputy Head [Pastoral])
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Next Review Date:	June 2026
Agreed by:	 Clare Freeman (Safeguarding Governor) <i>on behalf of the Full Governing Board</i>
Date of Agreement:	September 2025

Appendix I: Curriculum Map

Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum Map

YEAR GROUP	TERM	TOPIC / THEME DETAILS
Year 7	Summer Term 2	Friendships, Respect and Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent and Boundaries • Respect and Relationships • What Makes a Good Friend? • Friendship and Managing Them • Being Positive and Self Esteem • Pressure and Influence • What does it mean to be a Man?
Year 8	Spring Term 2	Identity, Relationships and Sex Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Relationship and Sex Education • Healthy Relationships • Dealing with Conflict • Sexual Orientation • Gender Identity • Introduction to Contraception • What is Love? • Periods and Menstrual Cycles
Year 9	Autumn Term 2	Sex, The Law and Consent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Consent and the Law • FGM and The Law • Delaying Sexual Activity • Why have Sex? • Relationships and Partners • Pleasure and Masturbation • What are Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI's)
	Summer Term 1	Contraception and STI's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STI Lesson • Contraception Available • The Condom Lesson • Exploring the Realities of Contraception • Sexual Harassment and Stalking • HIV and AIDS • AIDS – Prejudice and Discrimination

YEAR GROUP	TERM	TOPIC / THEME DETAILS
Year 10	Spring Term 1	<p>Exploring Relationships and Sex Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigning against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) • Sexting, Nudes and Dick Picks • Porn Life v's Real Life • Porn materials and attitudes • Domestic abuse and violence • Sexual violence (Assault and Rape) • Sexualisation of the Media
Year 11	Autumn Term 2	<p>Sexual Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer on Peer Bullying • Fertility and what impacts it • Alcohol and bad choices • Importance of Sexual Health • Revisiting Contraception • Revisiting STI's • Respect and Relationships

Appendix 2: By the End of Secondary School Students Should Know :

TOPIC	STUDENTS 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 its 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	STUDENTS 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	STUDENTS 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

Appendix 3: Parent Form: Withdrawal from Sex Education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of Child		Class	
Name of Parent		Date	
Reason for Withdrawing from Sex Education within Relationships and Sex Education			
Any Other Information You Would Like the School to Consider			
Parent Signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed Actions from Discussion with Parents	
Deputy Head (Pastoral) Signature	