

## **Relationships education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Interim policy for 2025**

At Link Academy Trust, our vision is clear:

**Flourishing schools for all at the heart of our communities.**

Inspired by, ***“Life in all its fullness” (John 10:10)***, we strive to create environments where every individual can thrive.

Our mission is underpinned by three core values that guide everything we do:

- **Belonging** – Every interaction matters; we nurture relationships and ensure everyone feels valued and included.
- **Curiosity** – We embrace ambition, creativity, and innovation to inspire lifelong learning.
- **Collaboration** – We foster an open culture of accountability and shared success, working together for the benefit of all.

These principles shape our approach to equality and diversity, ensuring that every policy, decision, and action reflects our commitment to inclusion and excellence.

# **Relationships education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Interim policy for 2025**

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Department of Education (DfE). All Members of the Board of Trustees are Directors of the company as well as Trustees of the exempt charity; the term 'Trustee' used in this Policy also means Director. This Policy applies to all academies within the Link Academy Trust (the Trust).

## **Statutory Requirements**

Relationships and Health Education are compulsory in all primary schools in England (from September 2020, document reviewed and updated July 2025 with changes to be in place by Sept 2026.), The DfE Guidance 2019 recommends that all primary schools 'have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. However, 'Sex Education is not compulsory in primary schools, but we recommend primary schools teach sex education in Year 5 and 6'.

## **Objectives for this Policy**

RSHE must be taught as part of our curriculum, beyond the statutory elements contained in the science curriculum. We consider RSHE education to be a fundamental part of our pupils' personal, social and health education, and wish our pupils to be able to make responsible and well-informed age-appropriate decisions, based on respect for themselves and for others. We will follow legislated guidance on parents' right to withdraw their children from all or part of the RSE programme. Parents will be consulted on this policy in line with annual review.

The Local Advisory Committee and Academy Head will monitor effective implementation of this Policy and share unsolicited feedback from parents and pupils with Trustees, through:

- Responses to occasional surveys of parent and pupil opinions.
- Monitoring numbers of pupils who are withdrawn from non-science sex and reproduction education.
- Considering any safeguarding/child protection incidents that the effective implementation of the policy should have influenced.

## **Delegation**

Subject leaders in each academy will take on monitoring of the effective implementation of this policy, and future reviews, and will report to the Academy Head and Local Advisory Committee annually.

## **Definition**

RSHE is about the emotional, social, health and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity, and personal identity. RSHE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

## **Legal Position**

### **DFE guidance 2019 states:**

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 pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education.<sup>4</sup> They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools.

At The Link Academy Trust, we consider relationships, sex and health education to be a fundamental part of our pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE), the aims, values framework, and delivery of which are set out below.

### **The Right to Withdraw**

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw pupils from sex education but not Relationships or Health Education and to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

*This excludes those parts of the syllabus that are required by the National Curriculum for Science.*

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing (on a yearly basis) and addressed to the Academy Head. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Academy Head will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from RSE.

## **Rationale**

### **What is Relationships, Sex and Health Education?**

To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.

### **Aims:**

To

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence, and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality, gender identity and relationships
- Help children to understand how to keep safe.
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies to avoid confusion, safeguard our children and teach them about the importance of consent.

### **Teaching of RSHE**

RSHE offers a place within the curriculum where children and young people can learn the age-appropriate knowledge and skills, they need to make the increasingly complex transition through childhood and adolescence, into adulthood. Children are protected from teaching materials that would be considered inappropriate when bearing in mind the age, religion, and culture of the pupils.

At the Trust, RSHE will be taught in a safe manner recognising that children's individual circumstance, needs and experiences may have an emotional impact. We will seek to provide every child with an equally supportive view of themselves and their choices and beliefs without prejudice or bias.

**Responsibilities:** The Board of Trustees will approve the RSHE policy and hold the Academy Heads to account for its implementation.

The Local Advisory Committee (LAC) works with the Academy Head and Teachers to 'Learn, Support and Challenge' the teaching and learning set out in this curriculum area through visits, book scrutiny and personnel/ pupil interviews as a minimum.

The Academy Head is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school by the class teacher. Parents will be informed of content in writing, and the Academy Head is responsible for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSHE.

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive and professional manner
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils including those with SEND and vulnerable pupils.
- Monitoring progress
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSHE.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Staff who have concerns about RSHE are encouraged to talk to their Academy Head.

We believe that the provision of RSHE should be seen as a partnership between parents and schools. This partnership approach would help ensure that: children receive accurate information; that they benefit from informed adult perspectives on the issues that they face; and so that they can understand and respect other people's values. Therefore, parents will be informed as far in advance as possible and supported to understand how the syllabus will be delivered at their child's academy. A letter will be sent to parents in advance of teaching relationships and sex education so parents can ask any questions and prepare for these conversations.

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

### **Training**

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE, and it is included in the school's continuing professional development calendar. The RSHE Lead Teacher may also invite visitors from outside the school or Trust, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by the lead RSHE Teacher and Academy Head through: learning walks, talking to the children, work scrutiny book opportunities etc. Pupils' development in RSHE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems and LACs and Trustees have oversight of this monitoring.

## **Confidentiality and Child Protection**

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for children or their parents. Should any individual be in possession of information that staff feel may indicate a child is at risk of harm in any way they will always report this to the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in confidence who will deal with it in line with the academy's child protection and safeguarding policy.

RSHE may sometimes bring about disclosures of child protection issues and staff should always ask for advice or support if they are in any doubt of procedure or the importance of a disclosure from their Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **Delivery of RSHE**

At the Trust, each school uses a high-quality, progressive scheme to support the delivery of RSHE. Further information including what is taught, a curriculum map and lesson plans can be viewed on each school's website.

## **Values Framework**

RSHE is always taught with due regard to moral and legal considerations, age-appropriateness and with the explicit values of family life and respectful, kind relationships. Care needs to be taken that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances. When discussing families and relationships all contributions from children will be equally valued. When discussing conception and sexual intercourse, staff will present it as part of a committed and stable relationship.

Among the values promoted are:

- Respect for oneself and other people
- Taking responsibility for one's actions in all situations
- Honesty and kindness in relationships
- The importance and responsibilities of the family unit for all members, including the diverse nature of different families and relationships
- Sensitivity towards the needs and views of others
- To recognise the physical, emotional, and moral implications and risks of certain types of behaviour
- The importance of protecting themselves and ask for help and support
- Being prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life.
- Understand the dangers and misrepresentation of online and AI created images and pornography

## **Dealing with Questions**

Clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate will be established within the ground rules. Questions will be answered in a sensitive manner using simple, accurate and straightforward language. The answers given will always be honest but may not, on occasion, be everything there is to know. The age of the child will always be taken into consideration as will their level of maturity. Should a sensitive issue arise or a question that leads a staff member to suspect inappropriate knowledge, curiosity, or experience, this will be reported to the parent and/or Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL).

## **Links with other policies**

Other policies that relate to RSHE include: -

Anti-Bullying with child-on-child abuse

Equal Opportunities Policy

Online Safety Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## Curriculum Policy

This Policy is reviewed and approved by the Standards & Curriculum Committee on an annual cycle.

*-Reviewed and approved by S&C Committee: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023*

*-Reviewed and approved by Standards & Curriculum Committee: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024*

**Reviewed and approved by Standards & Curriculum Committee: November 2025**

**Next Review:** July 2026 with renewed guidance for September 2026.

*This is an interim policy in light of RSHE guidance updates in 2026. Roadmap to guidance and policy review:*

*-January 2026 - training for Academy Heads to include a summary of updated RSE guidance, for AH to roll out to teachers.*

*-Feb 2026 - Design and send out an audit to identify staff training needs, schemes and current good practice.*

*-April 2026 - draft new policy.*

*-11<sup>th</sup> June 2026 - policy draft to AH for consultation*

*-June 2026 - Policy draft to parents for consultation*

*-7<sup>th</sup> July – policy draft to Trust Standards and Curriculum Committee to ratify.*