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Responsible person: RSE Lead

Relationships and Sex Education policy (RSE)

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Introduction

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is part of our student's lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. RSE at The Boulevard Academy is centered on building strong relationships, caring for others and personal safety. This is coupled alongside teaching our students about sexual health (including safe sex) and sexuality.

At the Boulevard Academy we believe that effective relationship and sex education is essential in order for our students to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. The purpose of RSE at the Academy is intended to help our students learn about relationships, emotions, sexuality and sexual health. Lessons are set in the context of the family, friends and wider societal issues and address responsibilities that arise from within these relationships. At the Boulevard Academy RSE aims to help our students learn to respect themselves and others, develop their resilience and self-esteem in order for them to move through adolescence into adulthood.

The students at the Academy come from diverse backgrounds, expressing a range of beliefs and values. Together with our Trustees, we have consulted and developed a familiarity with the beliefs and attitudes which our range of families/guardians have issues about:

- Relationships and sex education
- Abortion
- Contraception
- LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans +)
- Sex outside of marriage

1. Aims

The aims of Relationship and Sex Education policy (RSE) at our The Boulevard Academy are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- To enable our students to better understand the nature of relationships
- Prepare students for puberty, and give 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 with the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- To know about the risks of being online and how to stay safe online.
- To support all young people to stay safe and prepare for life in modern Britain.

[Link to the Academy's safeguarding policy.](#)

2. Statutory requirements

We at The Boulevard Academy are required to teach and deliver RSE as stated in the revised Department for Education statutory guidance which states:

"that from September 2020, all schools must deliver relationships and sex education (in secondary schools). The parental right to withdraw pupils from RSE remains in primary and secondary education, for aspects of sex education which are not part of the Science curriculum."

Documents that inform the Academy's RSE policy include:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2010)

- Statutory guidance for RSE (Feb 2019)
- Keeping children safe in education-Statutory safeguarding guidance (2016)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)

4. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents/guardians. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
4. Student consultation – we investigated what exactly students want from their RSE
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with Trustees and ratified

5. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, 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.

6. Delivery of RSE

6.1 RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of SRE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

6.2 In PSHE, RSE is taught via a spiral approach, which gradually revisits and reintroduces topics at a deeper and more complex level for each key stage, whilst rehearsing, emphasising and embedding the essential skills and attributes young people need to manage their lives.

6.3 Topics that are covered as part of the Academy's RSE programme:

- Young people make informed decisions about life.
- Focus on relationship with on-line world
- LGBT issues
- Range of relationships including; friendship, family, working, intimate.
- Legislation in relation to sexual harassment, rape, pregnancy choices, contraception.
- Links between relationships & mental wellbeing
- Sexuality and sexual orientation
- Self-respect, confidence & self-esteem

6.4 Students also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

6.5 Across all Key Stages, pupils will be supported with developing the following skills:

- Communication, including how to manage changing relationships and emotions
- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- Assertiveness
- Seeking help and support when required

- Informed decision-making
- Self-respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and maximising a healthy lifestyle
- Managing conflict
- Discussion and group work

6.6 These skills are taught within the context of family life.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Trustees

The Trustees will approve the RSE policy, and hold the principal to account for its implementation.

7.2 The principal

The principal is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from [non-statutory/non-science sex education element for RSE in PSHE] components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of SRE

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 lead of PSHE in the first instance and also the principal.

7.4 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

8.1 Parents' have the right to withdraw their child from RSE provided within PSHE. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from aspects of the RSE programme then they need to follow the instructions that are stated in the RSE letter that is given distributed to all parents/careers at the start of each Academic year, which are to write a letter to the PSHE lead or Principal. Parents and guardians will be invited into the Academy to discuss their concerns in regards to the programme and to look at the relevant materials.

8.2 Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from RSE.

9. Training

9.1 Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

9.2 The principal and lead of PSHE will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring arrangements

10.1 The delivery of RSE is monitored by the lead of PSHE through:

Lesson observations, student and staff voice and continuing development of RSE LTP within PSHE.

10.2 Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

10.3 Students at the start of each RSE module will have an opportunity to show what their prior knowledge is and then go back at the end of the unit to show progress and understanding that has been made.

10.4 Staff and pupil voice will be influential throughout the Academic year in adapting resources and meeting the needs of the students within the Academy.

11. Dealing with sensitive issues

The topics discussed through RSE are likely to bring up some sensitive and controversial issues which could be challenging for a teacher to manage. Students will present a range of levels of understanding and experiences which will need to be considered when discussing sensitive issues. Whilst young people must never be expected to discuss anything they feel uncomfortable with, it may be that they will want to discuss high profile cases or even draw on personal/peer experience and it is vital that they do so in a climate of trust, cooperation and support.

Good practise has been outlined when handling sensitive issues in the 'Handling sensitive or controversial issues' resource¹¹, which states teachers should:

- work with pupils to establish ground rules and link PSHE education into the whole-school approach to supporting pupil welfare
- offer some opportunities for pupils to discuss issues confidentially in small groups as well as with the whole class
- be sensitive to the needs and experience of each pupil; remembering that some pupils may have direct experience of these issues
- make pupils aware of sources of information and support both inside and outside the school

A teacher may wish to use a range of techniques to support class discussions around these sensitive topics, such as:

- same sex discussions – it may be more comfortable for the students/school/ parents if lessons are held in same sex groups taught by a teacher of the same sex. This may not be necessary for all lessons.
- distancing techniques – Using stories, TV programmes/characters, role play and scenarios based on real situations can provide fictional characters and storylines that stimulate discussion whilst 'de-personalising' any content

Some discussions or questions which young people raise might not feel appropriate for the session or may need more consideration before answering. In these cases you may wish to use one of the following techniques to pause the discussion:

'Save it for later' – Display a question wall or box in which questions, themes or topics which may not be appropriate for that lesson can be saved for future lessons or follow up discussions.

'Oops and ouch' - This method can be used if young people are discussing controversial issues which have the potential to cause offense. Anyone who finds a comment offensive or worrying can respond with 'ouch' and the speaker follows on by saying 'oops' and is given an opportunity to further explain their viewpoint. This method helps to avoid misunderstandings or possible resentment to form.

'Time out' - You could call a 'time out' when young people are showing signs of fatigue and or stress; this will provide them with a brief break and can give you an opportunity to take stock of the situation and decide how to proceed.

'Pause and park' - You may wish to hit the pause button on particular discussions and 'park' them until a later date. Try to give the young people an idea of when this discussion will be 'unpaused', this might be after the lesson, during a break or even after discussion with another member of staff.