

Manchester Communication Academy

Relationship and Sex
Education Policy



with you, for you, about you.

Revision Information

This document has been approved for operation within	Manchester Communication Academy
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Review period	Annually, or where they have been material changes to the relevant courses of business
Date of approval	
Status	
Person responsible for the policy	Headteacher
Owner	Local Governing Body (MCA)
Signature of Approval	<i>Signed copy on file</i>

Revision History

Review Date	Changes Made	By Whom
November 2022	Curriculum adaptations Change from Principal to Headteacher Changes from Assistant Principal for Safeguarding to DSL	SW
November 2023	Context details MCA Values Curriculum adaptations Updates to definitions of Sex and Relationship Education. Pupil Voice	S Wilcock
November 2024	No changes	S Watmough
November 2025	Curriculum updates	S Wilcock

Equality Statement: Under the public sector equality duty (PSED), all schools/academies must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. To advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and to foster good relations across all protected characteristics. This means schools/academies must take into account equality considerations when policies are being developed, adopted and implemented. Manchester Communication Primary Academy (part of Greater Manchester Academies Trust) regularly reviews all policies and procedures, which are recommended to schools/academies to ensure compliance with education and employment legislation including the Equality Act 2010.

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Context

Manchester Communication Academy (MCA) is located in Harpurhey in North Manchester and is part of Greater Manchester Academies Trust. MCA has effective partnerships with other key organisations such as Manchester City Council and hosts Manchester Communication Research School. Harpurhey serves a wonderful vibrant community which is diverse and dynamic. MCA celebrates the rich community we serve whilst having an astute knowledge of some of the contextual challenges that our families face. Manchester ranks as the 6th most deprived district out of 326 local authorities in England. MCA serves the communities of Harpurhey and Miles Platting which are ranked as the 1st and 2nd most deprived ward in Manchester (Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019). The levels of deprivation in the local area present challenges for the community on a range of measures spanning the different domains of the IMD including health, education, crime, housing, environment and unemployment. The local community has also had numerous interventions over many years which have sought to improve its outcomes, including Health Action Zones (Powell and Moon, 2008); New Deal for Communities (DCLG, 1998); Resident Wages Programme (City Council, 2009); Single Regeneration Budget (DCLG, 2007) and Sure Start (DfES, 1998); none of which have made a notable or sustained impact on measured outcomes.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

MCA is committed to complying with the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to the principles of equality and strives to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved at MCA whether as learners (and their parent/guardians), staff, trustees, governors or as general members of the public:

- Has a genuine and equal opportunity to do so without regard to their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation
- Can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment, bullying or abuse.

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), MCA is required to have due regard to:

- The need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities
- The advancement of equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and to foster good relations across all protected characteristics
- Review all of its policies and procedures, through consultation with its academies and institutes, to ensure compliance with education and employment legislation including the Equality Act 2010.

GMAT has an Equality and Diversity Policy which is monitored and reviewed annually as a minimum. The Disciplinary Policy does not and must not contradict the contents of the Equality and Diversity Policy.

The RSE Policy does not and must not contradict the contents of the Equality and Diversity policy.

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them

Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences

During lessons, makes pupils feel:

- Safe and supported
- Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:

- A whole-class setting
- Small groups or targeted sessions
- 1-to-1 discussions
- Digital formats

Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

1. Aims

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Manchester Communication Academy are 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 and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- MCA's vision highlights the focus of our students being physically, socially, emotionally safe and healthy encompassed within our values of Respect, Resilience and Responsibility providing high quality education and opportunities for all.

2. Statutory requirements

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

MCA follows the statutory guidance on [Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#) updated in July 2025 for teaching in September 2026.

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](#).

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At MCA, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. 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. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified.

4. 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.

Sex Education refers to sexual intimacy between two people.

Relationship Education refers to families, friendship, marriages, romantic relations and making positive relationships with others.

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

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 and 2 but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

Relationship Education within this curriculum builds on the knowledge children learnt within primary schools about characteristics of positive relationships in reference to family, other children and other adults.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation over the years with parents, pupils and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and do not seek answers online.

Parents who wish to seek further information about which lessons can be opted out of can contact the Academy for future details.

Following the updates released in July 2025 we have reviewed adaptations to the lesson content to include challenging misogyny, addressing online harms (AI, deepfakes, porn fuelled behaviours) and fostering ethical and respectful relationships.

Challenging Misogyny – the content delivered helps boys identify positive male role models and makes clear that most boys and young men are respectful.

Consent and Sexual Ethics Beyond “Just Yes/No” – content will include guidance around strong relationships requiring more than just respecting boundaries and consent with the highlight towards qualities such as empathy and communication.

Online Safety, Pornography and Emerging Technologies – content puts a stronger emphasis on the digital risks in RSE which includes the emerging threats of AI generated explicit images and deepfakes. This would also include the area of illegal online behaviors such as sharing intimate images without consent, “upskirting” and online sexual harassment focusing on the legal consequences and how to report issues.

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within MCA’s personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum known as Aspire. These lessons are taught in single sex, and where timetabling allows, the same sex teacher. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

Pupils also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional from Manchester Brook and Manchester Healthy Schools. Lessons are planned to suit the needs of the MCA students using guidance from Cre8tive Resources.

We will:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
 - Are age-appropriate
 - Are in line with pupils’ developmental stage

- Comply with:
 - This policy
 - The Teachers' Standards
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on:
 - What they're going to say
 - Their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use
- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers
- Share all external materials with parents and carers

We won't, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

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, 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).

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

All pupils will be given access to the curriculum and where SEND support is required this will be provided in consultation with the SENCo. Provisions could be:

- Smaller group work sessions.
- ☑ Bespoke sessions with students
- ☑ 1-2-1 follow-up conversations.

7. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation with the support of the Director of Health and Wellbeing.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE. This information will be provided by the Director of Health and Wellbeing. (See section 8).

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 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 Director of Health and Wellbeing.

The responsibility of teaching RSE in MCA is the Health and Wellbeing teachers with the support of Health Professionals and the Director of Health and Wellbeing. Assessment of Aspire is completed by confidence level checks. These are completed by students at the beginning and end of every lesson where students can score their confidence and knowledge of the lesson focus.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity. If students have a sensitive questions to ask there are various members of MCA staff they can speak to. During the lesson teacher can have a question box, or anonymous post it question to seek advise/support. At the

end of all Aspire lessons, students are directed to links of support whether this is internal within the Academy or external agencies who support the Academy.

Students are assessed within Aspire in their confidence levels

8. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory 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 Director of Health and Wellbeing to be approved by the DSL.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The DSL and Director of Health and Wellbeing will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

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

9. Training

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

The Director of Health and Wellbeing 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. This support is received from Manchester Healthy Schools and Brook.

The headteacher 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

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Sarah Wilcock (Assistant Principal – Personal Development and Careers) through:

- ☑ Quality Assurance
- ☑ Planning Scrutinises
- ☑ Learning Walks.

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by Health and Wellbeing staff as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by Sarah Wilcock – Assistant Principal – Personal Development and Careers annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Headteacher.

Appendix 1: Curriculum map

Relationships and sex education curriculum map

YEAR GROUP	TERM	SUBJECT	TOPIC/THEME DETAILS	RESOURCES
Year 7	Autumn 2	Aspire	Puberty, Body and Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction to Puberty ➤ Puberty (Female/ Male focused) ➤ Personal Hygiene ➤ Growing up and FGM ➤ Assertiveness, Consent and Hormones ➤ Self Esteem and Empowerment ➤ Tooth Decay and Dental Hygiene 	Cre8tive Resources PSHE Association Manchester Brook KCSIE Guidance 2022
Year 7	Summer 2	Aspire	Friendships, Respect and Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consent and Boundaries ➤ Respect and Relationships ➤ What make a good friend ➤ Friendships and Managing them ➤ Being Positive and Self Esteem ➤ Pressure and Influence ➤ Stereotyping 	Cre8tive Resources PSHE Association Manchester Brook KCSIE Guidance 2022

Year 8	Summer 1	Aspire	<p>LGBTQ+ Explored</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Equality Act and Protected Characteristics ➤ LGBTQ+ - What is it? ➤ Rights across the world ➤ Gender Equality ➤ Removing Barriers and Equality for all ➤ Racism and Discrimination 	<p>Cre8tive Resources</p> <p>PSHE Association</p> <p>Manchester Brook</p> <p>KCSIE Guidance 2022</p>
Year 8	Summer 2	Aspire	<p>Identify Relationships and Sex Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction to Relationship and Sex Education ➤ Being Yourself and Self Love ➤ Healthy and Respectful Relationships ➤ What is Love? ➤ Dealing with Conflict ➤ Periods and Menstrual Cycles ➤ Introduction to Contraception ➤ Sexual Orientation 	<p>Cre8tive Resources</p> <p>PSHE Association</p> <p>Manchester Brook</p> <p>KCSIE Guidance 2022</p>

YEAR GROUP	TERM	SUBJECT	TOPIC/THEME DETAILS	RESOURCES
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Year 9	Summer 1 and Summer 2	Aspire	<p>Sex, The Law and Consent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sexual Consent ➤ FGM and the Law ➤ Relationships and Partners ➤ Domestic Abuse and Domestic Violence ➤ What have Sex? Delaying sexual activity. ➤ What are STI's? ➤ Treating STI's and Gum Clinic ➤ Contraception – Methods Available ➤ Contraception – Condom ➤ Contraception – Explored ➤ Sexual Harassment & Stalking ➤ HIV and Aids ➤ HIV – Discrimination and Prejudice 	<p>Cre8tive Resources</p> <p>PSHE Association</p> <p>Manchester Brook</p> <p>KCSIE Guidance 2022</p>
Year 10	Summer 2	Aspire	<p>Exploring Relationships and Sex Ed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pleasure and Delaying Sex ➤ Campaigning against FGM ➤ Sexting Nudes and other pictures ➤ Online Pornography (myths and reality) ➤ Porn – The Impact on Society ➤ Unhealthy Relationships and Sexual Violence ➤ Sexualisation of the Media 	<p>Cre8tive Resources</p> <p>PSHE Association</p> <p>Manchester Brook</p> <p>KCSIE Guidance 2022</p>

Year 11	Spring 1	Aspire	<p>Sexual Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Peer on Peer Abuse ➤ Fertility and What it Impacts ➤ Alcohol, Parties and Bad Choices ➤ Importance of Sexual health ➤ Revisiting Contraception ➤ Respect, Love and Relationships 	<p>Creative Resources</p> <p>PSHE Association</p> <p>Manchester Brook</p> <p>KCSIE Guidance 2022</p>
YEAR GROUP	TERM	SUBJECT	TOPIC/THEME DETAILS	RESOURCES
Year 9	Autumn	Science	<p>Biology Topic 1,2 and 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cells - Describe the adaptations of sperm, egg and cilia cells. ➤ Mitosis - State the order of the stages of mitosis using a pneumonic (premier league matches are terrifically corrupt). Be able to look at images of mitosis happening in cells and identify the stage of mitosis. State that interphase happens before mitosis and that the DNA is replicated and more organelles are made because the cell is about to be split in two. State the characteristics of cells produced by mitosis. State that cancer is uncontrolled cell division/mitosis. ➤ DNA and Alleles – Structure and Chromosomes - Describe how the sex of offspring is determined at fertilisation, using genetic diagrams. ➤ Variation - Describe the causes of variation that influence phenotype including genetic variation – different characteristics as a result of mutation and sexual reproduction ➤ Health – Describes the spreads of diseases and common infections. Explain how sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are spread and how this spread can be reduced or prevented, including: Chlamydia (bacteria) and HIV (virus). 	Edexcel

All Years	Various (See Academy website for exact dates)	Safeguarding Assemblies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ FGM ➤ CSE ➤ Consent ➤ Forced Marriage ➤ Period Poverty ➤ Domestic Violence ➤ Up skirting ➤ Peer on Peer Abuse 	<p>Manchester Brook Government Guidance Afruka GM Police Mad Theatre Odd Arts Footlights PSHE Association Creative Resources</p>
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Appendix 2: By the end of secondary school pupils should know

TOPIC	PUPILS 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 their 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

<p>Respectful relationships, including friendships</p>	<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
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TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
<p>Online and media</p>	<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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW

<p>Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health</p>	<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
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Appendix 3: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Form and Year	
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			
Signed:			