Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) 2026

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.

The Link Academy Trust (the Trust) is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Department for 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 Trust.

1. 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.

We are required by law to teach **Relationships Education** and **Health Education** to all primary aged pupils. We deliver these statutory subjects within our broader PSHE programme. Where we teach about human reproduction (Sex Education), we do so in line with the principles and approach of the 2025 Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) statutory guidance, in which Sex Education itself remains non-statutory (but recommended) in primary schools.

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance

2. 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.

3. 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. RSHE lessons will be taught by a qualified teacher or under the guidance of one. The children will be taught age-appropriate lessons identified in the RSHE guidance, which may include teaching to single year groups, rather than mixed age groups (as our common Trust structure includes mixed age year groups). Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSHE and, when discussing issues related to RSHE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

At the Trust, each school uses a high-quality, progressive scheme to support the delivery of RSHE. At Sparkwell we use Kapow. Further information including what is taught and a curriculum overview can be viewed on each school's website.
If parents and carers require further information regarding the content of RSHE, they should contact the Academy Head who will share the information through an informal meeting.

4. 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 teachers. 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.

The **Teachers** 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.

The teachers and support 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.

Partnership with parents and carers

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most important educators, particularly regarding relationships and health. Effective RSHE education works in partnership with families, supporting parents to continue conversations started in school and keeping them informed about what their child is learning. Each individual school, within the Trust, will provide parents and carers with support information and guidance on how to talk to and support their child with relationships, health and sex education.

Consultation and communication

We engage with parents and carers throughout the year and when developing and reviewing our RSHE policy. We seek views on content, approach and resources.

This includes:

- Gathering parent views through ongoing communication and opportunities to share feedback.
- Opportunities to view teaching materials.
- Parent information sessions to explain content and answer questions.
- Regular communication about RSHE through newsletters, curriculum overviews and the school's website.

5. Legal Position and the Right to Withdraw

Under the Education Act 2002 and the Academies Act 2010 all schools must provide a curriculum that:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils.
- Prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations (updated July 2025) make Relationships Education and Health Education statutory for all primary-aged pupils. These subjects must be taught in all maintained schools, academies, independent schools, maintained special schools, non-maintained special schools and alternative provision settings.

At the Trust, we consider Relationships, Sex and Health education to be a fundamental part of our pupils' personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), the aims, values framework and delivery of which are set out in this policy.

The Right to Withdraw

Relationship Education is compulsory for all primary-aged children and there is no right of withdrawal. It focusses on teaching children the fundamental building blocks of positive, respectful relationships with families, friends, peers and adults.

Health Education is compulsory for all primary-aged children and there is no right of withdrawal. It focusses on supporting children to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

Sex Education is NOT compulsory for all primary-aged children; however, the Department for Education recommends that all primary schools teach age-appropriate sex education to ensure children are prepared for the changes adolescence brings and understand how human life begins. **There is a right to withdraw from this element of the RSHE curriculum**; however, this excludes those parts of the syllabus that are required by the National Curriculum for Science (Life cycles and reproduction in mammals).

Requests for withdrawal must 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 Sex Education as part of RSHE curriculum.

6. Confidentiality, Safeguarding 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.

7. 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 (protective characteristics).
- 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 asking for help and support.
- Being prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- Understanding the dangers and misrepresentation of online and AI created images and pornography.

8. Church schools

Our policy aims to fully support the Church of England vision for education: "I come that they may have life in all its fullness" (John 10:10). This scripture grounds us in the recognition that having a positive relationship with ourselves and with others is foundational for a complete and fulfilled life.

Our school's approach to Relationship, Sex and Health Education follows that of the Church of England Education Office in that it seeks to be faith-sensitive and inclusive. It will not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act and will be sensitive to the faith and beliefs of those in the wider school community. Pupils will consider how to ensure that they treat themselves and others, at all times and in all contexts, with dignity and respect. Our RSHE curriculum is therefore grounded in an acknowledgment of the worth and dignity of all people

It is also concerned with the spiritual and moral aspects of healthy, loving and nurturing relationships within the context of a Christian vision of flourishing for all. Therefore, the RSE policy will reflect our school's Christian vision and associated values, and our teaching will seek to develop character within a moral framework, based on virtues such as honesty, integrity, self-control, courage, humility, kindness, forgiveness, generosity and a sense of justice. However, it does not seek to teach only one moral position.

9. 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).

10. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE through the support materials and videos provided in the chosen scheme. Training is also included in the school's CPD calendar. Schools may invite visitors such as the school nurse or health professionals to provide support.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by the lead RSHE Teacher and Academy Head through learning walks, talking to the children, book scrutiny 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.

Links with other policies

Other policies that relate to RSHE include: -

- Anti-Bullying with child-on-child abuse
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND policy
- Health and Safety Policy

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

Reviewed and approved by Standards & Curriculum Committee: 7th July 2026
Next Review: Summer 2027