Accrington Academy September 2026
Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is statutory in all secondary schools in England. Accrington Academy delivers RSHE in accordance with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 and the Department for Education's statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education.

This policy framework should be read in conjunction with the more detailed **United Learning Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy Statement** for schools, and the DfE Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Statutory Guidance. Its purpose is to enable secondary schools to develop an effective Relationships and Sex Education Policy, using the framework set out below.

Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

•Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.

•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 the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies at Accrington Academy our RSE Programme has its foundation on our core Character Values - Truth, Effort, Ambition and Manners.

Introduction

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. The general framework of the programme is designed to help young people identify and build positive relationships. RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity. Its objective is to enable students to learn about:

(i) families and people who care for them, including the nature of marriage and civil partnership and their importance for family life and the bringing up of children,

(ii) forming and maintaining caring relationships,

(iii) the characteristics of healthy and respectful relationships, including online,

(iv) how relationships may affect physical and mental health and wellbeing, and how to ensure they are safe, and

(v) intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

Relationships and sex education will only use teaching and materials which are appropriate to the age and the religious background of the students receiving it.

Curriculum Content

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is delivered throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 through the PSHE/EWC curriculum and other appropriate curriculum opportunities.

The curriculum is age-appropriate, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all students. In line with statutory guidance, students will learn about:

- Healthy, respectful and caring relationships.
- Marriage, civil partnerships and different family structures.
- Consent, personal boundaries and respectful behaviour.
- Recognising, preventing and reporting sexual harassment, sexual violence, coercive behaviour and abuse.
- Online relationships, digital communication and online safety.
- The risks associated with pornography, sharing images online, online exploitation and harmful online influences.
- Sexual health, contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy and fertility.
- Physical and emotional changes during puberty.
- Mental wellbeing, self-esteem and body image.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion, including the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- How to access support, guidance, and healthcare services when needed.

The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects current statutory guidance, safeguarding priorities, and the needs of our students.

Parental, staff and student involvement regarding the policy

The Governing board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

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 components of RSE.

RSHE Lead

The designated RSHE Lead is responsible for:

- Monitoring the quality and effectiveness of RSHE provision.
- Supporting staff with curriculum planning and delivery.
- Ensuring the curriculum remains compliant with statutory guidance.
- Monitoring student voice and feedback.
- Ensuring appropriate communication with parents and carers regarding RSHE content.

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 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 Principal.

RSE is taught by teachers during the designated PSHE/EWC time during form time and drop-down days (TEAM AA in Action).

Students

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

RSHE is delivered throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 through the PSHE/EWC curriculum. These lessons cover relationships, sex and health education, personal development, safeguarding, wellbeing, online safety and economic education. Students receive one lesson during form time each week, in addition to drop-down days (TEAM AA in Action).

As with all students, RSE for students with SEND is part of life-long learning which begins at reception/school entry and continues throughout formal education and beyond.

RSE is most effective when delivered through a whole school approach. For students with SEND, this means working continuously through informal opportunities as well as the formal RSE curriculum. All staff are actively involved in offering consistent messages around RSE, e.g. learning support assistants. We make regular links with other parts of the curriculum and school day too, for example, through playground rules, Anti-Bullying Week, displays about puberty and e-safety initiatives.

We provide additional support to make sure our SEND students can make sense of RSE lessons. This is done by sharing lesson content prior to the lesson via different layers of support so students are aware of the content they will receive. This is sometimes carried out in separate small group sessions

or in 1-2-1 sessions dependent on the student and the content being covered. Where identified, we offer additional small group sessions for students with SEND which allow for questions and discussion that might be challenging or increase the risk of bullying in a usual class format.

Accrington Academy is committed to providing RSHE that is inclusive, respectful and accessible to all students. Teaching reflects the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and promotes respect for diversity, individual differences and the dignity of all people.

Teaching about relationships and families will reflect the diversity of modern British society and will be delivered in a factual, balanced and age-appropriate manner. Staff will ensure that all students feel safe, respected and included during RSHE lessons.

Staff delivering PSHE ensure all resources and images used are inclusive of all students. This is part of our general inclusive approach to RSE (and in other subjects and whole-school) and images should represent SEND, LGBTQ+, a range of ethnicities, and all the protected characteristics. Lesson materials are available in appropriate learning media including physical materials when required. Staff are aware of the language used in RSE and ensure that it is inclusive. Where needed follow up sessions are also arranged with smaller groups to personalise the learning from RSE group lessons. This may be targeted small group sessions, 1-1 etc.

The PSHE curriculum can be accessed via this link and on our website should parents and carers wish to support by going through content at home prior to the timetabled lesson.

Online Safety and Safeguarding

RSHE contributes to the school's safeguarding responsibilities by helping students recognise risks, seek support and maintain their personal safety.

Students will learn about:

- Safe and respectful online relationships.
- Privacy, consent and digital footprints.
- Online grooming, exploitation and coercion.
- The risks associated with pornography and sexually explicit content.
- Harmful online influencers and misogynistic content.
- Image sharing, including the legal and emotional consequences of sharing indecent images.
- How to report concerns and access support.

Staff delivering RSHE are aware that safeguarding concerns may arise during lessons. Any disclosures made by students will be managed in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Parental right to withdraw children

The school recognises that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children in matters relating to relationships and sex education.

Parents and carers can access information about the RSHE curriculum through the school website and may request additional information regarding curriculum content and teaching resources. The school will communicate openly with parents and carers to ensure they understand the aims and content of the RSHE programme.

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 made in writing to the Principal. The Principal will meet with parents or carers to discuss the request and explain the benefits of receiving sex education as part of the school's RSHE programme.

The Principal will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

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

If a student is withdrawn from sex education, the school will ensure that the student receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Complaints

Any complaints about the relationships and sex education programme should be made in accordance with the school's usual complaints procedure. Please email enquiries@accrington-academy.org.

Policy Review Date

	Date	Name of owner/author
Authorised:		
Policy Reviewed:	**September 2026**	Director of EWC
Next Annual Review Date:	**September 2027**	Director of EWC