

Trinity Specialist College

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) policy



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Signed by Chair of Trustees:	

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1. Introduction

Trinity Specialist College strives to help learners achieve greater independence in all aspects of their lives and in doing so, help them to gain a greater understanding about building relationships with others both within and outside of the College.

Effective RSE is essential if our learners are to achieve this independence. It helps them make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives.

Our learners are aged 16 - 25 and are therefore preparing for adulthood. They all have learning difficulties and are generally no different to other adults in their sexual and physical development. Some (but not all) are likely to have the same range of feelings and expectations of relationships.

Due to their vulnerability, Trinity Specialist College learners will need support to develop, understand and manage their relationships. This policy is intended to support learners, staff (including volunteers), and learners' families or carers to successfully help Trinity Specialist College learners to understand about building and sustaining genuine and caring sexual and personal relationships.

Safeguarding principles underpin all RSE delivery to ensure learners are supported appropriately and safely.

Our policy is based upon DfE guidance '*Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education*'. Whilst the statutory requirements do not apply to sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies or Further Education (FE) colleges, we aim to follow the principles outlined in the DfE guidance so that we can support our learners in their transition to adulthood.

2. Aims

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education at our college are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Provide learners with an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help learners develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy, and cultivate positive characteristics such as kindness and integrity
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach learners the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

3. Objectives

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

RSE includes the following elements:

Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of values and individual conscience and moral considerations
- learning the value of family life and stable loving relationships for the nurture of children
- learning the value of respect, love and care
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- developing critical thinking as part of decision making

Personal and Social Skills

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- developing self-respect and empathy for others
- learning to make choices based on understanding of differences and with an absence of prejudice
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- managing conflict
- learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse

Knowledge and Understanding

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages
- learning and understanding about the importance and factors of healthy living

- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national health advice, contraception and support services (including education about HIV and AIDS - and other sexually transmitted diseases)
- supporting pupils to make wise and informed choices regarding sexual activity
- developing an awareness of sex and the law
- developing an understanding of the diversity of relationships and sexuality
- an understanding of the difference between consenting and exploitative relationships
- understanding internet safety issues such as sexting and sharing of images

4. Curriculum

Our RSE provision is set out as per Appendices 1 and 2, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary. We will share curriculum materials with parents and carers on request.

5. Delivery of RSE

Trinity Specialist College covers topics around relationships and sex through the PSHE curriculum, the Preparation for Adulthood Framework, and also works in partnership with external agencies to provide learners with more specialised access to support, information and services. Key themes covered include: consent, boundaries, safety, healthy relationships, and learning is adapted for different abilities.

The college will make sure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of manageable size
- The required content is communicated to learners clearly, in a carefully sequenced way and within a planned scheme of work
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for learners to embed new knowledge, so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships, including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

RSE complements several other curriculum subjects. Where appropriate, the college will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching. The RSE curriculum will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff.

Teachers will make sure that learners understand the importance of equality and respect, and learn about the law relating to the protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, by the end of their education. The curriculum is designed to focus on learners of all gender identities and expressions, and activities will be planned to make sure all are actively involved.

Throughout we will use appropriate material to assist learning, such as:

- Diagrams
- Videos
- Books
- Games
- Discussions and practical activities

Teachers will make sure that all learners' views are listened to, and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively, honestly and appropriately for the learners.

The college will make sure that all teaching and materials are appropriate for our learners and the pathway they follow.

Regarding curriculum delivery, the college will engage with parents and carers of learners and, in particular, with those parents of learners under 18.

We may amend our curriculum content to respond to the needs and context of our learners, to discuss issues affecting them in an age-appropriate manner.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of young people based on their home circumstances (i.e. families can include single-parent families, same-sex parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents among other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some young people may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after young people, young carers or kinship carers).

Across our college, we will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property or hate crime.

Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of learners will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all learners' experiences
- During lessons, makes learners feel:
 - Safe and supported

- Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that learners 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

Use of resources

We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support learners in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age and maturity of the learners
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to learners' experiences and won't provoke distress

We will make sure that when we consult parents/carers we provide examples of the resources that the college plans to use.

6. Use of external organisations and materials

We will make sure that an agency and any materials used are accurate, age and stage appropriate and unbiased and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

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 learners' 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

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
- Work with agencies who don't allow their material to be shared with parents and carers

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Advisory Board

The Advisory Board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

7.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for making sure that RSE is taught consistently across the college.

7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a way that is sensitive, high-quality and appropriate for each year group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual learners
- Modelling positive behaviour and avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and being conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that learners may make as a result of the subject content to the college's designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

Further guidance about staff approaches to the teaching of RSE can be found in Appendix B.

8. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as required.

The Principal will also invite visitors from outside the college, such as college nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE, where appropriate.

9. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored as part of our college quality assurance processes e.g. planning scrutinies, learning walks, etc.

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

This policy will be reviewed by the Leadership Team and Trustees annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by Trustees.

Appendix A: Curriculum map

Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education Curriculum Map

Pathway

Year	Term	Topic and brief description
Post 16	Year 1	<p>Types of relationships: family, friends, acquaintances, romantic partners.</p> <p>What makes a healthy vs unhealthy relationship.</p> <p>Recognising trust, respect, kindness, and equality.</p> <p>Understanding personal boundaries — their own and others’.</p> <p>Managing conflict, saying no, and seeking help.</p> <p>Online relationships and digital communication.</p> <p>Gender identity and sexual orientation explained simply.</p> <p>Respecting differences in others.</p> <p>Developing self-esteem and confidence.</p> <p>Understanding emotions and how to express them safely.</p> <p>Public vs private behaviour.</p> <p>Appropriate behaviour in different settings (college, home, community).</p> <p>This is certificated through Ascentis qualification in Independent skills</p>
	Year 2	<p>Consent and personal safety</p> <p>What consent means in simple, concrete terms.</p> <p>How to give, refuse, and withdraw consent.</p> <p>Understanding pressure, coercion, and manipulation.</p> <p>Safe vs unsafe touch.</p> <p>How to report concerns and who trusted adults are.</p> <p>Privacy: private body parts, private places, private behaviours.</p> <p>Understanding the law around sex, relationships, and consent.</p> <p>Hygiene and self-care.</p> <p>This is certificated through Ascentis qualification in Independent skills</p>
	Year 3	<p>Basic anatomy using accessible language and visuals.</p> <p>Puberty and body changes (if not previously covered).</p> <p>Sexual intercourse explained at an appropriate level.</p>

		<p>Contraception and pregnancy prevention.</p> <p>STIs and how to stay safe.</p> <p>Safe use of social media, messaging, and dating apps.</p> <p>Sharing images and the law (e.g., nude images).</p> <p>Recognising scams, catfishing, and unsafe contact.</p> <p>Digital footprints and privacy settings.</p> <p>How to access health services (GP, sexual health clinics).</p> <p>This is certificated through Ascentis qualification in Independent skills</p>
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Post 19	
<p>Learners in the Post-19 provision at Trinity Specialist College do not always have a full three-year placement. As a result, the Preparing for Adulthood curriculum is designed to be flexible and responsive, allowing staff to tailor learning to the needs, aspirations, and starting points of each cohort at any given time. This ensures that every learner can make meaningful RSE progress within the time they have available.</p>	
PfA Strand	Topics Covered
Good Health	<p>Understanding the body Basic anatomy, puberty, physical changes, personal hygiene.</p> <p>Healthy relationships Friendships, trust, respect, boundaries, recognising positive and negative relationships.</p> <p>Consent and personal autonomy Saying yes/no, understanding personal space, recognising when something feels unsafe.</p> <p>Emotional wellbeing Identifying feelings, managing emotions, coping strategies, knowing when and how to seek help.</p> <p>Sexual health (appropriately adapted) Private vs public behaviours, safe touch, understanding appropriate sexual behaviour, contraception at an accessible level if relevant.</p> <p>Staying safe Online safety, social media boundaries, recognising grooming or exploitation, knowing who trusted adults are.</p> <p>Identity and self-esteem Understanding self, gender identity, personal values, confidence in expressing needs.</p>

Appendix B: Guidance for staff approaches to teaching RSE

General Principles and Guidelines

1.1 Many people with learning disabilities have difficulty forming, exploring, nurturing and sustaining relationships, and staff support and guidance may be crucial at times. Therefore, learners should feel confident to talk things through with staff i.e. if things go wrong in their relationships. Such discussions will be in private and will remain confidential except where there is reason to believe that a student is at risk of or is actually being harmed in any way. In all cases such as this, the safeguarding procedure should be followed and the learner should be made aware of this.

1.2 If the learner feels they would like support when talking to their family or for someone to talk to their family on their behalf, Trinity Specialist College is available to provide this support. This also applies if they need to discuss their relationship with someone else for example a social worker, nurse, counsellor or if they need contraception from a family planning clinic.

1.3 Staff will not tell the learner what to do. They may only provide advice and support for the learner who will be helped to decide for themselves what to do.

1.4 Staff must be professional at all times. They must not develop a relationship with learners other than a professional one and will maintain a professional distance. A breach of professional boundaries or conduct may be seen as gross misconduct.

1.5 In supporting learners to make positive and safe decisions, staff must consider the following:

Protection

- Ensure learners are safe and free from exploitation and abuse by others
- Assess and manage risk in the context of supporting learner's relationships
- To maintain confidentiality

Empowerment

- Help learners to explore and understand their sexuality and relationships.
- Help people to grow and develop by ensuring education and support is available.
- Support rights and choices, help people understand decisions and the consequences of taking them and to provide support when things become difficult.

1.6 Staff must recognise the significant influence they hold as role models and advisers. Their attitudes, comments, and behaviour can unintentionally discourage healthy relationships or expressions of sexuality. Equally, staff may inadvertently

encourage relationships or decisions for which an individual is not yet ready or able to manage.

It is also important that staff avoid making assumptions about a person's beliefs, values, or preferences. This includes assumptions related to matters such as sexual orientation, attitudes towards sexual relationships, celibacy, monogamy, or personal and cultural values.

1.7 In supporting learners with their relationships, staff will need to:

- Consider an individual's background in terms of their life experience e.g. of institutionalisation, restricted lifestyle, past abuse
- Encourage suitable opportunities for relationships to develop. Some learners only have the opportunity to meet with their friends and partners at the college. Depending on the nature of the relationship, this can lead to difficulties as a result of lack of privacy. It is therefore important to give a clear message about what is appropriate behaviour within a public place.
- Enable the learner to be assertive with important people in their lives
- Facilitate opportunities for learners to learn from experience and make mistakes
- Extend opportunities for learners to identify their preferred peer group, meet new people and develop social networks
- Help learners gain information individually and/or in groups
- Use a variety of visual and interactive resources to help people learn
- Refer for specialist support from Brook, Family Planning clinics, Sexual Health clinics, etc

2. Staff Response to a Personal Relationship

2.1 There are circumstances where staff must intervene and report to the DSL:

- When there is evidence or suspicion of exploitation and misuse of power
- When behaviour is outside the law
- Where someone lacks capacity for consent (or appears to)
- Where there is cause for concern about emotional or physical health and safety

2.2 There are other circumstances where staff may consider it is in the best interests of the learner for them to intervene. For example:

- When a learner asks them to
- Where there is a need for contraceptive advice
- When a learner is considering becoming a parent
- Where there is a need for medical intervention (for example, sexually transmitted infections)

3. Record Keeping

3.1 Record keeping is essential as it:

- Provides evidence that sensitive issues have been considered and discussed
- Demonstrates the decision making process
- Identifies who was involved in the decision making
- is clear about when the decision was made

3.2 It is important that clear records are kept of advice and assistance given to the learner. This will involve:

- Advice and education given directly to the learner and to staff. This will include information about resources and practical aids
- Information about and “signposting” to other agencies that can help
- Support to learners to gain understanding and increase management of their emotions
- Keeping safe

3.3 With this approach, it is clear when decisions or assessments are considered or need to be reconsidered. Staff must ensure that all recording is clear and factual and bear in mind that individuals have the right to access their files.

4. The Learner’s Family

4.1 Family relationships are very important to many adults with learning difficulties and family members are often the most trusted and influential people in an individual’s life. The approach to working with parents and family members should reflect this whilst recognising that many young people are reluctant to discuss sexual relationships with their parents!

4.2 Some parents and family members find it difficult to understand and accept an individual’s wish to develop sexual relationships and as such can have a tendency to focus on their vulnerability. It is important that we acknowledge vulnerabilities and address them in ILP’s as well as enabling individuals to develop their relationships. Other than in specific instances as set out in the Mental Capacity Act (2005), staff and families do not have the right to make best interest decisions on behalf of adults with learning difficulties. Many will, however, need some support to make considered decisions. All must be aware though that having learning difficulties or making an apparently unwise decision does not necessarily in itself demonstrate that the young person lacks capacity.

4.3 When working with families, it is important to consider:

- Whether a parent or family member is likely to be informed of or find out about something anyway. There are circumstances (for example, serious assaults when the police would be involved, or pregnancy) where it is very likely that the parent or family member would need to know or would find out, whether the learner wanted them to find out or not. In such instances, not informing the family is likely to result in breakdown of trust.
- Cultural differences with regards to what is and is not valued
- How relationships are conducted particularly with regard to respect
- The advantages of being open with families. Often issues that have been

assumed to be confidential are not, or family members may be suspicious or have genuine concerns.

5 The Role of the Teacher

5.1 Teachers must recognise that they have a duty to ensure that learners receive the support and information they need in this area of their lives.

5.2 Teachers then have responsibilities to:

- Understand the needs of the learners in their area.
- Work within the framework provided by this and other policies. It is essential that staff understand the policies and the expectation that they work within these policies even if it is at odds with their personal or religious beliefs, to challenge and be challenged.
- Involve external agencies where more specialist support is required.
- Ensure that staff do not work in isolation. As well as discussions in team meetings, this is an issue that may (with the individual's permission) be discussed with families or with others within their circle of support. It is important that a consistent approach is taken by all involved with a person.

6. The Role of Learning Support Assistants

6.1 It is important for all staff to be aware of their own values and to reflect on their practice. This can be done at team meetings or in discussion with their manager. They should ensure that the learner's decisions are not made in isolation and without discussion with a member of staff. If staff feel that they cannot give unbiased advice, the learner should be referred to another member of staff or the teacher.

6.2 Staff must recognise the importance of personal relationships in learners' lives and work in ways that support the development of these. Where necessary, staff may seek the support of other agencies such as family planning.

6.3 It is everybody's responsibility to create and promote a culture of openness, within an appropriate understanding of confidentiality. This will increase awareness of individual, family and organisational culture and belief systems.

6.4 It should be made easier for all staff and learners to include discussion of personal relationships within lessons or meetings. In this way decisions are not made in isolation and will make it easier for staff to adopt a consistent approach.

6.5 Staff must not impose their own values on adults with learning difficulties who they are supporting. This can be done unintentionally as a result of the influence a trusted member of staff can have on the learner or it may be done intentionally because a member of staff is concerned about the actions a learner is planning to take. It is therefore important for the teacher to monitor the situation and to ensure that all staff perform professionally and seek advice from a senior manager where necessary.

7. Where there is concern about staff action or inaction

7.1 The action to take where there is concern about the advice or support being given or not given depends on what the area of concern is. If it is about poor practice, staff can:

- Talk to their manager.
- Talk to the DSL.
- Use Trinity Specialist College's Whistleblowing and Serious Misconduct Policy.

7.2 If a learner is being put at risk or there is any concern about abuse or safeguarding issues, staff must:

- Follow the Safeguarding Procedure.