



Countesthorpe
Academy

Provision of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2025

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Signed (Chair of Local Governing Board):

Date of Next Review:

Responsible Officer:

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Mrs A Melville

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Mr D Thurston

Countesthorpe Academy Policy on the Provision of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2025

Rationale

This policy is intended to provide a framework within which Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education are taught at the academy. RSE is taught within an overall programme of Personal, Social and Health Education which is delivered through the Personal Development Programme in Crew. Certain aspects are taught within the Science, Computing and PE curriculum and are addressed through assemblies and registration activities. The DFE RSE and Health Education Guidance 2019 and the National Healthy School Standard inform the RSE policy and scheme of work.

In the 2019 guidance document, the Department for Education set out the rationale for making Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools, as well as making Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools from 2020:

“Today’s children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.”

At Countesthorpe Academy we very much agree with this principle. We are determined that our teaching will build on the knowledge acquired at primary to develop further pupils’ understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs and alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex. Teaching about mental wellbeing is central to these subjects. We know that children and young people are increasingly experiencing challenges, and that young people are at particular risk of feeling lonely. The subject content in the Personal Development Programme (PDP) will give them the knowledge and capability to take care of themselves and receive support if problems arise.

Character Education

At CA we aim to foster pupil wellbeing and develop resilience and character as we know this is fundamental to pupils being happy, successful and productive members of society. Central to this is pupils’ ability to believe that they can achieve goals, both academic and personal; to stick to tasks that will help them achieve those goals, even when the reward may be distant or uncertain; and to recover from knocks and challenging periods in their lives. This is complemented by development of personal attributes including kindness, integrity, generosity, and honesty.

CA has been accredited for our participation in the Route to Resilience work on character building which is incorporated in our Teaching and Learning Policy. We believe that building character through the three central strands of ‘Respect, Resilience and Success’ should be at the heart of teaching and learning not just in the PD Programme and in Crew, but in every subject lesson and every interaction between staff and students, as is clear in our Strategic Plan.

The Personal Development Programme

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. Our Personal Development Programme can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.

We aim, through high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects to help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. PD helps to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, at school and in society.

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools.

At CA we deliver relationships and sex education as part of a timetabled PD Programme in Crew. We also ensure that aspects of the programme are taught within the Science, PE and Computing curriculums. In particular, the PD Programme at CA addresses the reality that for many young people the distinction between the online world and other aspects of life is less marked than for some adults. Young people often operate very freely in the online world and by secondary school age some are likely to be spending a substantial amount of time online. The internet and social media have other important characteristics which young people should be aware of in order to help them use them discriminately. For example, social media users are sometimes prepared to say things in more extreme, unkind or exaggerated ways than they might in face to face situations, and some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online. Some platforms attract large numbers of users with similar, sometimes extreme, views, who do not welcome dissent or debate. Young people should be aware that certain websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (i.e. to enable targeted advertising). In addition, criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. At CA we take these factors into account when planning teaching of the PD Programme.

Equality

Countesthorpe Academy complies with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). At CA we are alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled.

Right to be excused from sex education (commonly referred to as the right to withdraw)

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, CA would make

arrangements to provide the pupil with sex education following the PD Programme. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents have the right to view teaching materials and lesson plans for PDP on request.

The Delivery of RSE and Health Education

- a) RSE within the Personal Development Programme is delivered by Crew leaders, supported by experienced PSHE teachers and senior staff. The Science, Computing and PE curricular is delivered by subject staff. Staff are supported by appropriate outside agencies and guest speakers.
- b) **CPD** is given to staff via 'in-house' INSET and, where appropriate, external training.
- c) **Teaching and learning Styles.** The pedagogic method is no different than any other aspect of curriculum delivery in the college i.e. varied and differentiated. Handling of controversial topics is done with care and appropriate to the maturity, understanding and appropriateness of the content.
- d) Most teaching will be in mixed tutor groups. If it is thought appropriate at any time, single sex groups will be arranged.
- f) **Quality Assurance.** The RSE programme is reviewed regularly throughout each year. Teaching and learning is reviewed through learning walks and student voice surveys.
- g) **Resources.** A wide variety of resources are used. As with all aspects of the curriculum, the criteria used to select materials include the following (and is a matter of professional judgement):
 - appropriateness
 - quality
 - knowledge of source
 - differentiation
 - variety
 - cost

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. Our PD Programme aims to enable students to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. We also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure) from Year 9 onwards in PDP and Year 8 in Science.

We teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed. Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

Knowledge about safer sex and sexual health remains important to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. Our lessons are delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for young people to ask

questions in a safe environment. We set ground rules with the class to help manage sensitive discussion and question boxes to allow pupils to raise issues anonymously.

The PD Programme helps to reinforce to our pupils the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect. Through gaining the knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, they can be empowered to identify when relationships are unhealthy. Learning is underpinned by a wider, deliberate cultivation and practice of resilience and character in the individual. This includes character traits such as belief in achieving goals and persevering with tasks, as well as personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice.

Pupils are taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. Key aspects of the law relating to sex which should be taught include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy.

Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, are also addressed sensitively and clearly. As part of our PD Programme, we address the physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM). As well as addressing this in the context of the law, pupils may also need support to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk.

Internet safety is central to our PD Programme. Pupils are taught the rules and principles for keeping safe online. This will include how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues. Pupils need to have a strong understanding of how data is generated, collected, shared and used online, for example, how personal data is captured on social media or understanding the way that businesses may exploit the data available to them.

Some pupils are also exposed to harmful behaviours online, and via other forms of media, which may normalise violent sexual behaviours. A focus on healthy relationships and broader Relationships Education can help young people understand acceptable behaviours in relationships.

We believe that at the end of secondary education pupils should know:

- 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.
- 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 and sexual harassment (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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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).
- 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 and menopause.
- 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) within heterosexual and same-sex relationships, 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.
- important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- about gender identity and diversity.
- the risks associated with violence and exploitation by gangs and how to mitigate this.
- the push/pull factors involved in the 'grooming' process associated with extremism/radicalisation.
- the risks associated with criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations).
- how to combat hate crime.

Health Education

The aim of teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing is to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. We want our students to recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others and, when issues arise, how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources. Physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked, and it is important that pupils understand that good physical health contributes to good mental wellbeing, and vice versa.

Countesthorpe Academy is committed to developing pupils' self-control and ability to self-regulate, and strategies for doing so, through our pastoral support team and Crew programme. This enables pupils to become confident in their ability to achieve well and persevere even when they encounter setbacks or when their goals are distant, and to respond calmly and rationally to setbacks and challenges. This integrated, whole-school approach to the teaching and promotion of health and wellbeing has a potential positive impact on behaviour and attainment.

Through our teaching we aim to reduce stigma attached to health issues, in particular those to do with mental wellbeing. We aim to engender an atmosphere that encourages openness. This means that pupils feel they can check their understanding and seek any necessary help and advice as they gain knowledge about how to promote good health and wellbeing.

Health education in the PD Programme builds on primary content to enable pupils to understand how their bodies are changing, how they are feeling and why, to further develop the language that they use to talk about their bodies, health and emotions and to understand why terms associated with mental and physical health difficulties should not be used pejoratively. This knowledge should enable pupils to understand where normal variations in emotions and physical complaints end and health and wellbeing issues begin.

In Year 7, we continue to explore the impact of puberty, so that pupils are able to understand the physical and emotional changes, which take place at this time and their impact on their wider health and wellbeing. Emphasis is given to steps pupils can take to protect and support their own health and wellbeing. They need to know that there is a relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing and that this can also influence their ability to learn.

Our PD Programme covers self-care, the benefits of physical activity and time spent outdoors. This is linked to information on the benefits of sufficient sleep, good nutrition and strategies for building resilience.

Pupils are shown the contribution that hobbies, interests and participation in their own communities can make to overall wellbeing. We want them to understand that humans are social beings and that outward-facing activity, especially that with a service focus (for example, work, volunteering and participation in organisations such as the scouts or the girl guiding movements, the National Citizen Service or the Duke of Edinburgh Award) are beneficial for wellbeing. This can also contribute to the development of the attributes for a happy and successful adult life.

Pupils are also taught about problems and challenges. This includes factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental and physical health conditions, drugs, alcohol and information about effective interventions. We also look at issues such as eating disorders, the impact of time spent online, and negotiating social media, including online forums and gaming. Pupils are encouraged to consider the criteria to judge when they, or someone they know, needs support and where they can seek help if they have concerns. This includes details on which adults in school (e.g. school nurses), and external bodies such as helplines, can offer support.

Tutors are aware of common 'adverse childhood experiences' (such as family breakdown, bereavement and exposure to domestic violence) and when and how these may be affecting any of their pupils.

We believe that at the end of secondary education pupils should know:

- how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
- that happiness is linked to being connected to others.
- how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns.
- common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression).

- how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health.
- the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.
- the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image), how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, and the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt.
- how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.
- the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress.
- the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardiovascular ill-health.
- about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.
- how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.
- the facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions.
- the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
- the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood.
- the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency.
- awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.
- the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.
- about personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.
- about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist.
- the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
- the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination.
- the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.
- basic treatment for common injuries.
- life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.
- the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.
- key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing.
- the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.