



CEDARS ACADEMY TRUST

Cedars Academy: Low Fell
Cedars Academy: High Heworth

Relationships and Sex Education

Policy

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The Policy

1. Rationale

- 1.1** This policy sets out the framework for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at The Cedars Academy Trust. It explains how our curriculum is planned, organised and delivered at both sites, with teaching adapted to pupils' ages, stages of development and individual needs.
- 1.2** This policy applies to both sites: Cedars Academy: Low Fell (Reception to Year 11) and Cedars Academy: High Heworth (Years 7 to 13). The rules on consultation, withdrawal, teaching materials, safeguarding and visitors are the same at both sites. What each site teaches, and when, is set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.3** This policy replaces the separate High Heworth PSHE Policy (June 2026).
- 1.4** This policy was reviewed and developed in response to the following guidance:
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance (DfE, July 2025), in force from 1 September 2026
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (DfE), including Part Five: child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (DfE)
 - Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (UKCIS, updated March 2024)
 - Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE, 2017)
 - Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE, 2015)
 - Equality Act 2010: advice for schools (DfE, 2014)
 - National Curriculum in England: Key Stages 1 to 4 (DfE, 2014)
- 1.5** This policy should be read with the following Trust policies:
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Anti-Bullying Policy
 - Behaviour Policy
 - SEND Policy
 - Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy
 - Mobile Phone Policy
 - Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy

2. Aims and Intent

- 2.1** At the Trust, our aims for RSE are:
- to deliver high-quality, age and stage-appropriate RSE lessons as part of our overall planned curriculum and ethos;
 - to fulfil our legal obligations for RSE, while taking account of the views of parents and carers;
 - to make sure pupils are given accurate information from reliable sources;

- to use a range of appropriate resources matched to the strengths and needs of individual pupils;
- to give pupils the knowledge and skills that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships;
- to support young people to develop positive characteristics, including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness and trustworthiness;
- to give pupils opportunities to take part positively in sensitive discussions, and the confidence to ask questions that help address any misconceptions;
- to encourage pupils to remember what they learn, to support their ongoing preparation for the future.

2.2 To achieve these aims, we plan and teach the RSE content set out in the DfE statutory guidance. Appendix 1 shows how each site does this.

3. Legal Obligations

- 3.1** The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, brought compulsory requirements into effect across all schools.
- 3.2** Relationships Education is compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education, and RSE is compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. The regulations also make Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools. At the Trust, Health Education is taught through PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) at both sites.
- 3.3** The focus of Relationships Education is to teach the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. 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.
- 3.4** Primary schools can decide whether or not pupils are taught sex education. To support pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development, Cedars Academy: Low Fell offers sex education to pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, where the teaching and learning is appropriate for the age and stage of each pupil. Most of what is taught as sex education for these pupils is already covered in PSHE, and focuses on reducing vulnerability and increasing independence skills. It is always taught in a way that matches each child's understanding.
- 3.5** At secondary level (Years 7 to 11 at both sites, and Years 12 and 13 at Cedars Academy: High Heworth), sex education is taught as part of RSE.
- 3.6** The Trust must have regard to the statutory guidance. It must keep this policy up to date, consult parents and carers when developing and reviewing it, publish it on the Trust website, and give a free copy to anyone who asks for one.

4. Parent and Carer Engagement

- 4.1** The Trust is committed to working with parents and carers on all aspects of their child's education. We understand the importance of the role of parents and carers in developing their child's understanding of relationships, sex and health.

- 4.2** The law requires schools to consult parents and carers on their RSE policy. Consultation must be carried out when the policy is formed and whenever it is updated.
- 4.3** Each year, when the policy has been reviewed and updated, we tell parents and carers at both sites through our parent communication platform, Reach More Parents, and the Trust website. We give them time to respond with their views before the policy goes to trustees for approval. The final version is then published on the Trust website.
- 4.4** We give parents and carers further opportunities to find out about, and ask questions about, what is taught in RSE and how, by providing:
- notice of when RSE topics are to be taught, and a summary of the content to be covered;
 - opportunities to view and discuss examples of RSE teaching and learning resources;
 - information about their right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education.
- 4.5** Parents and carers of new pupils are given all of the above information when their child is admitted, whatever time of year they join.
- 4.6** We understand that parents and carers may have concerns about some aspects of RSE. All views will be listened to and carefully considered. However, the Trust makes the final decision about what is taught and when, informed by our statutory duties and the needs of our pupils. Parents and carers cannot veto curriculum content.
- 4.7** Parents and carers can find out about their child's progress in RSE topics, for example at Annual Reviews of EHCPs, at parents' evenings and in progress reports.
- 4.8** Parents and carers can see a representative sample of the materials used to teach RSE, and can ask to see all the materials their child will be taught, by appointment with the site PSHE Lead. Many PSHE materials are protected by copyright, so they cannot be put on the website or social media. Where materials are sent home, parents and carers agree, as a condition of seeing them, not to copy or share them further except as copyright law allows. Copyright will never be used as a reason to refuse to share materials.
- 4.9** Sometimes a site may need to teach something not set out in this policy, to respond to an issue affecting its pupils, for example where pupils are known to have seen pornography online. The site will tell parents and carers in advance and share the materials on request. Protective and preventative content is introduced in a way that does not cause unreasonable alarm and does not appear to normalise risky behaviour.
- 4.10** Before sex education is taught to primary-phase pupils at Cedars Academy: Low Fell, parents and carers are consulted on what it will cover, and offered support in talking to their children about it.
- 4.11** Parents and carers at both sites were consulted on this policy before it was approved:
Cedars Low Fell consultation closed 7th October 2026
Cedars High Heworth consultation closed 3rd September 2026

5. Right to Withdraw

- 5.1** RSE is an important part of our curriculum and we hope that all pupils will take part in all of it. Much of it is not taught as discrete lessons, but is part of how we approach every part of a

child's day, including self-care. The Trust recognises the legal rights of parents and carers set out below.

- 5.2** Parents and carers cannot withdraw their child from any part of Relationships Education or Health Education. This includes learning about the changing adolescent body and puberty, and learning the correct names for body parts.
- 5.3** Parents and carers cannot withdraw their child from any part of our individualised science curriculum. At Key Stages 1 and 2 this includes the names of external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age, and reproduction in some plants and animals. At Key Stages 3 and 4 it includes reproduction in humans and plants, hormones in reproduction, hormonal and non-hormonal methods of contraception, and communicable diseases, including sexually transmitted infections.
- 5.4 Primary phase (Cedars Academy: Low Fell, Reception to Year 6).** Parents and carers can ask for their child to be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education taught beyond science and Health Education. The request will always be granted.
- 5.5 Secondary phase (both sites, from Year 7).** Parents and carers can ask for their child to be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education taught as part of RSE. The request will be granted except in exceptional circumstances, for example because of a safeguarding concern or the pupil's specific vulnerability.
- 5.6** From three terms before their 16th birthday, a pupil can choose to receive sex education even if their parent or carer has asked for them to be withdrawn. If so, we will arrange for the pupil to receive sex education during one of those three terms.
- 5.7** Requests should be made in writing to the Director of Inclusion, through the site office. Before deciding, the Director of Inclusion discusses the request with the parent or carer and with the site Headteacher. We explain what the lessons cover and why they matter, and the possible effects of withdrawal, including that the child may hear a less accurate version of the lesson from other pupils.
- 5.8** In line with the statutory guidance, where a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, we keep a record of this, including the discussions and requests from parents and carers, and make sure the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education while withdrawn.
- 5.9** Appendix 2 gives an overview of which parts of RSE are compulsory at each stage of education. A letter to parents and carers explaining the right to withdraw is at Appendix 3.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1** The Director of Inclusion has overall responsibility for making sure that RSE is organised and delivered by staff with an appropriate level of expertise and knowledge, and that all pupils make progress towards the expected outcomes. The Director of Inclusion also manages requests to withdraw pupils from sex education, decides them after discussion with the site Headteacher, and arranges appropriate alternative education.
- 6.2** Each site Headteacher makes sure that RSE is timetabled, resourced and taught at their site.
- 6.3** The PSHE Lead at each site is responsible for making sure that RSE is well planned and sequenced, both as part of an overall long-term plan and in specific schemes of work. With the support of the Senior Leadership Group (SLG), the PSHE Lead makes sure that RSE is

taught consistently well across their site and is suitably resourced. This may include liaising with and supporting other staff and external professionals who deliver some or all RSE lessons, and being a member of the PSHE Association.

- 6.4** The PSHE Lead works closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and with colleagues in related curriculum areas, to make sure the curriculum is suitable for individual pupils, addresses emerging digital risks, and complements the rest of our broad and balanced curriculum.
- 6.5** Teachers who are given responsibility for delivering RSE lessons must recognise the importance of RSE. They must seek support and advice wherever necessary, so that teaching is well prepared and of a high standard at all times. Through the PSHE Association, staff can access a wide range of support on how to teach PSHE well.
- 6.6** The Trust Board, through the Curriculum & Pupils Committee, makes sure that the Trust complies with this policy and meets its legal obligations for RSE, including that:
 - all pupils receive their entitlement to RSE and Health Education;
 - the quality of provision is regularly monitored and evaluated;
 - teaching is accessible to all pupils;
 - parents and carers have clear information about what is taught and about their right to request withdrawal from sex education.
- 6.7** The Academy Business Leader owns this policy document and publishes it on the Trust website and National College.

7. Implementation (Organisation and Delivery)

- 7.1** Effective RSE does not encourage or promote sexual experimentation. RSE is carefully planned and delivered mainly through PSHE. PSHE is given a high priority: it is timetabled every week and is also part of our wider curriculum offer for all key stages. Some aspects of RSE feature across several topics, but discrete RSE topics are also planned and taught, giving full consideration to timing in relation to pupils' age and stage, and sequenced appropriately across the curriculum.
- 7.2** Both sites plan PSHE, including RSE and Health Education, using the PSHE Association Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND (2026). The framework maps the statutory content and adapts learning outcomes where statutory content may not be accessible for pupils with SEND. Appendix 1 sets out how each site organises its curriculum.
- 7.3** Through careful organisation and delivery of RSE, we make sure that:
 - RSE is delivered in a non-judgemental, age and stage-appropriate, factual and inclusive way that allows pupils to ask questions in a safe environment. Approaches such as relational practice and attachment-focused teams allow pupils to raise issues or ask questions they may find embarrassing;
 - class teams listen to pupils' views and encourage them to ask questions and take part in discussion. Ground rules are developed and shared with pupils, so that discussions and personal questions or comments, including more challenging questions, are managed appropriately and sensitively;

- core knowledge is divided into units of a manageable size;
- taught content gives opportunities to revisit earlier learning and allows clear progression. Topics and lessons are carefully sequenced within a planned scheme of work;
- teaching includes enough well-chosen opportunities for pupils to embed new knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations;
- the curriculum addresses issues in a timely way, in line with current evidence on pupils' development as well as their age;
- groupings are carefully considered by teachers and senior leaders (including the DSL where appropriate). Some classes may be taught in single-sex groups, one-to-one or as a whole class, depending on the topic, the cultural, religious or personal background of pupils, their age and their SEND;
- all resources are selected carefully. Inappropriate or illegal images and videos are never used, and all related Trust policies are followed;
- care is taken that no pupil is stigmatised because of their home circumstances or needs, recognising sensitively that some children have a different structure of support around them, for example children in care or young carers;
- staff are aware that pupils with SEND are at higher risk of exploitation, bullying and online harm because of the nature of their SEND, and act to reduce these risks, in line with KCSIE 2026;
- there is a balance between teaching pupils about making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online) and being clear that it is never the fault of a child who is abused, and that victim blaming is always wrong;
- we recognise that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation, or questioning their gender. All pupils should feel that the content is relevant to them and is explored at a timely point in a clear, sensitive and respectful way. Support for a pupil who is questioning their gender follows the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and KCSIE 2026;
- content related to LGBT+ is fully integrated into our teaching, rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson;
- at secondary level, teaching covers the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment. Beyond these, where there is significant debate, staff do not endorse any particular view or teach it as fact; for example, they do not teach as fact that all people have a gender identity. Staff avoid language and activities that repeat or reinforce gender stereotypes, and avoid any suggestion that social transition is a simple solution to feelings of distress or discomfort;
- there is a focus on challenging derogatory views about the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, by exploring, and developing mutual respect for, people who are different from ourselves;
- steps are taken to encourage healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication, and to provide an environment that challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their sex or any other protected characteristic;

- staff are alert to sexism, misogyny, homophobia, gender stereotypes, sexual violence and sexual harassment, and take positive action to build a culture in which these are not tolerated;
- the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (including AI-generated images and deepfakes) is taught as part of a developmental PSHE programme, rather than in isolation;
- online safety and digital behaviour are covered fully, including consent, online harms (misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy content, online misogyny and AI risks) and safe digital communication;
- mental health and emotional wellbeing are taught as integral to RSE;
- inclusive teaching recognises family diversity and different sexual orientations;
- respectful debate and the skills to manage digital misinformation are actively promoted.

7.4 Teaching must be accessible to every pupil and prepare pupils for adulthood, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice. The Equality Act 2010 applies to how the curriculum is delivered, so no pupil may be discriminated against. At both sites:

- content is broken down into manageable steps, with simplified language, visual supports and scaffolded tasks;
- delivery is tailored to each pupil's EHCP outcomes, so that PSHE supports wider priorities such as communication, emotional regulation, independence and social interaction;
- lessons use visual aids, modelling, role-play, social stories and practical activities;
- where appropriate, pupils receive small-group or one-to-one support to rehearse skills such as consent, personal safety, emotional literacy and healthy relationships in a safe, structured setting;
- staff use clear, consistent language, visual timetables, symbols and repetition to support pupils with speech, language and communication needs;
- sensitive topics, such as relationships, online safety and sexual health, are taught with extra pre-teaching, reinforcement and personalised resources, so that pupils understand risks and protective behaviours;
- the PSHE Leads work closely with the Director of Inclusion, therapists and external agencies, so that content is appropriate, safe and responsive to individual needs.

8. Working with Other Professionals

8.1 Working with external agencies can enhance our delivery of RSE, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging pupils. Examples include the school nurse, a representative of the NSPCC Speak Out Stay Safe programme, or community police officers. Visitors are used to enhance teaching by our own staff, not to replace it. Trust staff are present during any RSE session delivered by an external visitor. Before the session, we agree with the visitor how confidentiality will work and how any safeguarding concern will be dealt with, in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

8.2 External visitors are expected to comply with this policy. The Trust remains responsible for what is taught. In line with our usual procedures, we check the credentials of all external agencies and make sure their teaching fits the planned curriculum and this policy. We discuss with the visitor how they intend to deliver their sessions, check that content is accurate, age

and stage appropriate, unbiased and accessible for all pupils, and ask to see copies of the materials and lesson plans in advance.

- 8.3** Parents and carers can ask to see the resources a visitor will use before the lesson.
- 8.4** Where a pupil has involvement from specialist external agencies, discussions between those agencies and appropriate senior staff, including the DSL, help make sure that RSE is delivered in the way that is most appropriate for the individual child.

9. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

- 9.1** Keeping our pupils safe is central to our work, and the RSE curriculum plays an important role in preventative education. All pupils are taught about keeping themselves safe, including online, as part of PSHE. The RSE curriculum supports safeguarding education, including teaching about consent, online risks, respectful relationships and sexual harassment, in line with Part Five of KCSIE 2026.
- 9.2** The PSHE Lead liaises with the DSL on anything safeguarding-related within RSE. The DSL is likely to know of trusted, high-quality local resources that could be used, and of any local issues that should be addressed in lessons. The DSL liaises with the PSHE Lead about the circumstances of individual pupils where needed, and further professional advice is sought where required.
- 9.3** Our practice gives pupils an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues, and we recognise that this may lead to more safeguarding reports. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy must be followed at all times. Without exception, concerns or disclosures made in, or as a result of, RSE lessons must be shared with the DSL or a Deputy DSL and recorded on CPOMS.
- 9.4** Pupils are told how to raise a concern or make a report, and how any report will be handled, including when they are worried about a friend or peer. Staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests.
- 9.5** Where a pupil makes a disclosure, they are told who the information will be shared with and why, and are supported throughout. Some pupils may need time to talk one-to-one after the lesson, or to be signposted to further advice or support.

10. Managing Difficult Questions

- 10.1** Pupils may ask teachers or other adults questions about sex or sexuality. Given how easy it is to access the internet, pupils whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information.
- 10.2** The PSHE Lead advises staff on which questions are appropriate or inappropriate to ask and answer in a whole-class setting, supported by the use of ground rules. Staff can also use PSHE Association guidance on answering questions.
- 10.3** Depending on the question, staff use their skill and discretion to decide whether to answer it at the time. They may explain to a pupil that they will come back to the question later, and may discuss possible responses with a parent or carer, the PSHE Lead, the DSL or a member of

the SLG. Answers may then be followed up with individuals, small groups or the whole class as appropriate.

- 10.4** Pupils may ask about topics beyond the sex education taught at their site, or about content they have been withdrawn from. Staff may answer if it is appropriate for the pupil's age and stage, with the emphasis on supporting the child. If it is not appropriate, staff may ask the pupil to speak to their parents or carers or another trusted adult, and signpost support services where needed.
- 10.5** Where possible, teaching uses distancing techniques, such as case studies and scenarios, so that pupils can discuss issues without drawing on personal experience.
- 10.6** Where political or controversial issues arise, staff offer a balanced presentation of opposing views, avoid bias, and teach pupils how to recognise bias and weigh evidence. Pupils should feel free to express reasonable views that differ from those of staff, peers or families. Teaching reflects UK law and respect for the rights, dignity and safety of every person: freedom of belief and expression does not permit discrimination, harassment or abuse.

11. Impact and Assessment

- 11.1** The Trust has the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in RSE as in other curriculum areas. Our curriculum builds on the knowledge pupils have already gained, including in other subjects, and pupils receive regular feedback on their progress.
- 11.2** Learning is assessed, and assessment is used to identify where pupils need extra support, intervention or challenge. There is no formal examined assessment for RSE. Progress is captured through each site's own assessment system, and through observation, discussion, practical demonstration and personalised assessment tools, rather than written outcomes alone.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 12.1** The Senior Leadership Group (SLG) is responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in RSE.
- 12.2** The quality of RSE is also self-evaluated through an annual PSHE subject report at each site. This takes account of lesson visits and learning walks, planning and work scrutiny, pupil voice, parent feedback and pupil progress. The evaluation asks:
 - Is the curriculum effectively managed, and are staff teaching RSE suitably skilled and knowledgeable?
 - Does the RSE curriculum reflect national guidance, local priorities and pupils' needs?
 - Are all pupils being taught the curriculum as intended?
 - Is the quality of teaching consistent across all classes, and does it reflect best practice?
 - Are the RSE resources used suitable and accessible?
- 12.3** The Curriculum & Pupils Committee monitors this policy annually on behalf of the Trust Board, and reports to the Board as needed.

13. Policy Review

- 13.1** This policy is reviewed every year by the PSHE Leads at both sites. As set out in section 4, parents and carers are consulted and can share their views before the reviewed policy is approved by the Curriculum & Pupils Committee. The policy is published on the Trust website and all stakeholders are told of any changes.
- 13.2** The next scheduled review date for this policy is August 2027.

Appendices

Appendix 1A: Cedars Academy: Low Fell curriculum

Pupils	Reception to Year 11
What is taught	Relationships Education (Reception to Year 6), RSE (Years 7 to 11) and Health Education (all years), within PSHE. Sex education is offered in Key Stages 1 and 2 where appropriate for the pupil's age and stage (see 3.4).
How it is organised	PSHE is timetabled every week and is also part of the whole school day, including self-care routines. It is taught by class teams and led by the Low Fell PSHE Lead.
Curriculum frameworks	The PSHE Association Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND (2026) (see below). The EQUALS Informal Curriculum, which is designed for learners with complex learning difficulties. Its areas are My Sensory Play, My Communication, My Physical Well-Being, My Independence (dressing and undressing, travel training, shopping and cooking) and My Outdoor School.
Oral health	Oral health is taught within PSHE. Pupils take part in a daily supervised toothbrushing programme, delivered by trained staff.

PSHE Association Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND

The framework has six sections. Each has learning outcomes at seven stages: Encountering, Exploring, Foundation, Core, Development, Enrichment and Enhancement. Pupils work at the stage that matches their learning needs, rather than by year group, and revisit and consolidate earlier learning as they move through school.

Section	What it covers
Self-awareness	Me, who I am, my likes, dislikes, strengths and interests
Self-care, support and safety	Looking after myself and keeping safe, including online
Managing feelings	Understanding feelings, emotion regulation skills, and how feelings can affect choices and behaviour
Changing and growing	How I and others are changing; new opportunities and responsibilities; managing puberty and reproductive health
Healthy lifestyles	Being and keeping healthy, physical activity, food choices and hygiene routines
The world I live in	Managing money and aspirations for work; living confidently in the wider world

Appendix 1B: Cedars Academy: High Heworth curriculum

Pupils	Years 7 to 13
What is taught	RSE and Health Education, within PSHE. Sex education is taught every year (see below). The wider PSHE programme also covers citizenship, money and careers, as part of Preparing for Adulthood outcomes.
Curriculum framework	The PSHE Association Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND (2026), through six themes: Self-awareness; Managing feelings; Healthy lifestyles; Self-care, support and safety; Changing and growing; and The world I live in.
Staffing	A dedicated PSHE Subject Lead, supported by a specialist HLTA for Key Stage 3 and a specialist teacher for Key Stages 4 and 5. The team takes part in regular training on safeguarding, health education, relationships education and inclusive practice.
Lessons	Key Stage 3: one one-hour lesson a week, plus a weekly lesson or intervention from class teachers. Key Stages 4 and 5: two lessons a week.
Partners	The Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Service (workshops, training and specialist guidance), school nurses and police officers.
Pupil voice	Each year pupils are consulted on the PSHE curriculum through structured discussion and an annual pupil questionnaire. Their feedback informs planning.
Oral health	Oral health is taught within PSHE. Pupils take part in a daily supervised toothbrushing programme, delivered by trained staff.

Sex education by year

Year	Focus
Year 7	Puberty and body changes
Year 8	Consent and body autonomy
Year 9	Sexual health and safety
Year 10	Healthy sexual relationships
Year 11	Reproductive and sexual health
Year 12	Adult intimate relationships
Year 13	Family planning and adult sexual health

PSHE programme overview, Years 7 to 13

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Y7	Knowing Me Strengths, identity, routines, emotions, asking for help	Healthy Minds Recognising emotions, anxiety, regulation, resilience, trusted adults	Growing & Changing Puberty, body changes, hygiene, privacy, menstruation, personal care	Keeping Safe Personal boundaries, unwanted touch, emergencies, first aid, 999, medicines	Healthy Relationships Friendships, kindness, respect, bullying, online communication	Healthy Living Food, sleep, exercise, screen time, basic online safety
Y8	Respect & Difference Discrimination, prejudice, diversity, protected characteristics	Digital World Social media, AI, deepfakes, misinformation, digital footprints, gaming, gambling	Relationships & Consent Consent, body autonomy, healthy vs unhealthy relationships, coercion	Keeping Myself Safe Risk taking, exploitation, criminal exploitation, online harm, reporting concerns	Managing Strong Feelings Emotional regulation, conflict resolution, self-worth, coping strategies	Health Choices Alcohol, vaping, smoking, medicines, healthy choices
Y9	Preparing for Adult Relationships Romantic relationships, intimacy, sexual orientation, gender, respectful relationships	Sexual Health & Safety Contraception, STIs, pregnancy, accessing healthcare, confidentiality	Power & Influence Pornography, misogyny, incel/manosphere influences, coercive control, domestic abuse, sexual harassment	Mental Health & Wellbeing Depression, self-harm awareness, suicide prevention, bereavement, accessing support	Independence & Community Travel, employment behaviours, money, personal safety, citizenship, democracy, rule of law	Preparing for KS4 Healthy lifestyles, personal responsibility, future aspirations, transition
Y10	Knowing Myself Identity, strengths, interests, self-esteem, understanding needs, self-expression	Understanding Feelings/Sexual Health Recognising emotions, managing stress, coping strategies, resilience, trusted adults, consent, sexual health services, STI prevention	Friendships & Boundaries Healthy friendships, personal space, respect, consent, communication	Keeping Safe Online Online safety, social media, cyberbullying, AI awareness, digital footprints, sextortion, radicalisation/extremism	Healthy Lifestyles Nutrition, physical activity, sleep, hygiene, self-care	Making Safe Choices Risk-taking, peer influence, vaping, alcohol, medicines, support services
Y11	Developing Self-Advocacy Rights, confidence, expressing views, decision-making, independence	Healthy Relationships Respect, consent, healthy vs unhealthy relationships, conflict resolution, radicalisation/extremism	Sexual Health & Growing Up Contraception, STIs, reproductive health, accessing support	Personal Safety & Exploitation County Lines, grooming, coercion, scams, community safety	Managing Money Safely Budgeting, banking, consumer awareness, gambling risks	Preparing for the Future Resilience, coping with change, aspirations, transition planning
Y12	Independent Living Skills Organisation, cooking, household management, routines, responsibilities	Working Life Workplace expectations, professional behaviour, teamwork, communication	Managing Adult Relationships Healthy partnerships, boundaries, respect, intimacy, support networks, healthy masculinity/gender stereotypes	Managing Physical & Mental Health Healthcare services, self-care, mental wellbeing, healthy routines	Citizenship & Community Volunteering, democracy, rights, responsibilities, community participation	Travel, Housing & Budgeting Public transport, housing options, bills, budgeting, safety, financial exploitation
Y13	Adult Services & Self-Advocacy EHCP transitions, social care, advocacy, making informed decisions	Long-Term Relationships & Family Life Commitment, family relationships, healthy masculinity/gender stereotypes, parenting awareness, support services	Sexual Health in Adulthood Contraception review, fertility, family planning, health services	Financial Independence Benefits, tax, savings, banking, avoiding financial exploitation	Employment & Next Steps CVs, applications, interviews, career planning, workplace rights, mutual respect & law	Life Beyond Cedars Independent adulthood, community inclusion, wellbeing, future planning

Appendix 2: What is compulsory, and the right to withdraw

This table sets out which parts of RSE are compulsory at each stage, as set out by the DfE, and where parents and carers can ask for their child to be withdrawn.

	Primary phase (Low Fell, Reception to Year 6)	Secondary phase (both sites, Years 7 to 11)	Post-16 (High Heworth, Years 12 and 13)
Relationships Education (primary) and the relationships content of RSE (secondary)	Must be taught. No right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No right to withdraw.	Taught. No right to withdraw.
Health Education, including puberty	Must be taught. No right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No right to withdraw.	Taught. No right to withdraw.
Science, including reproduction	Must be taught. No right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No right to withdraw.	Not applicable. The national curriculum for science ends at Key Stage 4.
Sex education, beyond science and Health Education	Low Fell chooses to teach it where appropriate. Parents and carers can ask for withdrawal, and the request is always granted.	Must be taught. Parents and carers can ask for withdrawal. The request is granted except in exceptional circumstances. From three terms before their 16th birthday, the pupil can choose to receive it.	Taught. The pupil can choose to receive it, even if a parent or carer has asked for withdrawal.

Appendix 3: Letter to parents and carers

Cedars Academy: Low Fell, Ivy Lane, Low Fell, Gateshead NE9 6QD

Cedars Academy: High Heworth, Colegate West, Gateshead NE10 9AH

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: Relationships and Sex Education at Cedars Academy

At Cedars Academy, we believe it is important to give our pupils a thorough and balanced curriculum, including age and stage-appropriate information about relationships and sex.

What will be taught, and when, is set out in the Trust's Relationships and Sex Education Policy. The policy is reviewed each year against the DfE statutory guidance. It is on our website, and the school office will give you a free copy on request.

All pupils must be taught relationships education and health education. You cannot withdraw your child from these, or from what is taught in science. You can ask for your child to be withdrawn from some or all sex education. Section 5 of the policy explains how this works at each stage of education.

You can also ask to see the materials used to teach your child. Please contact the school office to arrange this.

If you would like to discuss a withdrawal request, please write to the Director of Inclusion through the school office.

If you have any concerns or questions about your child's participation in these lessons, please contact a member of the Senior Leadership Group or your child's class teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Senior Leadership Group
Cedars Academy Trust