

Ysgol Aberconwy



Relationship & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

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THIS POLICY HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

Signed:

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Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy

1. Introduction

This policy details Ysgol Aberconwy's whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

At Ysgol Aberconwy we believe that high quality RSE is vital for the personal, social and emotional development of our pupils.

RSE is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Learning for RSE refers to both what is expressly taught and what is embedded throughout the curriculum through our whole school approach.

Our RSE programme:

- will equip our pupils with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.
- is developmentally appropriate, relevant and engaging with clear progression pathways for learning and experience.
- has equal status to other areas of the curriculum.

We believe that by providing high quality RSE we are upholding the ethos, values, and moral framework of our school by showing respect for all pupils, staff and the wider community, by the inclusion of sexual diversity, celebrating differences and by building healthy relationships.

We developed this policy in consultation with staff, governing body, local authority, pupils and parents/carers, and in alignment with the latest guidance by:

- Welsh Government
 - [Curriculum for Wales Guidance, 2020](#)
 - [Keeping Learners Safe Guidance, 2016](#)
 - [Curriculum for Wales – Relationships and Sexuality Education Code, 2022](#)
- UK Government
 - [Equality Act, 2010](#)

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other policies, including: Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policies, Equality Policies and, Child Protection Policy and the [Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)

In particular, the schools' Relationships and Sexuality Education will include developmentally appropriate learning around the following thematic areas.

- **Rights and equity** - Learners will develop an understanding of how rights related to sex, gender, sexuality and relationships contribute to the freedom, equity, dignity, well-being and safety of all people.
- **Relationships** - Learners will develop an understanding of how different types of safe, consensual, healthy and fulfilling relationships can be formed and maintained.
- **Sex, gender and sexuality** - Learners will develop an understanding of sex, gender and sexuality. This includes how biology, society and culture shape our sense of self and relationships with others. The learning will recognise sexual identity, gender and LGBTQ+ diversity and understandings how sex, gender and sexuality have evolved over time.
- **Bodies and body image** - Learners will develop an understanding of the human body and how it changes over time, including people's feelings about their bodies, and their sexual and reproductive capacities and functions.
- **Sexual health and well-being** - Learners will develop an understanding of the positive role of sexuality in human life and a gradual awareness of personal sexual health and well-being. Learners will appreciate the different ways that people express sexuality across cultures, including myths about sexual health and well-being.
- **Violence, safety and support** - Learners will develop an understanding of the social, emotional, physical and legal nature and impact of gender-based and sexual violence, including online. Learners will be supported to manage conflict, risk and pressures of different kinds and to build confidence to speak out and know how to seek advice and support .

Welsh Government, Curriculum for Wales Guidance 2020

Curriculum for Wales - RSE Code 2022

Historically, parents/carers were entitled to withdraw their child/children from Sex and Relationships Education, however, the "Curriculum for Wales Guidance, 2020", and "Curriculum for Wales - RSE Code 2022" does not provide parents/carers with the right to withdraw. In order to ensure compliance with the mandatory requirements outlined within these documents we will follow the timetable below.

- *From the 1st of September 2023* : Relationships and Sexuality Education will be mandatory for year 7 and 8 pupils, with the right to withdraw still in place for year 9, 10 and 11 pupils.
- *From the 1st of September 2024* : Relationships and Sexuality Education will be mandatory for year 7, 8 and 9 pupils, with the right to withdraw still in place for year 10 and 11 pupils.
- *From the 1st of September 2025* : Relationships and Sexuality Education will be mandatory for year 7, 8, 9 and 10 pupils, with the right to withdraw still in place for year 11 pupils.
- *From the 1st of September 2026* : Relationships and Sexuality Education will be mandatory for all pupils.

"Curriculum for Wales - RSE Code 2022" stipulates that our RSE provision must be developmentally appropriate for each pupil. This may mean some pupils will be ready for specific learning before the broad

indications given in the "Curriculum for Wales - RSE Code 2022", but likewise it may mean that some pupils need opportunity for further development before they engage with specific learning. As we plan our RSE provision for each child we will take into account factors such as age, knowledge, maturity, any additional learning needs, as well as their physiological and emotional development. If we have any questions in regards to the developmental requirements of a pupil we will consult with parents/carers and other professionals to ensure that the planned content and delivery method is developmentally appropriate for their needs. If parents/carers have any questions around ensuring the provision is developmentally appropriate for their child, they can contact the school by phoning the school reception.

We will also ensure that parents/carers are fully aware of the provision and the planned provision in relation to RSE during the annual ALN review process for any students with an IDP.

2. RSE Programme

Our aim is to support our pupils' rights to enjoy equitable, safe, healthy and fulfilling relationships throughout their lives. This includes the ability to recognise, understand and speak out about discrimination and violence and know how and where to seek support, advice and factual information on a range of RSE issues.

Our RSE programme is:

- inclusive and tailored to suit the individual needs of our pupils.
- developmentally appropriate for each learner, meaning that learners' needs of similar ages may differ (this is detailed further in our RSE Scheme of Work).
- focused on healthy relationships and identity, sexual health and well-being, empowerment, and safety and respect (as detailed in "Curriculum for Wales - RSE Code, 2022").
- based on the following thematic areas: relationships; rights and equity; sex, gender and sexuality; bodies and body image; sexual health and well-being; and violence, safety and support.

3. Curriculum Design

In order to conform with Welsh Government, Curriculum for Wales Guidance 2020, the RSE curriculum will be taught through cross-cutting themes and will have equal status to other Areas of Learning and Experience. It will be delivered as a whole-school approach so that the following principles are supported and embedded across the school.

Learning:

- will be **rights and gender-equity based** so that learners can develop an understanding of how rights related to relationships, sex, gender and sexuality.
- will be **empowering** to enable teachers to create a positive RSE curriculum that enhances learner voice.

- will be **relevant and developmentally appropriate** to ensure that all RSE provision recognises and responds to all learners' needs.
- will be **co-produced**, offering learners the opportunity to be involved with decisions about learning and teaching in RSE.
- will be **creative** so that RSE provision can create an ethical, safe and engaging environment for learners to feel, think, question and share their thoughts on sensitive topics.
- will be **holistic with cross-cutting themes** that includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical and cultural elements.
- will be **inclusive** for all learners, recognising and valuing diversity and difference within sex, gender, sexuality and relationships, and ensuring that RSE provision is inclusive of LGBTQ+ lives.
- will be **protective and preventative** so that learners understand and recognise discrimination and violence and are able to seek support and advice regarding health, relationships, sex, gender equity and sexuality with confidence'.

Learners are given opportunities to comment on the school's RSE policy, lessons and practice by undertaking consultation activities with year 12 and 13 learners. Their views contribute to curriculum planning and evaluating effectiveness.

Core to our RSE provision is its reference on our Learning Journeys. The Learning Journeys for all our projects are available on the school's website. These documents detail how we manage, organise and embed RSE throughout our whole school curriculum. They clearly state how we ensure our programme is developmentally appropriate in alignment with "Curriculum for Wales Guidance, 2020", and "Curriculum for Wales - RSE Code, 2022".

All resources are carefully selected for their suitability and are reviewed for their effectiveness following their use by teachers and the lead RSE member of staff.

4. Teaching RSE

Teachers and the lead RSE member of staff will undertake the planning, teaching, evaluating and monitoring of the school's RSE programme. The school will ensure a safe learning environment for teachers, staff and pupils by establishing and agreeing to the school's class rules and arrangement.

Our staff should not answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their pupils that could make either party vulnerable.

4.1 Answering Pupils Questions

RSE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from pupils. We view questions as a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others.

As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group. There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class. When these situations arise we will ensure that two members of staff are present as the teacher addresses the raised question with the pupil. If a teacher becomes concerned about a pupil in any way or any disclosures are made the school's safeguarding policy and procedures will be followed.

We believe that an open approach to answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online, or from peers and older pupils. We believe that examining issues with the whole class is essential to reduce the stigma and embarrassment that can surround some of the issues explored in RSE. We believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they are able to discuss issues openly in a safe environment with trained professionals.

5. Working with Other Organisations

In order to ensure that our pupils receive the best possible RSE education we work collaboratively with health, educational, and youth service colleagues and other external organisations to enrich our programme. We carefully select partners and external organisations, ensuring that they are reputable organisations with expertise in RSE.

Accordingly, the school's programme may be supported by other outside agencies e.g. Stonewall/Viva to support gender issues or a health professional such as the school nurse to discuss sexual health.

Before any such organisations deliver RSE content, our lead RSE staff will:

- ensure that they are a reputable organisation with expertise in RSE. If the school is uncertain about the credibility of an organisation, the RSE lead will contact the Local Authority for guidance and support.
- ensure the school receives written confirmation from the external organisation, verifying the individual's appropriate qualifications and skills to work with children and young people, as well as their commitment to adhering to our safeguarding policy.
- review the content, resources, and delivery method, ensuring that they are safe and developmentally appropriate for our students and in full alignment with the "Curriculum for Wales - RSE Code, 2022" and this policy.

When an organisation is invited to deliver a session for the pupils on any topic covered by our RSE policy, we stipulate that a teacher (familiar to the pupils) must be present at all times. The attendance of a teacher is essential to ensure that the:

- content is suitable and developmentally appropriate for our pupils.
- external deliverer is aware of any additional needs that some learners may have.
- teacher is fully aware of what was discussed during the session.
- teacher can effectively answer questions from pupils following the session.
- teacher can consolidate and build on the information presented during the session with the pupils.

6. Consultation

6.1 Pupils

At Ysgol Aberconwy we have embedded a number of pupil consultation approaches in our practice to ensure the RSE curriculum we provide meets the needs of our pupils. These approaches include:

- pupils are consulted as we review, plan, and update our Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) policy and scheme of work (as outlined in our RSE work plan).
- The school will continue to use the comprehensive School Health Research Network (SHRN) questionnaire that brings together secondary schools and academic researchers, policy-makers and practitioners from health, education and social care to improve young people's health and wellbeing in the school setting. It is a partnership between Welsh Government, Public Health Wales (PHW), Cancer Research UK and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods.

We aim to improve young people's health and wellbeing by using our SHRN reports to evaluate emotional and physical health topics with national data for comparison. These include:

- Healthy eating and physical activity
- Mental and emotional health and wellbeing
- Smoking and alcohol use and other substance use
- Sex and relationships

We complete the Student Health and Wellbeing Survey every two years.

- continuous engagement with our pupils throughout their lessons, and through the School Leadership team. Pupils will also have opportunities to ask confidential/anonymous questions by using an anonymous question box. We will answer all questions sensitively, in a developmentally appropriate manner. If we are unsure about the most appropriate way to respond to a question we will seek support and guidance from recognised professional experts.

6.2 Parents/Carers

At Ysgol Aberconwy we believe that parents/carers are crucial to the success of the RSE programme, and therefore communicate regularly with them to foster a positive relationship. Our engagement with parents/carers is purposeful and aims to ensure a meaningful dialogue about our RSE programme. We work with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of what we teach and when through the following methods:

For example:

- Inductions to the school and welcome packs
- Parents/Carers evenings
- Sharing of the policy on the school's website
- Parent representatives on the Governing Body
- Parent/Carers forum as necessary

Parent/carers are welcome to make arrangements to visit the school if they wish to view and discuss the materials and resources used for RSE lessons.

7. Ensuring Quality

7.1 Quality Assurance Process

We regularly monitor our RSE planning, teaching and learning to ensure the highest quality, and that the programme meets the needs of our pupils, the "Curriculum for Wales Guidance, 2020", and "Curriculum for Wales - RSE Code 2022".

We will ensure the quality of our RSE provision as with other areas of the curriculum through lesson observations and our learning reviews every 10 weeks.

7.2 Continuous Professional Development

As a school, we are committed to the whole school approach to RSE. To ensure that our provision is of the highest quality for all our pupils we commit to support our teaching staff to develop their confidence, knowledge and skills to effectively deliver RSE. We will support our staff to ensure that their delivery is effective, developmentally appropriate and meets the needs of our pupils by providing appropriate training and responding to individual requests for professional learning through the school's PDR system.