



ABLE Education Policy Document

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH & ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION POLICY

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1. Introduction

ABLE Education is committed to each of its students receiving a broad and balanced curriculum, as outlined in the Education Act 2002 and the Academies Act 2010. Our Personal, Social, Health, and Economic (PSHE) education supports pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development while preparing them for future responsibilities and opportunities.

The Government's 2017 education reforms made Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) mandatory in Secondary schools from September 2019. At ABLE, we ensure our RSE and health education is age-appropriate, evidence-based, and aligned with government guidance.

We recognize the importance of educating pupils about relationships, sex, and health, which empowers them to make informed and responsible life choices. Our curriculum promotes holistic development, helping prepare students for adulthood and wider societal responsibilities.

This policy details how ABLE Education delivers PSHE, RSE, and health education to meet all pupils' needs, ensuring compliance with DfE guidance on:

- Sex and Relationships Education (July 2000)¹
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)²
- Drug and Alcohol Education (September 2012)³
- Safeguarding (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023⁴; Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024⁵)
- Equality Act 2010 (February 2013)⁶

Our commitment is to provide high-quality, inclusive education that fosters personal development, well-being, and lifelong learning.

1

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62cea352e90e071e789ea9bf/Relationships_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf

2

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/625ee64cd3bf7f6004339db8/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a75b67a40f0b67b3d5c8a26/drug_advice_for_schools.pdf

4

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf

5

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance#full-publication-update-history>

2. Legislation and policies

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- Children and Social Work Act 2017⁷
- DfE (2021) ‘Keeping children safe in education (2020)’
- DfE (2021) ‘Teaching about relationships, sex and health’⁸
- DfE (2019) ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education’
- DfE (2015) ‘National curriculum in England: science programmes of study’⁹

This policy operates in conjunction with the following of ABLE Education’s policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- IT and E-Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

3. Definitions

PSHE refers to Personal, Social, Health & Economic education, whilst RSE denotes Relationships & Sex Education.

- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) focuses on helping pupils develop healthy, respectful, and nurturing relationships, understand human sexuality, build self-respect and respect for others. It involves a balance of factual information, discussion of values, and exploration of key issues; it is not about promoting sexual activity.
- Health Education equips pupils with the knowledge to make informed decisions about their physical and mental well-being, recognizing the connection between physical health and mental wellness.

Effective RSE plays a major role in developing the personal and social skills needed to form and sustain positive relationships. It empowers young people to make responsible and well-informed choices about their health and well-being, ultimately supporting their academic success and personal growth.

⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-science-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-science-programmes-of-study>

4. Our Vision

Through our PSHE programme, ABLE Education aspires to empower pupils to develop a strong sense of identity, enabling them to lead healthy, safe, responsible, and fulfilling lives. Our vision is that through their learning experiences, pupils will:

- Recognize and manage risks while taking increasing responsibility for their choices and actions.
- Make positive contributions to their families, school, and community.
- Develop and express their skills, qualities, and attitudes with confidence.
- Build self-esteem and maximize their potential.
- Understand and articulate their feelings and emotions effectively.
- Navigate challenging situations positively and build meaningful relationships with a diverse range of people.

5. PSHE at ABLE Education

At ABLE, we aim to equip pupils with:

- Accurate knowledge and personal understanding.
- Opportunities to explore and challenge values, beliefs, and responsibilities.
- Essential life skills for a healthy, safe, and balanced life.

Our PSHE program helps students become:

- Successful learners who progress and achieve.
- Confident individuals who lead safe, fulfilling lives.
- Responsible citizens who contribute to society.

Our Approach

We ensure an engaging and supportive PSHE environment by:

- Creating a safe space for open discussions.
- Establishing clear ground rules for lessons.
- Modeling respectful communication.
- Partnering with external experts for enhanced learning.
- Adapting our curriculum to current issues.

Although we have a scheme of work which covers a full PSHE programme, this will be followed loosely as we will aim to be responsive to current affairs/events at the time to maximize the relevance of the subject matter for the young people. We may also align the topic with that for the home school's PSHE programme. Some examples of material within our PSHE scheme of work can be found below.

PHSE module: Health and Wellbeing Overview

Pupils will be taught to:

- Navigate life transitions effectively.
- Maintain physical, mental, and emotional well-being, including sexual health.
- Understand parenthood and the impact of teenage pregnancy.
- Assess and manage health risks for themselves and others.
- Identify and access support services.
- Make informed choices about health, including substance use, nutrition, exercise, and emotional well-being.
- Respond to emergencies, including basic first aid.
- Recognize the media's influence on lifestyle and decision-making.

PHSE module: Relationships Overview

Pupils will learn to:

- Build and maintain healthy relationships across different social and cultural settings, including developing parenting skills.
- Recognize and manage emotions in various relationships.
- Handle risky or negative situations, including bullying, abuse, violence, and online interactions.
- Understand the concept of consent in different contexts, including sexual relationships.
- Cope with loss, bereavement, separation, and divorce.
- Respect equality and contribute positively to a diverse community.
- Identify and seek appropriate advice and support when needed.

PHSE module: Living in the Wider World

Pupils will learn to:

- Understand their rights and responsibilities as active citizens within diverse communities and the economy.
- Make informed decisions, be ambitious, and develop an enterprising mindset.
- Build employability, teamwork, leadership, flexibility, and resilience.
- Navigate the economic and business environment.
- Recognize the impact of personal financial choices and understand consumer rights and responsibilities.

Drug and alcohol education

The term 'drugs' encompasses:

- All illegal substances
- All legal substances, including alcohol, tobacco, and volatile substances that can be inhaled
- All over-the-counter and prescription medications

Effective drug and alcohol education play a crucial role in helping students gain essential personal skills as they develop. It empowers them to make responsible and informed choices about their health and well-being in relation to the substances they ingest.

6. Relationships and sex education

Our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) program ensures pupils gain knowledge about:

- **Types of relationships** – friendships, family, intimate relationships, and interactions with strangers.
- **Building healthy relationships** – self-respect, mutual respect, commitment, boundaries, consent, conflict resolution, and recognizing unhealthy dynamics.
- **Impact of relationships** on mental and physical well-being.
- **Online safety** and maintaining healthy digital relationships.
- **Factual information** on sex, sexual health, and sexuality within the context of relationships.

7. Parental Queries regarding PSHE/RSE lessons

If a parent/carer has any questions or concerns about the teaching of PSHE/RSE within our provision, they are encouraged to contact us so we can discuss them.

If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their child from any sex education lessons, this may be allowed in exceptional circumstances, up until three school terms before the student turns 16. After this point, the student has the right to choose whether they wish to participate in the lessons.

When necessary in addressing any concerns, ABLE Education will collaborate with the student's home school and/or parents/carers to find a resolution that best supports the student's needs.

8. Safeguarding and confidentiality

All students will receive education on keeping themselves safe, including online safety, as part of a well-rounded curriculum. To align with the DfE's best practice guidance, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will contribute to the development of safeguarding-related aspects of the curriculum, ensuring that knowledge and resources effectively address relevant concerns.

Students will be educated on how to voice concerns or report issues, including the process for reporting concerns about a peer and how their concerns will be managed.

When teaching sensitive topics such as self-harm or suicide, tutors will be made aware of the risks of unintentionally encouraging harmful behaviours. Lessons on these subjects will always prioritize student safety and well-being.

Confidentiality within the classroom is a key aspect of RSE and health education, and tutors are expected to respect students' privacy as much as possible whilst adhering to the provision's Safeguarding Policy. However, tutors must also recognize that discussions in RSE may lead to safeguarding concerns, such as a student disclosing abuse. In such cases, the DSL must be informed immediately and ABLE's safeguarding procedures followed.

Tutors should be mindful that disclosures may arise during these sessions, and if this occurs, procedures set out in ABLE's safeguarding policy should be used. Some students may also require additional time to talk one-on-one after a lesson or discussion. It is essential to allocate the necessary time and staffing to accommodate this.

9. Teaching sensitive and controversial issues

Sensitive and controversial topics naturally arise when learning from real-life experiences. Tutors will be poised to address personal issues that may emerge, respond sensitively to disclosures made, and follow up appropriately.

Topics covered may be considered sensitive or controversial due to their political, social, or personal impact, or their connection to values and beliefs. These include family lifestyles and values, physical and medical issues, financial matters, bullying, and bereavement.

Tutors will take all reasonable steps to ensure that when political or controversial topics are discussed, students are presented with a balanced perspective that includes opposing viewpoints.

To promote critical thinking, tutors will use strategies to avoid personal bias and will equip students with the skills to recognize bias and evaluate evidence effectively.

ABLE will work to ensure that a respectful and open environment is fostered, where students feel safe to express differing viewpoints, even if they challenge those of their tutor or peers.

10. Answering difficult questions and sensitive issues

Staff recognize that views on RSE and Drug & Alcohol Education vary. While personal beliefs are respected, these subjects are taught impartially, presenting diverse perspectives to help students form informed opinions while respecting differing views.

Both formal lessons and spontaneous discussions are handled with sensitivity, considering the students' age and level of maturity. Tutors are not required to answer questions immediately and may address them later if needed. They are encouraged to use discretion and consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead if concerns arise.

ABLE will work to ensure that RSE and Drug & Alcohol Education are inclusive, addresses students' needs, supporting their developing identities, and discussing sexual orientation openly and sensitively. Homophobic

bullying is firmly addressed, and the provision will work with parents/carers to clarify content and context circumstances require this.

11. Equal opportunities

ABLE provides full access to the PSHE program for all students, regardless of age, faith, race, gender, sexual orientation, or disability, in line with current legislation. The curriculum promotes British values outlined in the Government's 2015 Prevent Strategy, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs.

In compliance with the Equality Act 2010, ABLE works to ensure that no student is discriminated against based on protected characteristics, such as age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation. The curriculum is tailored to consider students' backgrounds, gender, age range, and specific needs, with additional support provided where necessary. Teaching is delivered sensitively, ensuring content is age-appropriate, developmentally suitable, and aligned with legal standards.

ABLE is committed to fostering a respectful and inclusive environment, encouraging positive interpersonal interactions, and challenging gender-based or other limiting stereotypes. The provision actively addresses issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and gender stereotypes, taking immediate action to create a culture where such behaviours are not tolerated. Sexual violence and harassment are strictly unacceptable, and any reports will be managed promptly in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.