ACADEMY
GREAT BARR

PSHE and RSE Policy

2026-27



Policy owner	Mr L Price
Approval	Local Governing Body
Effective from	November 2026
Next review	November 2027

1. Purpose and scope

This policy explains personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) at Q3 Academy Great Barr. It applies to students in Years 7 to 13.

PSHE helps students develop the knowledge, skills, values, and confidence they need for life. Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) is the statutory relationships, sex, and health content within the wider programme.

RSE and health education are compulsory at the school. The school teaches both as part of wider PSHE across Years 7 to 13.

'Parent' includes carers and anyone with parental responsibility.

2. What students learn

PSHE and RSHE prepare students to make informed decisions, build healthy relationships, protect their wellbeing, and seek help when needed.

The programme will help students:

- develop self-respect, confidence, empathy, and respect for others
- recognise the features of healthy, stable, and caring relationships and family life
- communicate, manage emotions and conflict, respect boundaries, and understand consent
- think critically about stereotypes, prejudice, misinformation, and pressure from others
- recognise unsafe, abusive, exploitative, or discriminatory behaviour and know how to report it
- understand physical, sexual, reproductive, and mental health
- understand how choices can affect themselves and others
- know the relevant facts and law and where to find reliable advice and support

Teaching combines knowledge, discussion, and opportunities to practise personal and social skills. It supports students to make their own informed and lawful choices while respecting the rights and beliefs of others.

Relationships education

Relationships education develops understanding of:

- families, parenting, marriage, civil partnership, and other committed relationships
- friendships and respectful relationships, including online relationships
- kindness, care, trust, privacy, boundaries, consent, and managing conflict or endings
- equality, protected characteristics, stereotypes, prejudice, bullying, and harassment
- recognising unsafe relationships and seeking help

Relationships education can cover sensitive safety matters such as sexual harassment, sexual violence, and abuse. This does not require teaching the detail of forms of sexual activity.

Sex education within RSE

Sex education develops age-appropriate understanding of:

- human sexuality and intimate relationships
- sexual consent, including the age of consent and the right to give, withhold, or withdraw consent
- reasons for and benefits of delaying sexual activity, how to resist pressure, and how to avoid pressuring others
- contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual health services
- reproductive health, pregnancy, and medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion, and further help
- how alcohol, drugs, pornography, and unequal power can affect sexual decisions and behaviour

The school will identify in advance which planned lessons or parts of lessons count as sex education for withdrawal purposes. Related content taught through science is not sex education within RSE and is not covered by the right to withdraw.

Health education

Health education follows current statutory guidance. It includes physical development, puberty, health, hygiene, and emotional wellbeing.

The school may teach sensitive health topics such as self-harm, suicide prevention, and eating disorders where suitable for students' age, maturity, and circumstances, using specialist support or advice.

Safety, law, and online life

Students will learn how the law applies when relevant. This includes consent, sexual offences, domestic abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, harassment, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, online abuse, and sharing intimate images.

Teaching will make clear that abuse, harassment, exploitation, and sexual violence are never the fault of the person experiencing them.

Online teaching will address pornography, grooming, sextortion, scams, misogyny, harmful online subcultures and influencers, artificial intelligence, AI-generated sexual images, and deepfakes in an age-appropriate way. Students will learn how online content can distort expectations and where to report concerns or seek help.

3. How and when the curriculum is taught

Every year group receives a planned, sequenced PSHE and RSHE programme. Teaching builds on prior learning and covers the required content by the end of secondary education.

The school teaches content before students are likely to need it, taking account of age, development, maturity, and local or emerging needs. It may adjust timing to respond to a relevant safeguarding, health, or community issue. Parents will be informed in advance of departures from published RSE content or timing and can ask to view relevant materials.

At Key Stages 3 and 4, PSHE and RSHE are taught through:

- religious studies
- Wellbeing Inspire
- Wellbeing Active and PE
- tutor time
- assemblies
- science

Science specialists teach the scientific aspects of puberty, human development, and reproduction.

In Years 12 and 13, PSHE and RSHE continue through Wellbeing Inspire and Tutor Time.

School staff teach the programme. Personal tutors are well placed to adapt discussion because they know their students. Suitably qualified professionals may support particular topics where their expertise adds value.

For 2026-27, the planned PSHE and RSHE content by year group includes:

- Year 7: puberty and body changes, friendships, consent and boundaries, healthy relationships, and online safety
- Year 8: sexual consent and the law, online relationships, sharing sexual images, relationship types, discrimination, and gender stereotypes
- Year 9: respectful relationships, pornography's influence, gender expectations, stereotypes, diversity, consent, and sexual harm
- Year 10: self-worth, healthy relationships, respect, and social media
- Year 11: healthy relationships, relationships and social media, harmful sexual behaviour, personal boundaries, and digital footprints
- Year 12: serious relationships, pregnancy and contraception, pregnancy choices, sexually transmitted infections, fertility, and grief
- Year 13: relationships and social media, resilience, sleep, and growth mindset

Parents can find curriculum information through the Curriculum Portal on the school's website or contact the school for more information.

Parents will receive advance information about planned sex education content and its timing.

4. Teaching materials and external providers

The school remains responsible for all PSHE and RSHE teaching, including sessions involving an external provider.

No external provider is currently confirmed for RSHE teaching in 2026-27. If one is arranged, the school will update this policy to identify the provider and topics. It will tell parents before the session.

The school will seek parents' views on external resources and make the materials available to view on request. This includes advance consultation about external resources concerning biological sex and gender reassignment.

Parents may ask to view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE. The school will also provide a representative sample when consulting on or explaining the RSHE curriculum. Copyright may affect how materials are viewed or copied, but it will not be used as a reason to refuse access.

Parents must not copy or share copyright-protected materials except as authorised by copyright law.

Parents can contact the school office to arrange to view RSHE materials. If the usual portal, presentation, or viewing method is not accessible to a parent, the school will arrange an accessible alternative.

Parents can give views on materials and curriculum design. Consultation does not give an individual parent a veto over lawful curriculum content.

5. Safe and sensitive teaching

Staff will establish clear ground rules before sensitive lessons. Students must not ask others to disclose personal information or share another person's private experience.

Teachers aim to answer questions honestly and factually, taking account of students' age and development, the lesson, and the class's needs. They may deal with a question individually where a class answer would be unsuitable.

A student may ask a question beyond planned content or about sex education from which they have been withdrawn. Staff will still consider the student's safety and need for accurate information. They may encourage the student to speak to a parent or trusted adult and signpost suitable support.

Staff cannot promise confidentiality about a safeguarding report. They will act immediately on welfare concerns under the school's 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy', involving the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Information will only be shared with people who need it for safeguarding or another lawful purpose. Where appropriate, staff will explain to the student what will happen next. Safeguarding or confidentiality may affect what the school can tell a parent.

6. Equality, inclusion, SEND, and belief

Teaching takes account of students' needs. Treating students fairly does not always mean teaching them identically.

The school will:

- make reasonable adjustments for disabled students
- adapt teaching, communication, resources, and assessment for students with SEND
- consider a student's development, understanding, safeguarding needs, and personal circumstances

Teaching will recognise that families take many forms. It will not stigmatise a student because of their family, culture, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, or another protected characteristic.

By the end of secondary education, students will learn about the protected characteristics and the importance of equality and respect. Teaching about sexual orientation, biological sex, and gender reassignment will be factual, age-appropriate, sensitive, and respectful. Healthy same-sex relationships will be integrated into teaching rather than treated as a standalone topic.

The school will distinguish established facts and law from religious or ethical perspectives and contested views. It may explore different perspectives but will not present a contested view as fact. Students may hold and express different lawful beliefs, but bullying, harassment, and disrespectful language are not acceptable.

Where necessary, the school will respond to parents' requests and concerns about teaching particular topics in mixed groups. Any alternative grouping will reflect students' needs and equality and safeguarding requirements.

7. Withdrawing from sex education

A parent may request that their child is withdrawn from some or all sex education taught as part of RSE.

There is no right to withdraw a student from:

- relationships education
- health education
- scientific content, including puberty or sexual reproduction, taught through science

The request should be made in writing to the headteacher. The template in section 11 can be used, but a request will not be rejected only because the parent did not use it.

The headteacher may discuss the request with the parent and, where appropriate, the student to clarify its scope and the implications of withdrawal. The school will keep a record of the request and decision.

The headteacher will normally agree to the request. They may refuse it only in exceptional circumstances, such as a relevant safeguarding concern or specific vulnerability. The headteacher will consider the student's individual circumstances and explain the decision.

From 3 terms before a student turns 16, the student may choose to receive sex education despite an earlier parental withdrawal. The school will make students aware of this right and arrange sex education if they opt back in.

During any withdrawal, the school will provide appropriate, purposeful education. Withdrawal from sex education does not remove the student's access to pastoral or safeguarding support.

8. Withdrawing from religious education

A parent may withdraw a student under 18 from all or part of religious education (RE). A student aged 18 or over may make this decision themselves.

The request should be made in writing to the headteacher. The school will clarify its scope and make supervised arrangements for the affected lesson.

Withdrawal from RE does not create a right to withdraw from another subject because it discusses religion or belief. This includes PSHE, relationships education, health education, and science. Withdrawal from sex education within RSE does not withdraw a student from RE.

9. Responsibilities, monitoring, and review

The Local Governing Body approves this policy and oversees its implementation under the Trust's governance arrangements.

The headteacher is responsible for the consistent organisation of PSHE and RSHE and decides requests to withdraw from sex education.

Heads of year and assistant heads of year monitor and evaluate provision under the direction of the assistant headteacher responsible for personal development. Monitoring draws on curriculum review, student learning, and feedback.

Staff are responsible for accurate and sensitive teaching, suitable adaptation, and following safeguarding procedures. Students are expected to participate, respect ground rules, and treat others with respect and sensitivity.

The school develops and reviews this policy in light of its curriculum, current requirements, and relevant local needs. It will proactively consult parents before the Local Governing Body approves a new or reviewed policy and will consider students' views.

The Local Governing Body will review the policy by the date in the front matter. It may review it sooner if law or guidance changes or if curriculum or local needs make this necessary.

10. Questions, concerns, and complaints

Parents may contact the school to ask about curriculum content, timing, materials, or withdrawal arrangements. Students can speak to a personal tutor, another trusted member of staff, or the designated safeguarding lead about a concern.

The school will publish this policy on its website.

Concerns should normally be raised with the school first. A formal complaint may be made under the Trust's 'Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy and Procedure'.

Requests for personal information are handled under the Trust's 'Data Protection Policy'. Parents and students are not automatically entitled to another person's confidential information.

11. Withdrawal request template

A parent may use this template to request withdrawal from sex education within RSE or from RE. A student aged 18 or over may use it to request withdrawal from RE. Use these prompts in an electronic request, or print the form and write in the spaces. Send the request to the headteacher through the school's usual contact arrangements.

To be completed by the parent or eligible student

Student's name _____ **Tutor group** _____

Parent's name and relationship to the student (leave blank if the student is making their own RE request)

Contact details

Request relates to (mark all that apply): ☐ sex education within RSE ☐ RE

Request covers (mark one): ☐ all relevant teaching ☐ part of the relevant teaching

Lessons, topics, or dates covered by the request, if known

Reason for the request, if the parent or student wishes to give one (optional)

Other information for the school to consider

Signature or typed name _____ **Date** _____

School record

Date of any discussion with the parent and student

Agreed scope of withdrawal

Headteacher's decision and reasons where a sex education request is refused

Purposeful education during sex-education withdrawal or supervised arrangements during RE withdrawal

Information given about the student's right to opt into sex education from 3 terms before age 16

Headteacher's signature or typed name _____ **Date** _____