

# RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

<b>Approving Body</b>	Trust
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	June 2026
<b>Statutory (Y/N)</b>	Y
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	BMAT CEO for and on behalf of the Trust

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### **I. AIMS AND SCOPE**

Throughout this Policy, 'RSE' is used as shorthand for the three statutory strands of relationships education, sex education and health education.

1. *Aims.* This Policy helps BMAT to fulfil its legal obligations and achieve good practice. It aims to ensure that the BMAT RSE curriculum is delivered effectively to all students, so that they:
  - a. Have cultural capital and uphold the values of equality, dignity and inclusion for all members of our community, in line with the ["Calibre Curriculum"](#) at BMAT.
  - b. Form an active part of the inclusive community at BMAT, in line with its ["Vision and Values"](#) and its Strategic Plan.
  - c. Develop the maturity, self-awareness and understanding of others to discuss sensitive topics respectfully and positively, including sexuality and relationships.
  - d. Know appropriate facts and vocabulary about their bodies, puberty, sexual development, health and hygiene.
2. *Scope.* This Policy applies to all students in all BMAT schools.
  - a. Section VI of this Policy explains BMAT's approach to teaching RSE to students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND students).
  - b. Section VII of this Policy explains how parents or carers can withdraw students from the sex education components of the RSE Curriculum.

## **II. THE LAW**

3. BMAT must provide RSE to all its students, under Section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
4. In delivering its RSE Curriculum, BMAT must have regard to guidance issues by the Secretary of State, under Section 403 of the Education Act 1996.
5. This Policy and the BMAT RSE Curriculum have been updated to comply with [statutory guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), published in July 2025 and in force from 1 September 2026.
6. MAT and its schools are public bodies. As such, they have obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including:
  - a. A duty not to discriminate against the nine protected characteristics that are set out by the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).
  - b. The Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:
    - i. Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
    - ii. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who don't;
    - iii. Foster good relations across all characteristics, and between people who share a protected characteristic and people who don't.

## **III. POLICY AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

7. Parents and carers of BMAT students were consulted in the development of this Policy, to comply with compulsory requirements from the DfE. On 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020, a consultation paper was published on the BMAT website with a draft of this Policy and all parents/carers were given a four-week window to respond.
8. Following the publication of updated [DfE statutory guidance](#) in July 2025, BMAT undertook further consultation in June 2026 to inform the amendments needed for compliance. A consultation paper was published on the BMAT website with the revised draft of the Policy. All parents/carers were notified directly of the consultation and invited to respond within a two-week window.
9. BMAT is committed to openness with parents about RSE. All curriculum materials used in RSE, including those produced by external providers, will be made available to parents on request. BMAT will not enter into contractual arrangements with external providers that restrict this. Parents wishing to view materials should contact their child's school in the first instance.

10. Where pupils ask questions about topics that go beyond the sex education covered by the school, or that relate to sex education from which they have been withdrawn, teachers will respond in a way that supports the pupil. This may include asking the pupil to speak to their parents or another trusted adult, signposting to support services where appropriate, and recognizing that children whose questions go unanswered may turn into inappropriate sources of information, including online.
11. Following the consultation process, this Policy and our RSE Curriculum was ratified by the BMAT Trust Executive and the Board of Trustees.

#### **IV. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND TRAINING**

12. Under the leadership of the BMAT Chief Executive Officer, the BMAT Trust Executive is responsible for ensuring that this Policy and the RSE Curriculum is implemented consistently and fairly across all BMAT Schools, in line with BMAT's values and obligations as an organisation.
13. Under the leadership of BMAT School Principals, BMAT Senior Leadership Teams are responsible for ensuring that this Policy and the RSE Curriculum are implemented consistently and fairly in their school, in line with BMAT's values and obligations; and for managing requests to withdraw students from the sex education components of the RSE Curriculum (see Section VII of this Policy).
14. The BMAT Trust Executive and Senior Leadership Teams are accountable to the BMAT Board of Trustees for the implementation of this Policy and the RSE Curriculum.
15. Teaching staff are responsible for:
  - a. Delivering RSE consistently and in line with BMAT's values, obligations and their training.
  - b. Model positive attitudes of equality, diversity and inclusion.
  - c. Monitoring progress in RSE as part of the standard internal assessment systems for student performance.
  - d. Managing and responding appropriately to the needs of individual students (e.g. those with special educational needs and disabilities – "SEND students").
  - e. Respond appropriately to students whose parents or carers make a request for them to be withdrawn from the sex education components of the RSE Curriculum.
16. Teaching staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Any concerns about delivering RSE will be raised with the appropriate school principal/headteacher. Appropriate action will be taken in line with BMAT's values and obligations, the [BMAT Staff Code of Conduct](#) and other BMAT policies.
17. Training: BMAT teaching staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and continuing professional development. Specific departments arrange internal training or awareness raising for their staff.

18. BMAT also arranges for external experts to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE and/or to deliver some specialised areas of RSE themselves.

19. All students are required to:

- a. Engage fully in RSE, as with any other area of their education (unless they have been withdrawn from the sex education components of the RSE Curriculum, in line with Section VII of this Policy).
- b. Engage with RSE in line with the [BMAT Student Behaviour Policy and Student Code of Conduct](#), which are based on equal respect (for ourselves, each other, diversity, the environment and achievement).

## **V. WHAT IS RSE AND HOW IS IT DELIVERED?**

20. RSE is key to the emotional, social and cultural development of students. It teaches them about:

- a. Families;
- b. Respectful relationships, including friendships;
- c. Staying safe;
- d. Behaviour online and in the media;
- e. Leading healthy lifestyles;
- f. Diversity;
- g. Personal identity;
- h. Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health; and
- i. Sexuality.

21. These topics are taught within the context of family life and not in a way that discriminates against or stigmatises students based on their personal circumstances. RSE reflects that, in our diverse society, “family life” can include single parent families, LGBT+ parents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers, families headed by grandparents and other support structures).

22. The relationships components of the RSE Curriculum cover positive and respectful relationships of all kinds and do not describe the detail of sexual activity. The sex education components are those which deal explicitly with intimate and sexual relationships, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, and related matters; only these components are subject to the right to withdraw (see Section VII).

23. RSE does not promote sexual activity and, whilst it encourages equality and respect for all groups, it does not pressure students to adopt beliefs or practices that are inconsistent with their values, which may be linked to their faith, culture or another aspect of their background. See paragraph 23 of this Policy for more information on BMAT’s approach to RSE.

24. Framework:

- a. The DfE requires all secondary school students to learn about certain RSE topics by the end of secondary school. These requirements are listed in the following DfE RSE Guidance [here](#). Many of the topics were already taught as part of RSE, before the DfE's changes were announced in 2019.
- b. The BMAT RSE Curriculum is appended to this Policy, at Appendix A. It has been consulted on in line with Section III of this Policy – “Policy and Curriculum Development”. The Curriculum is a live document, so it will be reviewed and updated as appropriate.
- c. BMAT teaches its RSE Curriculum as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE). Certain biological aspects of the RSE Curriculum are taught within the Science Curriculum and other aspects are included in other areas of the curriculum e.g. R.E, P.E. Trained external health professionals deliver stand-alone sessions on sex education and parts of the RSE Curriculum may be taught in form-groups and assemblies.

25. BMAT's approach. BMAT teaches RSE in line with its values and obligations as an organisation. For example, through RSE, BMAT:

- a. Shows that it has due regard for the three limbs of the Public Sector Equality Duty (see paragraph 6a of this Policy);
- b. Shows that it does not tolerate discrimination or prejudice against any of the protected characteristics (see Paragraph 6b of this Policy) or any individual;
- c. Respects diversity of belief, which may be based on culture, religion, sexual orientation or another factor.
- d. Teaches its students to practise equality and respect diverse ways of life, and not to tolerate discrimination or prejudice, in line with the [BMAT Student Behaviour Policy](#).
- e. Endeavours to teach sensitive topics at an appropriate stage in students' education, as shown by the RSE Curriculum map at Appendix A to this Policy.
- f. Engages its students in conversations about sensitive topics in a way which allows them to express different points of view respectfully, constructively and maturely.

## **VI. SEND STUDENTS**

26. The policy of BMAT and its schools is that SEND students should follow the same RSE programme as all other students.
27. When appropriate, and to ensure that the RSE Curriculum is accessible for all BMAT students, teaching and content will be adapted, to meet the needs of SEND students.

28. This will be done on a case by case basis, through collaboration between mainstream teaching staff, staff who specialise in SEND students in general or work closely with particularly SEND students and wider support systems as appropriate (e.g. parents or carers and specialist agencies). When delivering RSE to SEND students, BMAT will be mindful of:
- a. The SEND Code of Practice, which includes a set of outcomes on preparing students for adulthood.
  - b. The additional vulnerability that SEND students can face, to exploitation, bullying and other issues.
  - c. The possibility that elements of RSE may be particularly important for some SEND students, because of the nature of a condition or disability.
  - d. The potential need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of SEND students at different developmental stages.
29. See below for the process for withdrawing students from the sex education components of the RSE Curriculum. The process is the same for all students.

## **VII. THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW**

30. Parents or carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from all or part of the sex education component of the RSE Curriculum, until three terms before their child turns 16.
31. After this point, it is the child's choice: if a child who is within three terms of turning 16 chooses to be taught the sex education components of the RSE Curriculum, BMAT will take all reasonable efforts to ensure that they are. For example, if a pupil turns 16 during the autumn term, the pupil can opt back into sex education at any time after the start of the previous autumn term.
32. The sex education component of the RSE Curriculum are those areas covered in the "Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health" part of the DFE requirements.
33. Students cannot be legally withdrawn from the aspects of sex education that are taught as part of the national and statutory science curriculum (they may only be withdrawn from the aspects of sex education that are taught as part of the RSE Curriculum).
34. The form for making a request for withdrawal is at Appendix B to this Policy. It needs to be addressed to the appropriate school principal/headteacher, via the school office or email address.
35. Requests will be granted unless exceptional circumstances exist.
36. The appropriate school principal or a member of senior leadership should discuss the request with parents/carers and, as appropriate, with the child to:
- a. Ensure that their wishes are clear;

- b. Clarify the nature, purpose and intended benefits of the RSE Curriculum; and
  - c. Explain the potential risks of withdrawing a child, including the social and emotional risks of being excluded and the possibility of hearing about sex education elements of the RSE Curriculum from other students, rather than a qualified adult.
37. These discussions should be noted, and withdrawal requests will be stored on the student's educational record.
38. When a student is withdrawn from the non-statutory areas of sex education, BMAT remains responsible for ensuring that the student receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. .
39. The process to request to withdraw students from the sex education components of the RSE Curriculum is the same for SEND students. However, in exceptional circumstances the school principal/headteacher may want to take the specific needs of a SEND student into account when making this decision.

#### **VIII. MONITORING IMPACT**

40. The impact of RSE at BMAT is monitored by through lesson observations, learning walks, the staff appraisal process and day to day management or communication with colleagues, students and parents or carers.
41. Student development in RSE is assessed as part of the standard assessment systems for student performance, at a department and school level (e.g. behaviour and performance management, parents' evenings and marking work).

#### **IX. RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT THIS POLICY OR THE RSE CURRICULUM**

42. Concerns about the delivery of the RSE Curriculum in this Policy will be considered in line with the BMAT Complaints Policy.
43. Before deciding whether or not to make a complaint, parents and carers are kindly asked to consider:
- a. This Policy.
  - b. The extent to which parents, carers, staff and students were consulted or engaged in the development of this Policy and the BMAT RSE Curriculum (see Section III of this Policy).
  - c. Whether the complaint would be an appropriate, fair or meaningful use of resources at BMAT or one of its schools (complaints to "vent" about the DfE's decision to make certain aspects of RSE compulsory will not meet these criteria – see below).
  - d. If BMAT or one of its schools is the correct organisation to complain to. The DfE requires schools to teach students about the areas of RSE in the DfE statutory guidance. BMAT is not placed to handle complaints about the scope and content of the national curriculum – these should be

directed to the DfE or local government. BMAT can only handle complaints about its interpretation and delivery of that curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

- e. The reason for and nature of their complaint. Complaints will not be considered if they are based on prejudice or a desire to discriminate against a particular group. If a complaint of this nature is made, appropriate action will be taken to prevent the discriminatory or prejudiced views of the complainant from having a negative impact on the BMAT community and its values of equality, dignity and respect.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, whilst BMAT may consider complaints about when and how it teaches about sensitive issues, such as birth control or LGBT+ relationships, BMAT will not consider complaints about whether or not those issues should be taught at all. The DfE requires all schools to teach them and doing so is in line with BMAT's values and obligations as an organisation.

## RSE POLICY

### APPENDIX A – BMAT RSE CURRICULUM MAP (HOW BMAT MEETS THE DFE REQUIREMENTS).

A Copy of our RSE Curriculum map can be found on our websites and can be accessed by clicking on the following relevant school links:

#### **Beal High School:**

[KS3 and KS4 Personal Development Curriculum](#)

#### **The Forest Academy:**

[KS3 and KS4 Personal Development Curriculum](#)

#### **Beacon Business Innovation Hub:**

[Year 9, 10 and 11 Personal Development Curriculum](#)

