

Background:

Following the introduction of the new statutory guidance for Relationships & Sex Education in secondary schools which came into effect in Summer 2020, Co-op Academy Belle Vue consulted all staff and parents/carers (referred to as families) on our proposed RSE curriculum plan and RSE policy.

The consultation was open for 4 school weeks.

The consultation involved clear communication of our curriculum plan and proposed RSE policy to all stakeholders.

In line with the guidance in the letters from the secretary of state for education in March and October of 2023, examples of resources were provided to parents. These resources were provided in the form of example student booklet sections from the relationships topic for each year group.

The communication given to families via email included information on our statutory duties regarding RSE, a link to the policy available on the academy website, government guidance documents on RSE in secondary schools and information on how to respond to the consultation. This email was sent twice to all families.

Information was also provided on two family forum events for families to hear from the AVP for personal development about the RSE curriculum and policy. Where possible an Urdu speaker attended these family forums to support the language barrier of some families.

Staff were provided curriculum information and the RSE policy and asked to respond during the consultation period via a Google form.

Parents were given access to another google form to log feedback and feedback was also taken during both family forum events.

Outcomes:

In total there were 36 parental responses to the consultation. 25 parents responded via the google form and a further 11 attended family forum events. Of the 25 Google form responses 23 confirmed they had read the RSE policy document. These numbers are based on our current student numbers of 480.

In total 12 members of staff responded to provide additional feedback to the RSE consultation.

Question One - Looking at our RSE policy and curriculum plan, are there any topics that you feel are being taught too early, when the students are too young? If yes, please list those topics and reasons below:

- 22 respondents thought the age at which the students receive this information was appropriate in this way.
- Three parents reference intimate sexual relationships as being too early. Comments include:
 - Yes , Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health, Being safe topics including sexual consent, sexual exploitation, etc.
 - It's too early
- Four parentents expressed specific satisfaction with how the academy was handling RSE. Comments include:
 - *I am fine with the way the school is handling this.*
 - *No, I think everything is OK.*
 - *No I think it's just the right age*

During the Family forum events some parents asked questions regarding the sex education elements of the curriculum.

Parents at both family forum events raised concerns about the content students have access to online through their mobile devices.

Response - As an academy we are committed to cover the required content at KS3 and KS4 for RSE. These topics are introduced in an age appropriate way. In year 7 students look at relationships that focus on making new friendships, consent in this context with friends and peer pressure and then touch on the idea of romance. In year 8 students look at relationship values and respect for all sexual orientations rooted in the Equality Act. In year 9 students look at healthy and unhealthy friendships, building relationships, conflict resolution, consent and then begin to look at an introduction to sex education including personal choice, STI and the legal view of behaviour. family values When concerns surrounding this were raised at the family forum events parents were told and understood that the curriculum in no way promotes sexual activity. RSE is designed to provide age-appropriate information to help children develop a healthy understanding of relationships. Early education promotes a positive attitude and establishes a foundation for informed decision-making later in life. No inappropriate images are used nor anything not relevant to the explanation. The curriculum is designed to provide factual information to keep students safe and combat the false information they read online. Parental right to withdraw from these elements is clear in the policy and was re-communicated during both family forum events.

Question Two - Looking at our RSE policy and curriculum plan, are there any topics that you feel are being taught too late and students would benefit from learning about at a younger age? If yes, please list those topics and reasons below:

- All 25 respondents thought the age at which the students receive this information was appropriate in this way. Comments include:
 - *I am fine with the manner Co op academy Bellevue is handling this.*

Response: These topics are introduced in an age appropriate way as mentioned in the above response. Some further comments raise additional areas to cover. This is covered in the response to question 4.

Question Three: Are there any topics that you feel have been missed from our RSE curriculum that should be included? If yes, please list the topics below:

- One respondent raised a topic area here
 - *Mental health and how to manage it*

Response: Response: As part of the PSHE curriculum, each year group studies a whole module on "Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing" which includes a focus on positive mental health, promoting positive mental attitudes and emotional resilience. This topic looks to value the idea of mental health as equally important as physical health. As part of the pastoral curriculum, Children's Mental Health Week is promoted as well as Mental Health Awareness Week. Young Carers are supported pastorally within school. Body positivity and positive mental image including self worth is touched on each year and builds in complexity.

Question Four: Do you have any further comments or suggestions to make relating to the RSE provision at Co-op Academy Belle Vue?

- 4 respondents left a suggestion to this question.
 - *As a parent we're more concerned about harmful content on the internet and the children's use of language with each other. Not sure if this is covered if so, it would be great to cover this a bit deeper*
 - *My opinion as a mother is that children should be taught around their own age. And as you mentioned in the letter, it is very important to consider culture and religion. And the most important thing is to teach children to be able and fully aware to take care of themselves and their bodies in front of aggressors.*
 - *I would like to see religious discrimination covered, anti semitism and islamophobia, this is very relevant at the moment.*

- Why is same sex marriage taught?

Response:

*Point 1 - We are equally concerned about the amount and quality of information that the students can access online. This is not only covered in the wider world topics but we have also incorporated it into the relationships topics and focus on how the harmful content on the internet can affect relationships with family friends and others. We feel that this is an important element of keeping students safe. We also do a lot of work on internet safety through assembly time as part of making sure our students are safe with our digital commitment. All students are taught the concept of a trusted adult and who they should speak to immediately if they access harmful content. **The point about the language students use with each other is valid and so has been incorporated throughout the curriculum rather than a one of lesson. For example in HT3 y8 look at discrimination and how the language around the concept of 'snitching' is damaging when combatting discrimination.*

Point 2 - When creating the curriculum we have considered the religious beliefs within our community as did the government when putting the curriculum together. We believe that we are teaching morally sound content at an age appropriate time.

Point 3 - This is already covered when looking at discrimination. As a response the specific definitions to these types of discrimination have been added in year 8. The whole school is taught about the protected characteristics and the fact that it is against the law to discriminate based on these. This happens in the CARE curriculum but also regularly through assembly time.

Point 3- As a school we are committed to promoting inclusivity and ensuring that all our students understand the values of tolerance, equality and respect. As such we have ensured that our curriculum complies with the Equality Act 2010, under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics. We believe that teaching students about the different forms of committed, stable relationships and modern family structures is incredibly important in promoting tolerance and understanding and fulfilling the aims of the Equality Act. We also do not teach LGBTQ+ as one off lessons and instead weave it into the normal narrative surrounding modern families and relationships of all kinds in modern Britain as RSE guidance states.

Following the consultation the policy was reviewed and approved by the governing body. Governors were satisfied with the policy and consultation process.