



## BCA Relationships and Sex Education Policy

### **Statement of Intent**

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) forms an important part of the BCA curriculum and is closely linked to the school's mission, values and vision of high quality learning. The inclusion of RSE is mandatory for UK schools (but excluding sex education until the secondary years), and for British international schools who seek accreditation as such through the relevant school inspection agencies.

Nonetheless, because of the sensitive nature of some of the issues, it is important that the school clearly outlines the *context, purpose and scope* of Relationships and Sex Education, as well as the *content and mode, and timing of delivery*, strengthening the home-school partnership through mutual understanding of all of these aspects.

This policy seeks to meet this need, and is guided by the mission and values of our school community, and driven by our vision of high quality learning:

### ***BCA Mission***

*The British College of Andorra provides opportunities for all our students to achieve academic, artistic and sporting excellence, lasting physical, spiritual and mental health and to be inspired to accomplish personal and professional success.*

### ***BCA Values***

*We especially value the following in guiding the learning experience and promoting wellbeing at The British College of Andorra:*

- *Communication Skills*
- *Inquisitiveness*
- *Appreciation of Diversity*
- *Ability to Solve Problems*

- *Sense of Responsibility*
- *Commitment to Sustainability*
- *Tenacity*
- *Courage*
- *Self-awareness*
- *Team-working skills*
- *Inventiveness*
- *Compassion*

### **Application of Policy**

The primary audiences for this Policy are:

- staff at BCA who are involved in teaching or assisting the provision of Relationships and Sex Education
- BCA parents
- external agencies and specialists seeking a detailed statement of the school's approach to Relationships and Sex Education

The policy applies at all times and in all situations. There are no special conditions, restrictions or exclusions. Any special situations are covered with the text of the policy itself.

Related policies:

- BCA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

### **Process**

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff and parents.

The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant UK and local guidance.
2. Staff consultation – the relevant school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – all BCA parents were invited to attend a meeting in October 2024 which sought to explain the school's curriculum and approach. A complete draft policy was shared. Important feedback was taken during that meeting, evaluated and incorporated into the policy.
4. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with the school Board and published.

## **Publication Information**

This Policy is for both Internal and External publication (BCA website and Parent Portal)

Supersedes and replaces the 'BCA PSHE and Citizenship Policy, 2021'

Effective: November 2024

Review date: June 2026

Policy approved by: Principal

## **Policy Statement**

### **1. Purpose of Relationships and Sex Education**

1.1 The purpose of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at BCA is to:

- 1.
2. Support the emotional, social and cultural development of students.
3. Teach students about relationships, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.
4. Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
5. Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
6. Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
7. Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy, especially around issues of sexuality and relationships.
8. Educate students to recognise, avoid and challenge discriminatory language or actions.

1.2 Relationships Education is taught in the Primary years, i.e. from Year 1 to Year 6 (age 10), inclusive.

1.3 Relationships and Sex Education is taught in the Secondary and Baccalaureate years, i.e. from Year 7 (age 11) to Year 13

### **2. Curriculum Context**

2.1 In the UK, all schools must provide relationship education to all students as per section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

2.2 The curriculum content and guidelines for delivery is set out by the UK Department for Education in their document 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers' (2019). This document is non binding in the context of a British international school, but BCA believes it represents a research-informed, reasonable and complete approach, and respectful within an international setting of cultural diversity and different perspectives. It is also informed by the standards by which the school is inspected.

2.3 The school is sensitive and open to modifications according to the views of our staff, students and parents, and any special considerations for the local cultural context.

2.4 The standards for the inspection of British Schools Overseas (August 2023) require a personal, social, and health education which:

*“(i) reflects the school’s aim and ethos; and*

*(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010”*

And furthermore, that the school,

*“ensures that all students provided with secondary education at the school are provided with relationships and sex education, except .....that where a student’s parent requests that the student is wholly or partly excused from sex education provided as part of relationships and sex education, the student is so excused until the request is withdrawn, unless or to the extent that the head teacher considers that the student should not be so excused.”*

2.5 The curriculum is further informed by reference to the objectives and guidance of the Observatori Social i de la Igualtat d’Andorra, <https://observatorisocial.ad/objectius> and of the Departament d’Afers Socials, <https://www.aferssocials.ad/igualtat>, the protected characteristics under both Andorra and EU law, and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.

2.6 There is no exact equivalent programme in Andorran schools, but some of the content is included within the [Programa de competències transversals de segona ensenyança de l’Escola Andorrana](#) and [Programa de competències transversals de primera ensenyança de l’Escola Andorrana](#), published by the Ministeri d’Educació i Ensenyament Superior, 2022.

2.7 BCA recognises that schools and their curriculum operate in a political landscape, and this is certainly the case for Relationships and Sex Education. In this respect, whilst the school and its staff will always promote healthy relationships and physical and mental wellbeing, and the concept of equality, the curriculum around sexual and gender diversity seeks only to inform and to develop understanding and an appreciation of diversity, i.e. to educate not promulgate.

2.8 The BCA curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 (Primary) and Appendix 2 (Secondary).

### **3. Managing difficult questions**

3.1 Students will often ask their teachers or other adults questions pertaining to sex or sexuality which go beyond what is set out for Relationships or Relationships and Sex Education.

3.2 Given ease of access to the internet, students whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information.

3.3 Furthermore, students of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to differing types of questions or behaviours.

3.4 Teaching methods must anticipate such questions and differences (including when they are due to specific special educational needs or disabilities) and the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.

3.5 In general, if students ask questions outside the scope of the curriculum, teachers will decide whether to redirect the question or to respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online. If students ask questions about non-age-appropriate topics, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner or redirect the question.

3.6 The teacher must consider what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting. Teachers may require support and training in answering questions that are better not dealt with in front of a whole class.

#### **4. Primary school**

4.1 In the Primary School, Relationships Education is delivered as part of the wider Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum, with one weekly lesson. Student's progress in the subject is not formally assessed or reported upon.

4.2 Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

4.3 These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of student based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after student or young carers).

4.4 Children in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 (ages 3 to 6) are taught students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies. They are also told to immediately inform a parent or other trusted adult if another child or adult touches their 'private parts'.

4.5 The changes in humans from birth to adult, including puberty, is included within the Primary science curriculum, and currently taught in Year 5 (age 9).

#### **5. Secondary school**

5.1 In the Secondary school, RSE is delivered as part of the wider Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum, either by one weekly lesson (Years 7 to 9) or by periodic half-day workshops (Year 10 to 13). In addition to RSE, the PSHE curriculum addresses other topics such as physical health (sleep, diet, exercise), mental health (emotional intelligence, mental illness, identity), ethics, citizenship and democracy. Students' progress in the subject is not formally assessed or reported upon.

5.2 The science of human reproduction is covered within the secondary science curriculum. Reference is also made to the social and emotional context, and students are invited to ask questions to the teacher. These topics are then explored in more detail, and in an age-appropriate way, in Year 10 and above (see 5.4, below)

5.3 Relationships and Sex Education builds on the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships established in the Primary school, and develops and adds to these, in a step by step and age-appropriate process, to support children and their families through puberty, adolescence and the transition to young adulthood. The topics are:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
- The law

5.4 Some of the above topics, or content within a topic, is taught only in Upper Secondary (Year 10 and above).

5.5 RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity, or of sexual or gender diversity.

## **6. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)**

6.1 BCA follows the guidance set out by the UK Department for Education in their document 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers' (2019)

*"In teaching Relationships Education and RSE, schools should ensure that the needs of all students are appropriately met, and that all students understand the importance of equality and respect.*

*Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, .....under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.*

*Schools should ensure that all of their teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content.*

*At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their students about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all students to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum"*

6.2 In relation to the previous paragraph, BCA considers it appropriate to teach their students about LGBT from Year 10. Nonetheless, students in earlier years may reasonably and likely ask questions about this topic: see 'Managing difficult questions', above.

## **7. Parents' right to withdraw**

7.1 In Primary school, sex education is not taught. There is no right to withdraw a child from 'Relationships Education'.

7.2 In the Secondary school, parents have the right to withdraw their child from 'Relationships and Sex Education', wholly or in part, excepting those components taught within the science curriculum (see 5.2, above). Beyond the age of 16, it is usual for this decision to rest with the student.

7.3 In the Secondary school, parents will be informed of the annual curriculum plan for RSE, and of their right to withdraw their child. Parents will also be informed shortly before the lessons or workshops take place, and of any external visitors contributing to the curriculum plan.

## **8. Training**

8.1 Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their initial teacher training, through the staff induction training, and through continuing professional development.

8.2 Teachers are not obliged to teach any component of the curriculum with which they do not feel confident. In this situation, a more experienced teacher will deliver the content.

8.3 The Principal will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

9.1 The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Principal, and delegated to the Heads of Section.

9.2 Students' development in Relationships and Sex Education is monitored by class teachers (or, in Secondary, by the subject teacher). It is not formally assessed or reported upon, although the extent and nature of participation and contributions to classroom discussion is noted.

## **Appendix 1. Primary curriculum for Relationships Education**

The curriculum is intended to deliver the learning outcomes set out at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-education-primary>

### **By the end of primary (Year 6)**

#### **Families and people who care for me**

Students should know:

- that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability
- the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives
- that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care
- that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up
- that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong
- how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed

#### **Caring friendships**

Students should know:

- how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose



and make friends

- the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties
- that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded
- that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right
- how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed

## **Respectful relationships**

Students should know:

- the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- the conventions of courtesy and manners
- the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help
- what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive
- the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults

## **Online relationships**

Students should know:

- that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not
- that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous

- the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them
- how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met
- how information and data is shared and used online

## **Being safe**

Students should know:

- what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)
- about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe
- that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact
- how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know
- how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult
- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard,
- how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so
- where to get advice, for example family, school or other sources

## **Appendix 2. Secondary curriculum for Relationships and Sex Education**

The curriculum is intended to deliver the learning outcomes set out at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-secondary>

### **By the end of secondary school (Year 13)**

BCA continues to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition should cover the following content by the end of secondary.

#### **Families**

Students should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- what marriage is, including their legal status – for example, that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- how to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships), how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

## **Respectful relationships, including friendships**

Students should know:

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as:
  - trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict
  - reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

## **Online and media**

Students should know:

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them

- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- the impact of viewing harmful content
- that specifically sexually explicit material, for example pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

## **Being safe**

Students should know:

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online

## **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health**

Students should know:

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get

further help)

- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

## **The Law**

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

Students should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)