

# Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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## 1. Introduction

This policy covers Grace Academy's approach to the teaching of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (HE).

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

High quality evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. These subjects also promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, at school and in society.

Our Grace Academy vision is to develop well educated, considerate and caring citizens with a strong sense of values who will succeed in, and contribute to, 'modern society'.

## 2. What is Relationships and Sex Education?

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is defined as:

*"lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about understanding the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health."* DfE.

*"learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being." (Sex Education Forum)*

The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships, resisting pressure to have sex and not applying pressure with any other to have sex. It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

The aim of teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing is to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. It should enable them to recognise what may usually occur and what could potentially be an issue in themselves and others.

Most research into this area agrees that effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

### 3. Statutory Duty of Schools

The Government has produced statutory guidance for schools on their legal duties with which they must comply when teaching Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, and has been effective from September 2020.

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, makes Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in Academies.

This guidance also sets out both the rights of parents/carers to withdraw pupils from sex education and the process that head teachers should follow in considering a request from a parent. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. See section 8 “Right to be Excused” for further detail.

### 4. Grace Academy’s Relationship and Sex Education Programme

#### OUR AIMS

Good quality RSE helps provide accurate **information** about the body, reproduction, sex and sexual health. It also gives young people essential **skills** for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline. Good quality RSE promotes the core values of respect, love and care. It provides opportunities for young people to reflect on their own **attitudes, values and beliefs** and those of their peers and others.

We are clear that parents and carers are the prime educators for children on many of these matters. The Academy’s RSE is designed to be complementary and supportive of this parental role.

We will build on the foundation of statutory Relationships & Health Education taught in Primary school.

**OUR OBJECTIVES** are to support the development of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviour which enable pupils to:

- a) Have a sense of purpose
- b) Value self and others
- c) Develop positive character traits & personal attributes
- d) Form healthy relationships
- e) Promote the value of long-lasting relationships and the place of intimacy within them
- f) Consider the impact of relationships on their mental health
- g) Understand different types of relationships
- h) Appreciate the value of family life and associated responsibilities
- i) Understand safer sex and sexual health

- j) Make and act on informed, value-based decisions and counteract myths and misconceptions
- k) Communicate effectively using appropriate words without embarrassment
- l) Understand a range of views and religious influences about sex and relationships in society and understand links with the Christian ethos of the Academy
- m) Be able to delay early sexual activity and resist and report any unwanted touch or pressure
- n) Understand the law, their rights and responsibilities
- o) Be aware of sources of help and to acquire the skills and confidence to use them
- p) "Recognise and seek support when relationships are unhealthy or abusive"
- q) "Keep safe online and understand how data is used".

## OUR VALUES

RSE is linked with the Grace Foundation "Building Healthy Relationships" programme, and provision will be consistent with the values and Christian ethos of the Academy (this however should be inclusive for those with different faiths and those who have no faith). Exploring morals and values is a key dimension of RSE. The programme is consistent with our core shared values of **Grace, Respect, Integrity, Potential and Excellence** and underpinned by our Christian ethos. The RSE programme will aim to promote those values of respect and dignity for human life. It is a holistic approach and aims to help young people develop their own set of moral values.

At the heart of the Christian ethos is the belief that all children are loved by God, are individually unique and that the Academy has a mission to help each pupil to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their personhood: physically, academically, socially, morally and spiritually. Our aim is that all pupils will flourish and have an abundant life. Our RSHE programme is linked to a set of core Christian beliefs including:

- Every individual has inherent **Potential** because we are all special and unique.
- Every individual is of equal value and worthy of **Respect**.
- Every individual has the capacity within them to live with **Integrity** and sound character and we can be inspired and guided by God.
- Every individual can achieve **Excellence** with the right support because we can all feel empowered to make the right choices.
- Every individual will flourish best in an environment of **Grace** because life is better with fresh starts and second chances.

RSE is underpinned by a wider deliberate cultivation and practice of resilience and character in the individual. RSE should help to develop character traits (such as belief in achieving goals and persevering with tasks) and personal attributes (such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness, a sense of justice, self-respect and self-worth).

## 5. Provision of RSE at Grace Academy Darlaston

The RSE programme will be co-ordinated across Academies by a specialist member of staff linking with the Lead Teacher in each Academy for PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education). Content will be delivered in a variety of different ways, by teachers as well as external specialists, through:

1. The "Building Healthy Relationships" Ethos programme (off-timetable days, tutor-time & intervention courses)

2. The “PSHE” (Personal, Social, Health and Economic)/ Citizenship Education timetabled curriculum
3. The National Curriculum Science Programme of Study
4. Tutor time, assemblies and performances/workshops from external agencies
5. Pastoral support & intervention for vulnerable students
6. School nurse services, dependent on NHS provision and other relevant external agencies
7. Provision of appropriate information through leaflets & display of posters

The Lead PSHE Teacher will work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education programmes complement each other and do not duplicate, content covered in national curriculum subjects such as citizenship, science, computing, food technology and PE.

Grace Academies within Tove Learning Trust will deliver content in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. There will be a planned programme of lessons sequenced so that core knowledge is broken down into units. Teaching methods will be relevant to key stages, levels of development and age-appropriate.

Effective teaching will:

- include sufficient well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real life situations.
- be delivered in a non-judgmental, factual way and allow scope for pupils to ask questions in a safe environment.
- Include distancing techniques and setting ground rules with the class to help to manage sensitive discussion, using question boxes to allow pupils to raise issues anonymously.
- Encourage active student participation in order to learn from others and to practise using appropriate language in ways which are understood by others.

RSE will be set in the context of a wider whole-school approach to supporting pupils to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school. The curriculum on relationships and on sex will complement, and be supported by, the school’s wider policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, anti-bullying and safeguarding. The subjects will sit within the context of the Academy’s broader ethos and approach to developing pupils socially, morally, spiritually and culturally; and its pastoral care system. This is also the case for teaching about mental health within health education. The curriculum on health education will similarly complement, and be supported by, the Academy’s wider education on healthy lifestyles through physical education, food technology, science, sport, extra-curricular activity and school food.

All staff, whether directly involved in the RSE Programme or not, will support the Academy’s approach & ethos in relation to RSE. At all times teaching will take place in the context of an explicit moral framework.

## **6. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education needs to be accessible for all pupils. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility. Academies will also be mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes, as set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching these subjects to those with SEND.

Some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education, RSE/HE can be a priority for some pupils; for example those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities.

For some pupils there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of children at different developmental stages. Small-group intervention courses or further teaching by the SEND team may be appropriate for some SEND students.

RSE lessons will have classroom support, where there are SEND students who will require it. The teachers of RSE will have appropriate information to guide their planning, teaching and assessment for SEND students including support plans and SEND updates from the SENCO and SEND team.

Where there are external agencies in, the SENCO will ensure the visitors will be informed of any additional needs in line with GDPR allowances and students, where necessary, are extracted after the session to check their understanding of key concepts or terminology and address and misconceptions with the SEND team. Furthermore, there will be additional small group sessions run by the SEND team where it is appropriate and / or necessary.

Academies will ensure that their teaching is sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, and delivered with reference to the law.

## **7. Parents/Carers**

The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.

All parents/carers will be:

- given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education & RSE.
- encouraged to participate in the development of these subjects and ask questions.
- informed about what will be taught and when.
- supported in managing conversations with their children on these issues.
- be able to request details of lessons delivered by external agencies and Grace Academy staff
- told about their right to request their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

## **8. Right to be Excused from Sex Education (the Right to Withdraw)**

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request the Principal will aim to discuss the request with parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The Principal will document this process to ensure a record is kept.

The Principal will discuss with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although the

detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead).

Following those discussions, except in exceptional circumstances, the Academy will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the Academy should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, the Academy's will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

There is **no** right to withdraw from **Relationships Education** or **Health Education** or **Safeguarding content**.

There is **no** right to withdraw from sex education taught under the National Curriculum in Science (listed in the table below)

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| KS3 Science | <p><b>Reproduction</b></p> <p>- reproduction in humans (as an example of a mammal), including the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycle (without details of hormones), gametes, fertilisation, gestation and birth, to include the effect of maternal lifestyle on the foetus through the placenta</p> |
| KS4 Science | <p><b>Health, disease and the development of medicines</b></p> <p>- communicable diseases including sexually transmitted infections in humans (including HIV/AIDs)</p> <p><b>Co-ordination and control</b></p> <p>-hormones in human reproduction, hormonal and non-hormonal methods of contraception</p>  |

|   | Statutory Topics listed under Secondary RSE  | Grace Academy Parental Right of Withdrawal (YES/NO) |
|---|--|---|
| Intimate & Sexual Relationships including Sexual Health | 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. | YES   |
|   | that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.              | YES   |
|   | the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.   | YES   |
|   | that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.  | YES   |
|   | that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.   | YES   |



|  |  |                     |
|--|--|---------------------|
|  | the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available  | NO (Science Sex Ed) |
|  | the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.  | NO (Science Sex Ed) |
|  | 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).             | YES                 |
|  | how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing. | NO (Science Sex Ed) |
|  | about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them & key facts about treatment.  | NO (Science Sex Ed) |
|  | how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.   | YES                 |
|  | how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.   | YES                 |

## 9. Working with External Agencies

Working with external organisations enhances delivery of these subjects, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with young people. Our Academies will ensure that they:

- check the visitor or visiting organisation’s credentials (such as DBS checks, safeguarding training, and experience)
- ensure that the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with their planned programme and the published policy.
- discuss the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils. The lesson plan and any materials the visitors will use must be approved in advance of the session.
- ensure that the visitor is aware of how confidentiality will work in any lesson and understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with Academy policy.
- Any visitor to the classroom is bound by the Academy’s Safeguarding policy, regardless of whether they, or their organisation, has a different policy. They should work within the framework of the Christian ethos and values of the Academy.
- Provide lesson plans on request to parents.

## 10. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

At the heart of RSHE there is a focus on keeping children safe, and our Academies can play an important role in preventative education. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) sets out that all schools and colleges should ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

In our Academies, we will allow pupils an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Pupils will be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This will also include processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.

In line with KCSIE, all staff are aware of what to do if a pupil tells them that they are being abused or neglected or are witnessing abuse. Staff are also aware of the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

The involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) in anything that is safeguarding-related in the context of these subjects will ensure that knowledge of trusted, high quality local resources can be engaged, links to the police and other agencies utilised and particular local issues which it may be appropriate to address in lessons are included.

It will be explained to pupils how confidentiality will be handled in a lesson and what might happen if they choose to make a report. Students must be reminded that the classroom is never a confidential place to talk, lessons are not a place to discuss their personal experiences and issues through the establishment of ground rules. Staff should follow the Safeguarding Policy in the event of disclosures, and report if a child under the age of 16 is having or considering having sex.

All staff must be aware of their statutory reporting duties in relation to female genital mutilation (FGM) as set out in our Safeguarding Policy.

## **11. Equality**

Schools are required to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects. We work to ensure RSE provision is inclusive of all students and consistent with equalities duties.

### **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBTQ+)**

The Academy will ensure that all of their teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. As part of teaching pupils about LGBTQ+, the Academy will 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.

All pupils should feel that the subject content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Sexual orientation and gender identity should be explored in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner. When teaching about these topics, it must be recognised that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. The principles of the RSE programme can be applied to all types of relationships.

### **Faith & Belief**

A good understanding of pupils' faith backgrounds and positive relationships between the Academy and local faith communities will help to create a constructive context for the teaching of these subjects. When teaching these subjects, the religious background of all pupils will be taken into account when planning teaching, so that the topics that are included in the core content of the statutory guidance are appropriately handled. Our Academies will comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics.

Grace Academy has a Christian ethos and will include teaching on the distinctive Christian faith perspective on relationships, and balanced debate may take place about issues that are seen as contentious. Teaching will reflect the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

It is recognised that there will be a range of opinions regarding RSE. The starting principle when teaching each of these must be that the applicable law should be taught in a factual way so that pupils are clear on their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Pupils should be well informed about the full range of perspectives and, within the law, should be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs.

## **12. Responding to Pupil's Questions**

Pupils of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to different types of questions or behaviours. Teaching methods should take account of these differences (including when they are due to specific educational needs or disabilities) and the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. Support and training will be given to staff about what is appropriate/inappropriate in a whole class setting, as some questions are better not dealt with in front of a whole class.

- We may allow pupils to raise anonymous questions by a "question box" activity in lessons
- Trained teachers will also use their professional judgement in answering questions to the whole class or individually taking into account the Safeguarding Policy.
- Pupils will be encouraged to ask their parents/carers any questions that are outside the planned programme.
- Ground rules will be clearly set out by the teacher regarding personal questions at the start of lessons.
- Pupils will be referred to designated adults if they wish to talk further (e.g. pastoral staff, school nurse).
- If a safeguarding issue is raised by a question this will be reported/follow-up through the school safeguarding procedures. Teachers may wish to consult with the Deputy Safeguarding

Lead if they feel this is appropriate and should feel able to work with colleagues if necessary to construct an appropriate answer.

### **13. Discussions about Sex and Relationships Raised Outside of the Planned Programme**

The teaching of apparently unrelated topics may occasionally lead to a discussion of aspects of sexual behaviour. Provided that such a discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it will not form part of the Academy RSE programme.

In such cases, particularly since they may involve students whose parents have withdrawn them from RSE, teachers must balance giving proper attention to relevant issues with the need to respect students' and parents' views and wishes.

The Academy expects that teachers will draw upon their professional judgement and common sense to deal effectively with such occurrences and that all staff will be familiar with this policy and act accordingly.

Teachers may not give personal, individual advice on contraception to those under 16 years for whom sexual intercourse is unlawful. Teachers must advise students to seek advice from parents, GPs and/or appropriate trained staff or healthcare professionals such as the School Nurse.

The Academy is committed to the promotion of student welfare. Staff endeavour to make themselves approachable and to provide caring and sensitive pastoral support. This may be on an individual basis or through the Academy tutorial and pastoral system. Where appropriate, students are referred to the school nurse or external agencies. Care must be taken, however, in counselling and advice to individual students, particularly with regard to their sexual behaviour, and must not trespass on the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities.

### **14. Monitoring, Evaluation and Assessment**

The Academies have the same high expectations of the quality of the pupil's work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas. The curriculum will build on the knowledge pupils have previously acquired, with feedback on pupil progress. Teaching will be assessed and assessments used to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention.

The "Building Healthy Relationships" programme is regularly evaluated. The views of students and staff who deliver the programme are used to make changes and improvements to the programme on an ongoing basis.

Ofsted inspection will assess RSHE through pupil's Personal Development and SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) development.

### **15. Provision of Sexual Health Services on Site**

Opportunities may be provided for students to access confidential information and advice on site through the drop-in service provided by the NHS school nurse. The extent to which the school nurse contributes to RSE will depend on capacity and local resources. This service is restricted to:

- advice about personal safety, healthy relationships and delaying sexual activity
- chlamydia and pregnancy testing on-site

- contraceptive advice
- advice, information and prevention of STIs
- advice, information and signposting about emergency contraception and terminations.

The Academy policy does not permit the C-card scheme (free condom scheme) on-site, instead students may be signposted by the nurse to other services in the local area, if appropriate.

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with individual students, outside the classroom. When working within the classroom they are also bound by the school's Safeguarding and RSHE Policies.

## 16. Links with other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust/Academy policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Equality Information
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Drugs Education Statement

## 17. References for Developing the Relationship and Sex Education Policy

This policy has been written with reference to guidance from relevant government documentation & should be read in conjunction with:

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- Equality Act 2010 and schools
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)
- Alternative Provision (statutory guidance)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (advice for schools)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools (advice for schools)
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)
- SMSC requirements for independent schools (guidance for independent schools on how they should support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).
- National Citizen Service guidance for schools
- Ofsted School Inspection Handbook

## 18. Review of this Policy

The local governing body & senior staff will review the policy every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness in meeting the needs of pupils, staff and parents and ensure it is in line with current Department of Education guidance.

Consultation has previously taken place in the form of online surveys with parents and focus groups with students.

This policy will be available on the Academy website.