



HEATHFIELD SCHOOL

Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Policy Area:	Academic
Relevant Statutory Regulations:	• ISSR 2014 - Part 1 and 2 • Learning and Skills Act 2000 • Education Act 2002 • Equality Act 2010 • Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 • DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance 2025 • NMS 17 – promoting good relationships
Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy:	Deputy Head
Version:	2025.01
Date updated:	01 September 2025
Date of next review:	01 September 2026

This policy will be reviewed at least triennially, and/or following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.

Introduction

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

Relationships and Sex Education is an important part of children's preparation for adult life and covers moral and emotional as well as physical development. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity. Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.

The purpose of RSE should be to provide knowledge about stable and loving relationships, the nature of sexuality and the processes of human reproduction. At the same time, it should lead to the acquisition of understanding and attitudes which prepare pupils to view their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner. Pupils should be encouraged to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and others, acceptance of responsibility, sensitivity towards the needs of others, loyalty, tolerance and fidelity. They should be able to recognise the physical, emotional and moral implications, and risks, of certain types of behaviour, and to accept that both sexes

must behave responsibly in sexual matters.

Under 'Policy statement: relationships education, relationships and sex education, and personal, social, health and economic education', RSE became statutory in all schools from April 2021. Secondary schools must have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

This policy is freely available on request to the entire school community and is published on the School's website. It has been completed through consultation with key stakeholders including senior management, governors, staff and parents.

Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at Heathfield School ("the School") is to ensure pupils learn about:

- different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships, intimate relationships, dealing with strangers
- how to recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, including self-respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent, and how to manage conflict, and also how to recognise unhealthy relationships;
- how relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health;
- healthy relationships and safety online; and
- factual knowledge, taught around the facts and the law about sex, sexual health and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships;
- grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, should also be addressed sensitively and clearly.

RSE at the School aims to:

- encourage pupils to discuss relationships and sex issues in a mature, responsible and age appropriate manner, equipping them to make informed decisions in the future;
- provide information and resources which are appropriate for different age groups, including access to and information from relevant outside agencies;
- provide access to effective teaching materials through the PSHE Scheme of Work which are regularly reviewed and updated by the Head of PSHEE through feedback from the pupils.

The aims above are in line with the core expectations that the School promotes to all pupils:

- maintain a positive attitude,
- show respect for all, and
- display high levels of commitment to being the best you can be.

Rationale

'Relationships and sex education' is defined as learning about physical, moral and emotional development that pupils need in order to understand their own and others sexuality. Whilst knowledge of biology and the reproductive system is important, RSE is concerned with attitudes and values, personal and social skills, respect for self and others, family, stable loving relationships, feelings, gender roles and decision-making. It is about the physical, emotional, social, moral and legal dimensions of human sexuality as well as factual teaching about sex, sexuality and sexual health.

The School believes it is important to address this area of the curriculum because pupils have a universal entitlement to learning that will enable them to live safe, fulfilled and healthy lives. The programme contributes to protecting children and young people by addressing national and local health priorities. Recent NSPCC studies have also directly informed the programme. The programme also acts to protect children and young people from concerns raised through the pastoral system in school.

Aspects of RSE are a statutory entitlement for young people at Key Stages 3 and 4. It provides a comprehensive body of knowledge and understanding about sexual health to manage fertility and avoid infection.

The School believes it is important to address relationships and sex education in this age group because they are considered to be a vulnerable age. This is further supported by the recent studies into child exploitation and teenage domestic violence.

How is Relationships and Sex Education Provided?

The Head of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) is responsible for planning, delivery and evaluation of the School's relationships and sex education programme. Delivery is through PSHEE lessons, together with the KS3 Science and Biology curriculum. Relationship issues are also addressed through other relevant subjects such as English and Drama. The Assistant Head (Pastoral and Boarding) oversees the effective implementation of PSHEE.

The School's programme of PSHEE is addressed throughout all years, with age appropriate topics and learning activities. Included within this are reference to contraception, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, abortion, attitudes to relationships (including educating pupils about the dangers of being in unhealthy relationships), and Pornography.

Delivery is supported via presentations by specialist speakers from both in and outside of school in PSHEE lessons.

Further details for the provision of Relationships and Sex Education can be found in the PSHEE Policy as well as the PSHEE Scheme of Work.

Across all Key Stages, pupils will be supported with developing the following skills:

- Communication, including how to manage changing relationships and emotions
- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- Assertiveness
- Seeking help and support when required
- Informed decision-making
- Self-respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and maximising a healthy lifestyle
- Managing conflict
- Discussion and group work

The RSE curriculum is delivered in a developmental manner so that issues are explored in greater depth as pupils mature. The following areas are examples of content which are addressed in the following form years:

First Form Content

- Puberty in females

- Period poverty
- Healthy relationships: Respecting Difference
- Keeping healthy: Knowing and understanding female anatomy
- Grooming and catfishing: E-safety online and in real life

Second Form Content

- Puberty in both males and females
- Body Image: developing and maintaining self-esteem
- Sexting & E-safety: reputational damage, keeping safe & acceptable behaviour
- Sexuality: Family & Marriage diversity
- Relationships: attraction, building relationships based on love, respect and trust
- Keeping healthy: knowing and understanding female anatomy, HPV vaccination, pelvic floor, UTIs
- Drugs and Alcohol: binge drinking & associated risks of early sexual experiences

Third Form Content

- Emotional Intelligence & Empathy
- Social Intelligence & Respecting Difference
- Body Language & interpreting/responding to romantic interest
- Age of Consent: law & views on sexual intimacy
- Puberty: Psychological and Physiological changes
- Female Genital Mutilation: The Law
- Genital Health, breast & testicular cancer
- Sexting & E-safety: reputations & acceptable behaviour
- Relationships: Intimacy, love, respect & trust
- Relationships: Fidelity & Respect
- Contraception
- Sexuality: Family & Marriage diversity
- Body Image: what's real & self esteem
- Relationships: The Psychology of Attraction

Fourth Form Content

- Sex & Consequences: teen pregnancy
- Choices: Abortion & Adoption
- A Spiritual Experience: Birth
- Menstrual Cycle, periods & conception
- Psychology of parenting
- Unsafe sex: consequences STI's
- Drugs/Alcohol/ binge drinking & associated risks of early sexual experiences
- Grooming and exploitation, involvement in organised crime

Fifth Form Content

- Virginity; waiting for sex, commitment and marriage
- Integrity & Sexual Ethics
- Relationships: respect and privacy
- Relationships: Psychology of Communication; Transactional Analysis
- Relationships: Marriage & Divorce
- Recognising Positive & Abusive Relationships
- Sexual Abuse
- Vulnerability in relationships: discovering the authentic self
- Exploring Consent: Rape, Sexual Assault & The Law
- Pornography: self esteem, respect and effects

- Sexual health review: safe sex & consequences

Sixth Form Content

- Healthy and unhealthy relationships with a focus on Coercive Control
- Sexual health review: safe sex & consequences
- Keeping Healthy: Genital Health, breast self-examination for early detection of breast cancer.
- Travelling and personal safety (UVI)

Universal Content

Some topics are covered by every form in an age-appropriate manner

- Sexuality: challenging stereotypes, misogyny & homophobia, lesbian and bisexualities
- Importance of pelvic floor
- Identifying reliable sources of help and support

The Science Curriculum

The following topic areas are covered in the Science curriculum, specifically within Lower School Biology.

Third form

Sexual reproduction

Sexually transmitted diseases: HIV/AIDS and Gonorrhoea

Fourth & Fifth form

Contraception methods (hormonal & non-hormonal)

IVF and hormonal control of the Menstrual cycle

Teaching methodologies

The RSE programme will be taught through a range of teaching methods; the School's programme recognises that young people will bring prior learning and real life experiences to their learning. The School's programme respects and builds on these, providing a programme that reflects both the universal and unique needs of our pupils. This includes use of academic research, quizzes, case studies, role-play, film and documentaries, small group discussion and use of appropriate guest speakers. Teaching is conducted in a safe designated PSHEE learning environment through the use of respectful ground rules and dialogue so that pupils are not expected to discuss their own personal issues in class.

Teaching resources are selected on the basis of their appropriateness to pupils.

The School will ensure that all RSE sessions remain positive in tone by setting clear expectations at the beginning of the year and reinforcing them at the start of each topic. Behaviour will also be managed according to the Positive Behaviour policy.

The School will ensure cross-curricular learning by keeping an up-to-date overview of whole school deliveries and liaising with both staff. Working closely with key subjects to ensure cross-curricular learning is explicit. Learning about relationships and sex in PSHEE classes will complement learning in Science (primarily Biology) and Religious Education. For a more detailed view of where and when aspects are delivered across the School, please see the relevant PSHEE education overview/curriculum document.

Responding to Pupil Questions

The School believes that pupils should have opportunities to have their genuine questions and curiosity answered in an approachable and matter-of-fact manner. Pupils' questions will be answered by teachers honestly but not referring to personal experience. Answers will endeavour to reflect different sides of an argument, if the topic is one of debate. Staff are to provide information and guidance but not instruction. However, occasionally a pupil may ask a particularly explicit or embarrassing question in class. If a question is too explicit or inappropriate to answer in class at that moment, it will be acknowledged and responded to later with the pupil who asked it. The Head of PSHEE will use their skill and discretion to decide about whether to answer questions in class and, if so, how. They will establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in class by discussing ground rules with pupils and by taking an approach that ensures pupils are mature and sensible.

Pupils who have been withdrawn from RSE lessons may still ask questions to staff. These questions will be answered with same guidance as above. Although pupils will be encouraged to speak with their parents/guardians regarding the conversation, they will not be made to.

The School will allow pupils to raise anonymous questions by having scheduled lessons in which pupils may write anonymous questions and drop them into an ask it box. These questions will be answered during lesson time however pupils are also encouraged to speak with their teacher discretely after the lesson if they wish.

If a pupil discloses information which is of concern with regards child protection, the procedure outlined in the Safeguarding policy will take place.

Dialogue between the RSE staff and pastoral staff will ensure that any pupils who are thought to be 'at risk' are supported through sensitive discussion of topics. Pupils are also able to take a timeout if a topic is in anyway distressing for them. They will not be made to discuss this, rather they will be offered support if wanted.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to excuse pupils from non-statutory components of RSE

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Head of PSHEE or Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding). The School is fortunate enough to have a PSHEE specialist who will currently deliver all RSE lessons.

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity. This response is in line with our core values of maintaining a positive attitude, respect for others at all times and displaying high levels of commitment.

Parents' Right to Withdraw from RSE

Parents' have the right to excuse their children from the non-statutory components of RSE. Parents can identify when RSE is being covered by referring to the PSHEE overview document emailed to them.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Headmistress. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Headmistress will discuss the request with parents with the Head of PSHEE and take appropriate action. Discussing with parents the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child.

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the School should 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 School should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. Appropriate alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from RSE.

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

Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE at INSET days and during CPD twilight sessions.

The Head of PSHEE 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.

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.

Pupils 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 self produced imagery)
- 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)

Pupil Consultation

Consultation with pupils takes place both formally and informally. Formally, pupils complete evaluations, which are reviewed within the department. The department work closely with the pastoral team to ensure the programme is targeted and timely. Informally there is an open dialogue between staff and pupils. There is also use of plenary activities to evaluate lessons.

How will we assess this learning

As with any learning, the assessment of young people's personal, social and emotional development is important. It provides information that indicates their progress and achievement informs the development of the programme.

Young people do not pass or fail in this area of learning but have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning and personal experiences and set personal goals and agree strategies to reach them. This process of reflective assessment has a positive impact on young people's self-awareness and self-esteem, and there are opportunities to record learning and progress in different ways. The School will assess pupil's learning through; in class question and answer, discussion, group work, peer assessment, self-assessment and marking.

Inclusion and differentiation

The School's RSE programme recognise that young people will bring prior learning and real life experiences to their learning. The School's programme respect and build on these, providing programmes that reflect both the universal and unique needs of the School's pupils. In this way, the programme recognises and respect pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example their own sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture (which may, depending on their age and maturity, not be something they have yet considered or may be emerging) or the sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture of their immediate family, close friends and wider community.

Pupils with additional educational needs

As far as is appropriate, young people with special educational needs follow the same RSE programme as all other pupils. Careful consideration is given concerning the level of differentiation needed, and in some cases the content or delivery will be adapted.

It is the School's policy not to withdraw young people with special educational needs from RSE to catch up on other national curriculum subjects, as the School believes that these aspects of personal and social development are as important as academic achievement.

Awareness of topics

Full curriculum details are available through the School website and letters home to parents. These will outline key content and themes covered. Controversial topics will be covered with sensitivity and respect for all viewpoints. The programme is not aimed to tell what is right and wrong but to take into account different perspectives and provide pupils with the information to make their own decisions.

Parents and carers involvement

The School is committed to working with parents and guardians. Parents and guardians are invited to contact the School directly with any queries or concerns. The resources used are also available on request.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Sex Education content by letter to the Headmistress. This does not include the content covered within the Science curriculum nor does it cover PSHEE or Relationships content.

Support for children who are withdrawn from the programme

If a parent or guardian requests that their child be removed from 'sex education', the School will provide support by ensuring the child understands that if they have questions they may still speak with a member of staff directly.

The School will also provide other PSHEE education work on the themes of positive social relationships and managing change. This will be completed in a supervised location in school.

Equality

The School promotes the needs and interests of all pupils, irrespective of gender, culture, ability or aptitude. Teaching pedagogy will take into account the ability, age, readiness and cultural backgrounds of the young people to ensure that all can access the full RSE provision.

The School promotes social learning and expect pupils to show a high regard for the needs of others. RSE is an important vehicle for addressing both multicultural and gender issues and for ensuring equal opportunities for all.

Pupil Relationships

It is the School's intention to encourage pupils to form positive friendships with each other, which are relaxed, natural and mutually respectful. Boarders and day pupils are encouraged to mix with the boarding house open to day pupils and boarders able to spend time with day pupils at their own homes if invited. However, it is important that pupils understand that the School has a responsibility to parents and to safeguard the pupils themselves.

If two pupils have a romantic relationship, they should be aware that:

- Displays of affection in public are not appropriate; these are unhelpful to the working atmosphere and community life of a school and pupils must remain especially mindful of this in the environment of their boarding houses and when in school, in the local vicinity and when on school trips.
- Relationships, beyond friendships, are generally inappropriate when there is a significant (more than one Form year) age gap and the School may inform parents where they have a concern about a relationship.
- Sexual intimacy and activity must be regarded by the School as a serious breach of discipline, and could in certain cases, lead to expulsion.
- If it is known that there is a relationship between two pupils within the same boarding house it is School policy not to place these two pupils in the same room

The above also applies if a pupil has a relationship with someone who is not a member of the School community. A sexual relationship between any member of staff, Governor, visiting tutor or volunteer and any pupil at the school is a breach of that trust. Such behaviour constitutes serious misconduct on the part of the member of staff/Governors/visiting tutor/volunteer and will invariably result in disciplinary action, often dismissal. It may also lead to a teacher being barred from further employment in the education service by the Secretary of State.

It is not the School's wish to emphasise disciplinary consequences, however as an educational establishment, the School must safeguard all pupils in our care.

The School wishes to be supportive in guiding pupils in this matter. Pupils who seek advice may contact the School Health Centre, DSL, Chaplain, House Staff or indeed any member of the teaching staff.

Sexuality

Some of the School's pupils will define themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, gender questioning or other (LGBTQ+). Pupils may also have LGBTQ+ parents/guardians, brothers or sisters, other family members and/or friends. The School's approach to RSE will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. The School's pastoral, medical and counselling support will take account of the needs of any LGBTQ+ pupils. The School shall also actively tackle homophobic bullying.

Related Policies

- Drugs Policy
- Personal Social and Health Education Policy
- Safeguarding and Protecting the Welfare of Pupils Policy