



## Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

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An academy within:



“Learning together, to be the best we can be”



# 1. Introduction

- Our school's policy on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education is based on the requirements of the Education Act 2002 and the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE). Relationships Education (primary), Relationships and Sex Education (secondary) and Health Education are compulsory subjects.
- This policy reflects the July 2025 statutory RSHE guidance, which strengthens expectations around safeguarding, online safety, sexual harassment and abuse, equality, inclusion, and support for vulnerable pupils.
- RSE and Health Education are central to our safeguarding culture. Teaching is designed to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations, seek help, and build respectful, healthy relationships both on and offline.
- The purpose of this policy is to set out the ways in which our school's provision for relationships and sex education will support pupils through their spiritual, moral, social, emotional and physical development, and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.
- Our PSHE curriculum aims to enable our pupils to put their knowledge into practice by developing resilience, knowing how and when to ask for help and where to access support. The guidance also sets out both the rights of parents / carers to withdraw pupils from sex education (but not Relationships or Health Education) and the process that headteachers 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 Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education, delivered as part of statutory RSE and Health Education (2023)
- As the guidance states, schools are able to determine how to deliver the content set out in the DfE guidance, in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff are fully aware that the delivery of RSE and Health Education lessons for some of our children may trigger experiences of past childhood trauma. This alone or in addition to a lower developmental age and understanding mean that when teaching RSE and



Health Education; close partnerships with the school's wellbeing team, parents, carer's, social workers and virtual schools may be called upon to support the RSE and Health Education work with the child/ young adult.

## 2. Aims

RSE is a National Curriculum requirement and is taught as part of Personal, Social, Health, and Economics Education (PSHE) at Hilltop School. Children and young people need knowledge and skills that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships. Effective RSE is important for promoting and protecting the wellbeing of all children.

The duties on schools in this area are set out in legislation making relationships education compulsory for all pupils in Primary and Relationships and Sex education for all pupils in secondary.

The overarching aims of RSE are to teach our students:

- to be more independent,
- to be aware of themselves and others, including the physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults,
- to make informed choices and gives them the knowledge they need to stay safe,
- to develop a caring and considerate attitude to each other,
- to be aware others may have a different view and be able to respect that view,
- to help develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy,
- to take responsibility for themselves and their own behaviours,
- to be aware of different families and relationships including keeping themselves safe and seeking help when they need it,
- to have increased confidence including talking about things that are worrying them,
- using accurate factual information including correct anatomical names for body parts,
- to ask and answer questions without embarrassment and with respect for others and themselves,
- to develop an understanding of mental health as well as how to keep themselves physically healthy,
- to develop safe and respectful relationships both on and offline.

Relationships and Sexual Health Education should:



- be an integral part of a lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life;
- be an entitlement for all children irrespective of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, special needs, culture, faith or religious tradition;
- foster self-esteem, self-awareness, a sense of moral responsibility, and the confidence and ability to resist unwanted sexual experience and abuse;
- be mindful of children's earlier experiences;
- should provide consistent messages;
- be continuous and progressive;
- support children as they move from childhood through puberty to adolescence;
- provide opportunity for discussion and clarification around values and attitudes;
- provide accurate, unbiased information.
- be sensitive, age appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.

### 3. Objectives

At Hilltop School children will learn to:

- use correct scientific anatomical terminology;
- understand physical and emotional changes during puberty;
- develop body confidence and positive self-concept;
- understand human reproduction in an age-appropriate and factual way;
- recognise and build healthy, respectful relationships;
- understand consent, boundaries and the right to say no;
- challenge stereotypes, discrimination and misogyny;
- recognise and respond to harmful behaviours, including sexual harassment and abuse;
- manage online relationships and digital risks;
- understand protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010;
- know how and where to seek help and support.

Teaching explicitly addresses the prevention of sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, coercion and exploitation, in line with DfE expectations on safeguarding.



All pupils at Hilltop School participate in a broad and balanced PSHE and Citizenship curriculum; which includes the delivery of RSE and which meets individual needs. Its role contributes towards students developing knowledge and understanding, skills, attitudes and values which are necessary for them to make sense of the responsibilities, opportunities and experiences which are part of their lives, both now and in the future.

## 4. Context

A high-quality sex and relationships education helps create safe school communities in which pupils can grow, learn and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life. We teach RSE and Health Education on the understanding that:

- it is taught in the context of family life;
- it is part of a wider process of social, personal, spiritual and moral education;
- children should be taught to have respect for their own bodies;
- children should learn about their responsibilities to others, and be aware of the consequences of sexual activity;
- our young people have the right to say no and they are able to change their minds at any point during sexual activity;
- our young people are aware of the rights of others and are taught about the importance of consent;
- children develop respect for diversity, risk management and support seeking skills;
- it is important to build positive relationships with others, involving trust and respect, both in person and online;
- it makes a significant contribution to our duty to safeguard and protect all children;
- it plays a key role in improving health outcomes for children and young people, enhancing their decision making and support seeking skills and reducing teenage pregnancy and risk-taking behaviour.

Our RSE and Health Education programme is one of the most important ways we act on our responsibility to safeguard and protect our children, as set out in our Safeguarding/Child Protection policy. We also refer to guidance from the government and expert organisations on specific safeguarding issues, which are relevant to our cohort of children, as listed in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. To safeguard children effectively it is vital that opportunities are



created in the curriculum to teach about healthy behaviour, caring relationships, online safety and when and how to get help. At our school we encourage children to develop skills in these areas so that they are equipped with strategies to help themselves in preventing or reporting harm or abuse. Lessons are planned with clear safeguarding outcomes. Staff are trained to recognise disclosures and follow the school's safeguarding procedures immediately. RSE content is trauma-informed and sensitive to pupils' lived experiences.

## 5. Online safety and Digital Relationships

RSE and Health Education explicitly address online harms, including:

- pornography and its impact on relationships and expectations;
- online misogyny, harassment and exploitation;
- image-based abuse and sharing of sexual content;
- artificial intelligence, deepfakes and digital manipulation;
- strategies for reporting concerns and accessing support.

Teaching aligns with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's Online Safety Policy.

## 6. Statutory requirements

In the DfE document, RSE is defined in primary schools as key building blocks of all positive relationships, supporting children from the start of their education to grow into kind, caring adults, who have respect for others and know how to keep themselves safe. Building children's understanding at Primary is essential for preparing them for more complex content at Secondary. By anchoring an understanding of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online, and how to recognise and report risks and abuse, students are equipped to understand their rights regards their boundaries, rights, bodies and personal information.

Whilst Sex Education is not compulsory in Primary, it is recommended that primaries teach sex education in years 5 and/or 6 in line with content about conception and birth which forms part of the national curriculum for science including external body parts and the human body as it grows from birth to old age, including puberty. Any teaching in this context in primary will be delivered only in consultation with parents/carers. This process will include support in



talking with children about sex education and include information about the right to withdraw. In all instances teaching will be age appropriate and respectful of all children.

By the end of Primary Students will know about:

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

At Secondary, teaching will build on the knowledge acquired at primary and develop further pupils' understanding of healthy, safe nurturing relationships of all kinds, health including how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies. Teaching in Secondary will support confidence and self-esteem that will enable students to make their own choices once they reach the age of consent. RSE will also cover a range of topics including how to stay safe related to abusive behaviour, online, and within unhealthy or unsafe relationships. Learning will include where support can be found and in all instances be delivered sensitively and clearly at appropriate ages, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs and alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex. Teaching about mental wellbeing is central to these subjects.

By the end of secondary students will continue their learning about:

- Families
- Respectful relationships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

The underlying values which underpin the whole of this work are based on respect for others, the development of positive relationships, and personal choice. The right of young people to have balanced, factual information and the need to have an opportunity to discuss issues in a safe and supportive environment are the keystones to the programme. It is hoped that our comprehensive programme of Relationships and Sexual Health Education will promote self-esteem and emotional well-being and will help pupils to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves, their bodies and for others, at home, school, work and in the community.



## 7. Equality, Inclusion and SEND.

- We deliver RSE in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. All pupils are entitled to access RSE regardless of background, belief, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- RSE teaching reflects the diversity of families, relationships and experiences while remaining factual, age-appropriate and respectful. Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure pupils with SEND can access the curriculum meaningfully, without lowering safeguarding expectations.

## 8. Policy Development

- This policy has been developed in consultation with governors, staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:
- Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
- Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
- Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties given the opportunity to look at the policy and discuss any concerns
- Pupil consultation – we discuss with pupils what they want from their RSE as part of the RSE lessons
- Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

## 9. Definitions

- RSE teaches children and young people how to be safe and healthy. It teaches them how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity or lifestyles.
- Relationships Education: the focus is on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular



reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children 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 children or young carers).

- Health Education: the focus is on teaching the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. Teachers should be clear that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.
- Sex Education: the focus is on teaching children the facts about puberty (preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings) and reproduction (how a baby is conceived and born).
- Students receive their Relationships and Sex Education and health education in a wide range of contexts that are accessible to all pupils with SEND, so they are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education is supported by the school's wider curriculum for personal, social and health education.

## 10. Safeguarding, reports of abuse and confidentiality

Teachers conduct RSE lessons sensitively. Confidentiality cannot be promised if a pupil discloses information indicating they may be at risk. Any disclosure or concern arising from RSE lessons is treated as a safeguarding matter and managed in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as well as Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.



## 11. The RSE Curriculum

Teachers and all those contributing to Relationships and Sexual Health Education work in line with current legislation and Government guidance, irrespective of their personal feelings and beliefs.

It will meet the needs of everyone; boys as well as girls, those with physical, learning or emotional disabilities, those with a religious or faith tradition, whatever their culture and whatever their developing sexuality or gender identity.

Relationships and Sexual Health Education is delivered in a safe, supportive environment where pupils feel able to discuss sensitive issues in an honest, open forum.

When dealing with questions teachers and class staff must establish clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole class setting.

Staff use standard school approved resources in their sessions. This is to protect staff and to ensure pupils are being shown appropriate images. Staff can contact the subject co-ordinator to discuss any resources they would like to use.

In EYFS the curriculum is covered in PSED (Personal and Social, Emotional Development). PSED is one of the three prime areas within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Each prime area is divided into early learning goals, for PSED these are: Self-confidence and self-awareness; Managing feelings and behaviour and Making relationships.

RSE is taught throughout the school. It is revisited to consolidate learning and extra sessions are sometimes put in to support individuals at key points in their life.

Content and teaching will be tailored to ensure it meets the specific needs of pupils at different developmental stages.

The National Curriculum states that RSE helps pupils to understand and manage a wide range of relationships as they mature, and to show respect for the diversity of, and differences between people. It aids the development of pupils' well-being and self-esteem. It also covers Child Sexual Exploitation to ensure pupils have the information needed to keep themselves safe.



## 12. Curriculum organisation

- PSED/PSHE and/or Citizenship is delivered in EYFS and Key Stages 1 to 5. Where possible all students are taught in their class groups and boys and girls are taught in the same group.
- Teachers will follow the PSHE Association planning framework for pupils with SEND. The Planning Framework is organised into six sections:
  - Self-Awareness (Me, who I am, my likes, dislikes, strengths and interests)
  - Self-care, Support and Safety (Looking after myself and keeping safe; aspects of Relationships and Sex Education)
  - Managing Feelings (Understanding feelings, and that how I feel and how others feel affects choices and behaviour; aspects of Relationships and Sex Education)
  - Changing and Growing (How I and others are changing; new opportunities and responsibilities; aspects of Relationships and Sex Education)
  - Healthy Lifestyles (Being and keeping healthy, physically and mentally)
  - The World I Live In (Living confidently in the wider world)
- Lessons will be differentiated to give all pupils relevant and appropriately challenging work. See appendix 1 for more information.

## 13. Roles and responsibilities

We teach about sex and relationships through different aspects of the curriculum. While we carry out the main RSE and Health Education in our PSHE curriculum, we also deliver some RSE and Health Education through the statutory science curriculum and other subject areas, such as ICT and PE. We believe all of these contribute significantly to children's knowledge and understanding of their own bodies, and how they are changing and developing.

We adapt our curriculum to suit the needs of our young people and the PSHE lead devises a long-term curriculum for teachers to follow. We teach children about relationships, and what a healthy relationship looks like, including boundaries and consent. We encourage children to discuss the changes that happen as they grow up. We teach about the parts of the body, including the private parts, inappropriate touching, why males and females are different, and we explain to the children what will happen to their bodies during puberty. We encourage the children to ask for help if they need it, through real-world context. We ensure that both boys and girls know why children's bodies change during puberty, how to manage puberty when it happens, and how babies are



made and born in the context of an adult sexual relationship. We always teach this with due regard for the emotional development of the children.

Under the science curriculum, teachers inform children about males and females and how a baby is born. We teach children that animals, including humans, produce offspring, which grow into adults, and we also teach them about the main parts of the body. Alongside this we teach about life processes including reproduction and the main stages of the human life cycle, in greater depth.

Content is sequenced progressively and reviewed annually to ensure it reflects emerging risks, updated statutory guidance and pupil needs.

### The Trust

The Trust will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

### The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-science components of RSE. It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our RSE and Health Education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the head teacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach about RSE and Health Education effectively, and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The head teacher/PSHE Lead liaises with external agencies regarding the school RSE and Health Education programme, and ensures that all adults who work with our children on these issues are aware of the school policy, work within its framework and reports to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

### The staff

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-science 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 headteacher.

## 14. The Role of Parents/carers

We know that the primary role in children's RSE lies with parents and carers. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation.

To promote this objective, we:

- inform parents about the school's RSE policy ~~and practice~~; encouraging parents to be involved in reviewing the school policy, and making modifications to it as necessary;
- answer any questions that parents may have about the RSE of their child;
- address any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about the arrangements for RSE in the school;
- inform parents about the best practice known with regard to RSE and Health Education, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home;
- make the RSE and Health Education resources used in our lessons available for viewing;
- teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home;
- work closely with parents and carers to identify any issues that may need addressing for each individual student as they get older to ensure planning and delivery is appropriate;
- We believe that through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing bodies and their increasing responsibilities.
- We acknowledge that parents have the right to withdraw their children from some or all sex education (except statutory science content). There is no right to withdraw from Relationships or Health



Education. Requests should be made in writing and will be discussed with the Headteacher or PSHE Lead.

- Parents are encouraged to establish exactly what is covered in the RSE and Health Education lessons relevant to their child's year group and discuss any concerns about lesson content with staff at the earliest opportunity.
- Children's PSHE long term overview will be shared with parents and if a parent wishes for their child to be withdrawn from any sex education lessons, they are able to fill in the reply slip on the letter informing them of their child's PSHE learning or RSE and Health Education week. The PSHE lead is available as first point of call should the need arise to discuss aspects of the programme and any concerns they might have. The school always complies with the wishes of parents in this regard.

## 15. The Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

## 16. Working with external agencies

This should be used to enhance delivery of the subject.

- School should ensure any visitor is checked, ensure teaching being delivered is accessible and appropriate.
- Teaching materials being delivered should be seen in advance to ensure it meets the needs of the pupils.
- It should be agreed in advance how a safeguarding report should be dealt with and how confidentiality will be handled.

## 17. Parents right to withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from any aspect relationships or health education (which includes learning about the changing adolescent body and puberty).



Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 2 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

## 18. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of our continuing professional development calendar.

The headteacher 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.

## 19. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by senior leaders through:

- Planning scrutiny, lesson visits, children and staff surveys.
- Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.
- The Trust is responsible for monitoring the delivery of our RSE policy and they give due consideration to any comments from parents about the RSE programme, and require the head teacher to keep a written record of parents' comments.



## Appendix 1 – Curriculum map

<b>Key Stage</b>	<b>Overview of key themes in PSED/PSHE/RSHE</b>	
<b>EYFS</b>	Personal, Social and Emotional Development Self-regulation Managing Self Building relationships	
	PSHE Education planning framework for pupils with SEND <a href="http://www.pshe-association.org.uk">www.pshe-association.org.uk</a>	
<b>KS1 &amp; KS2</b>	Self-Awareness Autumn 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Things we are good at</li> <li>2. Kind and unkind behaviours</li> <li>3. Playing and working together</li> <li>4. People who are special to us</li> <li>5. Getting on with others</li> </ol>
	Self-care, Support and Safety Autumn 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taking care of ourselves</li> <li>2. Keeping safe</li> <li>3. Trust</li> <li>4. Keeping safe online</li> <li>5. Public and Private</li> </ol>
	Managing Feelings Spring 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying and expressing feelings</li> <li>2. Managing strong feelings</li> </ol>



	Changing and Growing Spring 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Baby to adult</li> <li>2. Changes at puberty</li> <li>3. Dealing with touch</li> <li>4. Different types of relationships</li> </ol>
	Healthy Lifestyles Summer 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Healthy Eating</li> <li>2. Taking care of physical health</li> <li>3. Keeping well</li> </ol>
	The World I Live In Summer 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respecting differences between people</li> <li>2. Jobs people do</li> <li>3. Rules and laws</li> <li>4. Taking care of the environment</li> <li>5. Belonging to a community</li> </ol>
<b>KS3 &amp; KS4</b>	Self-Awareness Autumn 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal strengths</li> <li>2. Skills for learning</li> <li>3. Prejudice and discrimination</li> <li>4. Managing pressure</li> </ol>
	Self-care, Support and Safety Autumn 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Feeling unwell</li> <li>2. Feeling frightened/worried</li> <li>3. Accidents and risk</li> <li>4. Keeping safe online</li> <li>5. Emergency situations</li> <li>6. Public and private</li> <li>7. Gambling</li> </ol>



<p>Managing Feelings Spring 1</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-esteem and unkind comments</li> <li>2. Strong feelings</li> <li>3. Romantic feelings and sexual attraction</li> <li>4. Expectations of relationships/abuse</li> </ol>
<p>Changing and Growing Spring 2</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Puberty</li> <li>2. Friendship</li> <li>3. Healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviour</li> <li>4. Intimate relationships, consent and contraception</li> <li>5. Long-term relationships/parenthood</li> </ol>
<p>Healthy Lifestyles Summer 1</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elements of a healthy lifestyles</li> <li>2. Mental wellbeing</li> <li>3. Physical activity</li> <li>4. Healthy eating</li> <li>5. Body image</li> <li>6. Medicinal drugs</li> <li>7. Drugs, alcohol &amp; tobacco</li> </ol>
<p>The World I Live In Summer 2</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Diversity/rights and responsibilities</li> <li>2. Managing online information</li> <li>3. Taking care of the environment</li> <li>4. Preparing for adulthood</li> <li>5. Managing Finances</li> </ol>



## Post 16

The importance of sleep

Mental wellbeing:

- Name and talk about emotions.
- Recognise what makes them feel stressed/sad.
- Explore the benefits of relaxation. Internet safety and arms:
- Recognise harmful behaviour online (Bullying, abuse or harassment)
- Who to ask for help if they feel unsafe.

Respectful relationships:

- Different types of relationships.
- Recognising signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Who to ask for help if they feel unsafe.
- Changing adolescent body.
- Name correct body parts.
- Public and private.
- My body is private – safety and appropriate touch.
- Menstruation – girls.

Health:

- Keeping clean.
- Dental hygiene.
- Handwashing – germs.
- Alcohol/drug awareness.
- Basic First Aid.



## Appendix 2 – Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from non-science components of sex education within RSE			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			
Agreed actions from discussion with parents			