



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Updated October 2025

Review October 2026

Policy reviewed by C Unsworth R Hiles

1) What is Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)?

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students 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 and preparing students for the experiences, rights and responsibilities of adult life.

RSE is an essential part of lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development and is a fundamental aspect of the wider personal development curriculum at Westhoughton High School. It is incredibly important that students gain access to accurate information, develop skills and form positive beliefs, values and attitudes as they grow to become young adults and responsible citizens in society. Westhoughton High School believes that our RSE curriculum should equip students with the skills and knowledge to enable them to build positive, enjoyable, respectful, loving and non-exploitative friendships – staying safe both on and off-line. The teaching of Relationships and Sex Education will empower students, help them to identify and manage risk and encourage them to act responsibly and safely when making choices.

2) Values and Ethos

We believe that:

- Effective Relationships and Sex Education is essential if children and young people are to make responsible and informed decisions about their lives.
- Children and young people need help and support through their physical, emotional and moral development.
- Relationships and Sex Education does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It teaches young people to understand human sexuality and the risks associated with sex. It teaches students to respect themselves and others and it equips them with the necessary skills to resist engaging in sexual activity before they are emotionally and physically ready and an awareness of what help and support is available if they do.
- Relationships and Sex Education builds up knowledge and skills that are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on children and young people.
- Relationships and Sex Education should provide an awareness of the biological and social factors which influence sexual behaviour.
- Relationships and Sex Education needs to be firmly embedded in the PSHE curriculum alongside other curriculum areas (Science/RE) and the wider personal development programme.

3) Aims and Objectives

Through RSE we aim to:

- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships.
- Provide a positive learning environment where sensitive discussions can take place and where students feel able to ask questions.
- Provide accurate information about and increase the understanding of relationships and sex-related issues.
- Equip students with an understanding of the law surrounding relationships and sex and to have a knowledge of their rights regarding relationships and sex.
- Explore a range of attitudes and values towards relationships and sex-related issues and help young people to reach their own, informed opinions.
- Develop a sense of mutual respect and care of others.
- Foster self-esteem, self-awareness and confidence with regard to relationships and sex related issues.
- Develop skills in communication, risk assessment, decision-making, assertiveness, conflict management, seeking help and helping others relevant to relationships and sex related behaviours.

- Promote safe, equal, caring and enjoyable relationships and discuss real life issues appropriate to the age and stage of students. This includes consideration of friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and safe relationships online.
- Teach students appropriate vocabulary to describe themselves, their bodies and their relationships.
- Signpost opportunities for students to access further help and support if/when they need it.
- Work in partnership with students and parents/carers to ensure that topics and themes covered are responsive to contextual issues and the needs of our school community.

4) Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Review the RSE policy annually and ensure that it aligns with statutory responsibilities and the ethos and values of the school.
- Hold the school leadership team and staff to account for the robust implementation of the policy.

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Appoint a lead member of staff (Head of curriculum for PSHE) who will be responsible for overall curriculum design and the consistent delivery of RSE across the school.
- Take responsibility via the Headteacher (or delegated to the Deputy Headteacher) for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory components of RSE.
- Ensure that all staff are informed of the RSE policy and the responsibilities included within the policy.
- Allocate appropriate levels of curriculum time to enable thorough coverage of material at all key stages.
- Communicate information about the delivery of RSE clearly to all stakeholders and ensure that it is regularly updated.

RSE Lead will:

- Design a curriculum which ensures all statutory material is covered in relation to RSE.
- Ensure that high quality and age-appropriate resources are used to support the delivery of RSE.
- Provide clear guidance to staff teaching RSE and opportunities for regular CPD.
- Monitor and quality assure the delivery of RSE lessons
- Liaise with parents and carers once a term to discuss curriculum changes and offer resources to involve parents in the learning their children undertake in RSE

All staff teaching RSE will:

- Deliver lesson content in a sensitive and objective way.
- Ensure that all students are offered the opportunity to explore ideas, situations and feelings in an atmosphere of confidence and support.
- Model positive and inclusive attitudes grounded in respect for others
- Direct students to further support if required.
- Act in line with the school safeguarding and child protection policy and KCSIE guidance if a disclosure or concern arises as part of a lesson/activity.

All students will:

- Participate fully in RSE lessons and activities.
- Be expected to respond appropriately to lesson content and to treat staff and other students respectfully in their choice of language and expression of views.
- Follow the class agreement at all times during the lesson.

5) Statutory requirements

The Education Act 2002 sets out the statutory duties which all schools are required to meet:

‘Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly-based and which:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society.
- Prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life’

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, make Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education.

The above legislation means that Relationships and Sex Education is compulsory and is now a statutory subject for all secondary schools.

6) Curriculum Content and Delivery

Content

The statutory content for curriculum delivery is outlined in Appendix 1 and the Curriculum coverage outline for Westhoughton High School can be seen in Appendix 2. Please note that curriculum coverage is kept under regular review and may be adapted throughout the year in response to contextual issues.

The Relationships and Sex Education programme is delivered primarily through the PSHE curriculum and the Science programme of study. All programmes of study for Science comply with the National Curriculum requirements. Additionally, there may be supplementary materials for aspects of the RSE curriculum which are delivered through the tutor time and assembly programme.

Teaching and Learning Styles

The school will use a wide range of teaching and learning styles to provide opportunities for active participation. We will utilise appropriate teaching methods, matched to the needs and maturity of our young people. Students will be assessed in line with the school marking and assessment policy and assessment for learning tasks are embedded within all lessons in PSHE and Science, where RSE is delivered through the curriculum. Staff will ensure that lesson content is appropriately adapted to meet the needs of all learners, including those with SEND.

Resources

All materials used to support the delivery of RSE will be selected and approved for use by the PSHE Lead to ensure that they are accurate and age-appropriate. Resources will be maintained and updated by the PSHE Lead.

7) Parents’/Carers’ rights to withdraw their children

Parents/carers have a right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory/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. If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their child they should:

- Discuss this first with the PSHE Lead.
- Make it clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in.
- Write to the Headteacher stating their intention to withdraw their child. A written copy of withdrawal requests will be held on the student’s record.
- A meeting with the Headteacher to discuss withdrawal request will take place before withdrawal is agreed

The school will ensure that where a student is excused from the non-statutory aspects of RSE that they will receive appropriate alternative education during the period of withdrawal. Parents/carers cannot withdraw their child from any aspect of the health and relationships education.

8) Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

RSE curriculum content and lessons will meet the needs of all young people regardless of their developing sexuality. We will deal with questions honestly and sensitively, answer appropriate questions and offer support. In lessons we will ensure that no particular sexual orientation is promoted.

9) Staff CPD

In order to promote an effective whole school approach to RSE we will ensure that all our staff have the expertise and understanding to support their particular contribution. Staff development and training in RSE will be identified through staff feedback forms, RSE meetings and departmental observations. Support will be given to members of the department with development/training in various forms, depending on the needs of the individual staff member.

Where appropriate the school may engage other services/professionals, such as the school health service, to assist with staff CPD or with the delivery of specialist lesson content.

10) Confidentiality

We recognise the subject material covered in some aspects of RSE lessons may result in students wishing to discuss personal and sensitive matters. Within RSE teaching the following principles will be applied:

- Ground rules/boundaries will be clarified at the start of lessons/series of lessons
- RSE teachers will always encourage young people to talk to parents/carers where sensitive/personal issues are shared.
- Staff will ensure that students know that teachers cannot guarantee complete confidentiality but that they will know first if it must be broken.
- Staff will seek further advice from the designated safeguarding lead if they have concerns about a student following discussion from a lesson. If there are safeguarding concerns appropriate action will be taken in line with our safeguarding and child protection policy.
- RSE staff will ensure that young people are informed of sources of confidential advice.

11) Specific Disclosures relating to sexual activity

If we learn that a student is sexually active or contemplating sexual activity we will ensure that:

- The young person is encouraged to talk to their parent/carer.
- Child protection/immediate safeguarding issues are addressed in an appropriate manner.
- Only in exceptional circumstances will information be handled without parental knowledge.

If we learn that a student has been the victim of alleged sexual harassment/sexual assault this will be treated sensitively and seriously in line with our safeguarding and child protection policy. Students will be made aware that whilst their wishes will be taken into account that it is likely that a disclosure of this kind will involve other agencies to provide support, including the Police and Social Care. Only in exceptional circumstances would a disclosure be handled without parental involvement.

12) Dealing with Questions

We will deal with questions in RSE by:

- Setting clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate within the class agreement.
- Acknowledging if a teacher does not know the answer to a particular question.
- If a question is too explicit, is age inappropriate for the child or young person or the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, staff will acknowledge the question and will attend to it later on an individual basis following safeguarding procedures.

13) Class Agreement

Before undertaking RSE lessons, classes must verbally agree to the class agreement:

- **Be respectful and mature**- Listen and share viewpoints respectfully

- **No personal stories-** We can discuss general situations as examples but must not use names or identifying descriptions.
- **What is said in the room, stays in the room-** certain level of confidentiality. Outside of the classroom, we are aware that other people may feel uncomfortable with such discussions. If something is said that is a safeguarding concern, this cannot be confidential. Pupils will be spoken to if what is said in the classroom needs to be handed over to relevant school staff.
- **No judgments, we are all different-** we are all different and know different things... different identities, backgrounds, and experiences
- **We won't be forced to get involved-** We'll always encourage everyone to get involved in the lesson, but no-one will be forced to do anything they don't want to, and no-one will be put on the spot.
- **We will listen to others and share our points of view-** Everyone has the right to share their point of view and it will be listened to.
- **We will use respectful and appropriate language-** Nobody should be intentionally disrespectful to others. If we use disrespectful language unknowingly, we will discuss this in class to help each other understand why it's disrespectful.
- **Ask questions-** We know that there are no stupid questions. It's okay not to know everything and it's okay to get things wrong – even if you are the teacher.

A use of a question box may be used by the class teacher. This encourages pupils who may not want to ask questions in front of their peers to have their questions answered later in the lesson.

14) Monitoring and Evaluation

We will specifically monitor and evaluate RSE by the use of:

- Student evaluation forms.
- Staff evaluation forms.
- Discussions at departmental meetings.
- Internal Quality Assurance (SLT, LOL) – lesson observations.
- Internal Quality Assurance (LOL) – monitoring exercise books.

The lead teacher for PSHE will provide regular updates on progress and curriculum review as appropriate

15) Communication of Policy

This statutory policy will be available to all stakeholders via the school website. Any review/changes to the policy will be signposted to governors/staff.

Parents/Carers are encouraged to raise questions regarding the policy by contacting school or by responding to parental consultation questionnaires which will be distributed throughout the academic year. Parents will also have opportunity to access curriculum content, raise questions and provide feedback to school at key engagement events.

16) Review Date

This policy will be reviewed: September 2026

Appendix 1 – Statutory Guidance on RSE content

By the end of secondary school

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

Families

Pupils 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

Pupils 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

Pupils 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

Pupils 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

Pupils 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.

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 ‘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)

Appendix 2 – Curriculum Overview

The table below outlines the entirety of the Life Skills curriculum, including RSE topics. It has been reviewed to ensure the additional curriculum time and leadership resources allocated further enhances our RSE provision so that it can continue to respond rigorously but sensitively to our ever-changing contemporary context and its many challenges. As part of this review process, the new RSE policy for September 2026 will also be adapted to ensure it responds appropriately to the latest government guidance which becomes statutory at that point. The schemes of learning have been adapted to align with the age limits in the guidance as well as the specific guidance around the topic of gender, gender reassignment, FGM and sexual harassment.

PSHE	Wellbeing			Life Skills	
	Fortnightly Lessons (60m)	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Autumn Term 7+7 (7)	Health Education: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What does good health look like? Boys Puberty Menstruation and Periods Personal Hygiene Dangers of vaping Drugs Cannabis 	Health Education: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety Eating disorders Self-harm Diet and exercise Lifestyle diseases Drugs use – vapes Drug use - cannabis 	Health Education: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The relationship between physical and mental health. Protecting mental health – coping strategies Health advice and services Prescription drugs and antibiotics FGM and the law Sleep importance and hygiene Drug use - cannabis 	Relationships, Sex and Health Education: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gas-lighting and emotional abuse Unplanned pregnancy Abortion STIs Cannabis Vaping Drug use - cannabis 	CEIAG and Wider World*: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Personal statement introduction Personal statement first draft Personal statement final draft Personal Safety Online privacy and data protection Gender roles Suicide Prevention
Spring Term 6+6 (6)	Relationships and Sex Education: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy relationships Relationship boundaries Different types of families Consent Online safety – grooming Online safety – image sharing 	Relationships and Sex Education: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Misogyny Being a great man Consent Consent Appropriate physical relationships Sextortion 	Relationships and Sex Education <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual harassment Consent revisited Contraception Condom use Pornography Appropriate online use 	CEIAG and Wider World: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of living crisis Equality and Equity Equality and Equity Hate crime Hate crime Fake news – critical thinking Social media validation Post 16 Options Post 16 Options Employment rights and responsibilities Identifying personal strengths The right career for me 	Relationships, Sex and Health Education*: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Positive relationships Role of pleasure Parenting costs and considerations Health behaviours - choice and consequence Harassment and the law
Summer Term 5+7 (6)	Living in the Wider World: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> £ - Wants vs needs £ - Budgeting PrCh - Racism in society R&R – My rights R&R - Young carers O - Media Literacy 	Living in the Wider World: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> £ - Credit and debit £ - Budgeting PrCh - Sexism in society R&R – Young carers R&R - County Lines and Gangs W - Protecting the planet 	Living in the Wider World: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> £ - How can I avoid debt £ - Healthy eating on a budget PrCh – Ableism visible and invisible disabilities O – Responsible internet use. R&R - Kinfe crime W - Sustainability for all 		

Appendix 3

Links to further guidance

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

[Understanding Relationships, Sex and Health Education - a guide for secondary school parents \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-secondary)