

Hitchin Girls' School

Relationship, Sex and Health Education Policy



Date of issue:	November 2025
Trust Board approval:	November 2025
Review date:	November 2026

This is a Statutory Policy required by all Academies under the Education Act 1996

Documents referred to for advice/guidance/information.

'From Needs to Practice' - Sex Education Forum

'Stand up for us. Challenging homophobia in schools' DfES / DH – 2004

Extended Schools: Improving access to Sexual Health Advice Services

DfES National Curriculum 2008

Hertfordshire Teenage Pregnancy Strategy – 2008 – 2011

'Not yet good enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools – May 2013

National Curriculum – October 2013

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers (DRAFT) – July 2018

The 2019 RSHE (RSE) Curriculum; Statutory guidance for all schools: DfE – July 2019

Relationship to other policies

Relationships and sex education forms an integral part of the curriculum policy, and the schemes of work for Science and Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (personal wellbeing) and Citizenship.

The policy also relates to:

Equality

Child Protection

Anti-bullying

Mental Health and well-being

SEND

Purpose

A key aim of the school is that each pupil will develop the skills and knowledge to make good decisions. Decisions about how they relate to others can only be made if they have adequate knowledge and understanding of their own physical and emotional development. This is not a task for the school in isolation, and we seek to work with parents to ensure that the teaching of relationships and sex education reflects their expectations and complements teaching at home.

Aims of the sex and relationship education policy:

- to clarify the content and the manner in which relationships and sex education is delivered in the school
- to ensure communication with parents / carers concerning all aspects of the relationships and sex education in the school
- to ensure all statutory duties are met in relation to RSHE delivery.

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- the Governing Body is advised about the nature and organisation of relationships, sex and health education and how it reflects the aims and values of the school and the statutory requirements
- sex education is provided in a way that encourages pupils to consider morals, the value of family life, and the importance of marriage or civil partnership
- the statutory content of the relationships, sex and health education is covered within the curriculum

- pupils are protected from inappropriate teaching materials
- a scheme of work is agreed and implemented
- parents are informed about the programme for sex education each year.

Staff who teach relationships and sex education are expected to:

- provide relationships, sex and health education in accordance with this policy and in a way which encourages pupils to consider morals and the value of family life
- participate in training to provide sex education in line with the school curriculum policy
- implement the agreed scheme of work
- draw to the attention of the Headteacher any materials which they consider to be inappropriate
- respond appropriately to those pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from relationships and sex education.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

Lessons on relationships, sex and health education will be observed in the normal programme of monitoring teaching and learning.

The policy will be reviewed every year.

External agencies - specialists involved in supporting the sex and relationship education programme will receive a copy of the policy should they request it and the visits will be evaluated by staff and students.

Schools' legal obligations.

- the sex education elements contained in the National Curriculum Science Orders are mandatory for all pupils of secondary age
- all schools must provide an up-to-date policy which describes the content and organisation of RSHE provided outside the National Curriculum Science Order. It is the school governors' responsibility to ensure that the policy is developed and made available to parents for inspection
- Secondary schools are required to provide an RSHE programme which follows the statutory guidance as set out in the 2019 RSE and Health Curriculum (statutory guidance).
- The aim of RSHE 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, civil partnership or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). 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.
- Pupils should be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and

gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. All pupils should feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality.

- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the sex education aspect of the RSHE provision but not from the statutory National Curriculum Science lessons. Children cannot be withdrawn from the statutory lessons about relationships or health. The parental right of withdrawal may be exercised by either parent or by a person who has responsibility for care of the child. Parents do not have to give reasons for their decision; nor do they have to indicate what other arrangements they intend to make for providing sex education for their children. Parents wishing to exercise this right are asked to contact the Headteacher
- All maintained schools must provide relationship and sex education in such a manner as to encourage young people to have regard to moral considerations and the value of family life
- Online safety must be delivered as part of the statutory content
- Mental health and well-being must also be explicitly taught as part of the health units, along with physical health

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints about the RSHE education curriculum should be made to the Headteacher who will report to the Trustees.

What is relationship, sex and health education?

Relationships, sex and health education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development, embedded in a context that enhances the self-worth and confidence of each individual and encourages mutually respectful relationships and empathy for others.

The national context

The National Curriculum (2014) set out three broad aims that provide an essential context. The curriculum aims to enable all young people to become:

- **successful learners** who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- **confident individuals** who are able to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- **responsible citizens** who make a positive contribution to society

Moral and Value Framework

The relationship, sex and health education programme at Hitchin Girls' School aims to present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner, and it is set within a clear framework of values and an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour, in line with 'Sex and Relationship Guidance', DfES, 2000 and the updated Relationships Education, Relationships, Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019). We believe that the school's relationship and sex education programme plays a very important part in supporting those with parental responsibility whilst their children cope with the emotional and physical aspects of maturing, and the school helps pupils prepare for the challenges and responsibilities which sexual maturity brings. Children are receiving relationship and sex education from various sources such as the media and their friends, and the relationship and sex education programme is designed to correct any misinformation.

Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the value of stable family life, marriage, civil partnerships and other stable relationships, and the responsibilities of parenthood. They are enabled 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.

We aim to:

- Give accurate information about physical and emotional changes at puberty, the structure and function of the reproductive organs, the process of conception and birth and methods of contraception and abortion.
- Inform students of the laws relating to sexual behaviour.
- Widen knowledge and understanding about related health and social issues and to help students to recognise their growing responsibilities for health care and to be aware of the dangers of casual and promiscuous sexual activity (including information about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections).
- Help students develop an appreciation of the possible consequences of their choices and actions, including an awareness of the risks and dangers and to learn to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse.
- Ensure that students know how and where to gain information and appropriate support and advice in school, locally and nationally.
- Help students develop a positive self-image and to behave with dignity and respect for themselves and others.
- Provide an opportunity for students to explore their attitudes and feelings towards sex and sexuality including their fears and uncertainties, including considering and understanding moral dilemmas.
- Help students to develop an awareness of social and moral considerations in relation to sexual behaviour and sexuality and an awareness of the concept of equal opportunities and responsibilities between the sexes. Also to promote an understanding, respect and sensitivity towards other people's beliefs and traditions.
- Encourage students to appreciate the benefits of stable relationships, family life and the responsibilities of parenthood.
- Help students develop their interpersonal skills as a basis for developing positive relationships with others.
- Enable all students to understand the role of peer pressure in influencing decision making and to develop the skills and confidence needed to resist pressure by developing skills in communication and assertive behaviour.
- Inform students about potentially dangerous practices such as female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation to ensure they are aware of the dangers that exist.
- Educate students about grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour. These issues will be taught sensitively and clearly, within the context of the law, and in a way which ensures students understand how they can seek appropriate help and support to keep themselves safe.

Organisation and Delivery

RSHE is not delivered in isolation within the curriculum but forms part of a complete programme of guidance and development for students as preparation for life.

Relationship and Sex Education is delivered mainly through Learning for Life: Personal Wellbeing,

Citizenship, Science, computing, social science and Philosophy and Ethics lessons. Aspects are also delivered through the weekly tutor resources about mental health and well-being. The main content of RSHE is delivered in Learning for Life, Personal Wellbeing and Citizenship which has been planned to cover the National Curriculum programmes of study for Personal, Social and Health Well Being and Citizenship Education and the statutory RHSE curriculum.

Year 7-11 are mainly timetabled for one hour a fortnight. Relationship, Sex and Health education is fully embedded in the Learning for Life schemes of work. It is intended that the programme matches the age, understanding, and needs of all students and it includes reinforcement of key messages at different ages and stages and in different situations, planned to provide coherence and progression. It is expected that the full programme will be completed at the end of Key Stage 4. The programme is taught by a number of teachers who receive opportunities for training and support to ensure they develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to teach the programme effectively.

Learning for Life is taught in mixed ability groups and a variety of teaching methods are used. Ground rules are discussed and agreed at the start of each RSHE module and it is made clear that no staff or student should ask personal questions. Students have the right not to participate in activities or discussions which make them feel uncomfortable.

The Public Health Advisors, external professionals and charities contribute to the delivery of RSHE in school and form part of the planned programme. They are chosen carefully to fit into the stated aims and objectives of the school's RSHE and Citizenship policies and to enhance the overall educational experience. All visitors who are delivering RSHE content to students will have access to the school's RSHE policy and will be given copies if requested. All external agencies will be expected to work within it and will be supervised/supported by a member of staff at all times. The input of visitors is monitored and evaluated by staff and students and this evaluation informs future planning.

Monitoring effectiveness of the Relationship, Sex and Health Education programme

Pupils and staff are involved in evaluating RSHE provision through:

- Discussion and pupil and staff voice
- Lesson observations
- Annual google form knowledge checks and feedback forms

Confidentiality

Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality to pupils. If there is a disclosure or suspicion of possible abuse then the school's child protection procedures will be involved and staff must pass this information on to the senior member of staff responsible for child protection who is James Crowther. For more detailed guidance members of staff should refer to the school policies about RSHE, whistle blowing and child protection.