

	Relationships and Sex Education Policy	
	Last reviewed: September 2026	Next review: September 2029
	Linked Governor: Alison Saunders	SLT Member: David Beattie

Overview

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is mandatory in all secondary schools. This policy explains:

- the aims of RSE in the curriculum;
- defining RSE;
- how and when RSE is delivered;
- accessibility of RSE to all students
- the rights of parents/carers to withdraw their children from aspects of the sex education part of RSE and children's right to opt in;
- roles and responsibilities
- monitoring and evaluation
- confidentiality and child protection
- relationship to other policies
- development of the policy

Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, mutual respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.

Ashlyns aims to ensure every student acquires the skills and knowledge they need to develop healthy nurturing relationships, make informed decisions, protect themselves and remain safe.

Decisions about relationships can only be made if students have adequate knowledge and understanding of their own physical and emotional development, understand the importance of respect and equality, are aware of/alert to issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotyping, and are aware of 'on-line' risks. This is not a task for the school alone; we seek to work with parents/carers to ensure that RSE teaching reflects their expectations and complements teaching at home.

Defining Sex and Relationship Education

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is lifelong learning for all young people in school, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity or ability. It is about physical, moral and emotional development, the understanding of the importance of family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity. RSE should enable students to make informed and appropriate choices as they become young adults and to

develop responsible attitudes to sexual activity and the development of their own stable, loving relationships.

The Ashlyns RSE curriculum builds on knowledge gained at primary school, in addition covering the content detailed in Appendix 1.

How and when RSE is delivered

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (PRE), assemblies, presentations by external speakers and sessions delivered by trained health professionals and youth workers.

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).

Appendix 1 details content coverage. Parents will be informed about the teaching of sex education every year. Details of what RSE content is delivered to each year group is posted on the [school website](#) and is also detailed in Appendix 1.

Accessibility

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity. The school will ensure RSE is inclusive and meets the needs of all our students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and that the teaching of RSE fosters gender equality and LGBT+ equality.

Right to withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory sex education 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.

Parents/carers considering withdrawing their children are encouraged to discuss their concerns with a member of the Senior Leadership Team so that they can fully appreciate the consequences of such a decision on their children; for example, the child may feel excluded or may hear a friend's version of lessons rather than the that of an authoritative teacher, etc. A file note will be made of such discussions and, if parents/carers still wish to withdraw their child, they will be asked to confirm their decision in writing to the Headteacher using the format provided in Appendix 2. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

Roles and responsibilities of Headteacher, other staff, governors

The **governing body** will:

- hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- seek the advice of the Headteacher on this policy, keep it up to date, and make it available to parents

The **Headteacher** will:

- ensure that RSE is taught consistently and sensitively across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from the non-statutory sex education components of RSE

- students are protected from inappropriate teaching materials
- parents are informed about the programme for sex education, and are informed of how they can withdraw their child from the non-statutory sex education aspects of lessons (by submitting a request in writing)

Staff who teach sex and relationships education are expected to:

- provide sex education in accordance with this policy and agreed schemes of learning
- participate in training to provide sex education in line with the school curriculum policy; this training will establish ground rules to help teachers create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unintended or unexpected questions or comments from students.
- respond appropriately to the needs of individual students, including those students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory aspects of sex education.

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.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Headteacher will provide a report on the implementation of the scheme of work once each year, together with a record of parental and student complaints, the number of students withdrawn from lessons, and the number of teachers and other staff involved in training on sex education. Lessons on sex education will be observed in the normal programme of monitoring teaching and the judgements about the impact of the lesson on students will be included in the report; the curriculum lead for PSHE will ensure that student surveys and focus groups enable feedback which informs the delivery of education in this area.

Confidentiality and Child Protection

If a student makes a personal disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff cannot offer or guarantee confidentiality. The procedure set out in the school's child protection policy regarding safeguarding causes for concern should be followed in these circumstances.

Relationship to other policies

Sex and relationships education forms an integral part of the curriculum policy, and is delivered through assemblies, presentations by external speakers, as well as through schemes of learning for science, citizenship, Religious Studies, Personal, Social, and Health education (PSHE).

Policy Development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students, parents and governors. The policy has been informed by the following guidance:

- The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403, 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996.
- Equality Act 2010
- PSHE Association guidance
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-your-relationships-sex-and-health-curriculum#creating-a-policy-for-the-new-curriculum>
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6970e7e67e827090d02d42e0/Relationships_education_relationships_and_sex_education_RSE_and_health_education_for_intro_1_September_2026_.pdf

Appendix 1

The school curriculum for RSE will cover the content detailed below by the end of Year 11.

A. Families

- 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 e.g. 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); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

B. Respectful relationships, including friendships

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: 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 (e.g. 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.

C. Online and media

- 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 e.g. 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.

D. Being safe

- 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).

E. Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
- 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/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.

Please also note that the PSHE Curriculum involves coverage of other topics to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum.

RSHE topic coverage

This section focuses on areas of the RSHE curriculum most closely linked to safeguarding In which year groups are these specific topics being taught?

	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Puberty	✓				
Marriage and other committed relationships	✓		✓	✓	
Bullying including cyberbullying	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Menstrual Wellbeing	✓				
Understanding menopause				✓	
Understanding personal space and basic consent		✓		✓	
Understanding sexual consent, including the laws around the age of consent and rape and sexual assault		✓	✓	✓	✓
Condoms and contraception	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Feelings and emotions to do with relationships	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pregnancy options (including factual information about abortion)			✓	✓	
Attitudes and behaviour of men and boys towards women and girls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The medically correct names for genitalia (vulva, vagina, clitoris, penis, testicles)	✓	✓			
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	✓	✓		✓	
Cultural and faith perspectives on relationships and sex				✓	✓
Sub-cultures that influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including “involuntary celibates” (INCELS) or online influencers		✓	✓	✓	
How to tell if a relationship is abusive (including online)	✓		✓	✓	
How to tell if a relationship is healthy (including online)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understanding that some social media accounts are fake/generated with AI	✓				
Understanding the risks posed by AI chatbots with regards to fake intimacy or offering harmful advice, and promoting critical thinking around this	✓				
Sexual harassment (including unwanted sexual attention and unwanted nudes)		✓	✓	✓	
Understanding the law regarding the sharing of indecent images		✓	✓		
HIV		✓			
Fertility	✓				
Power imbalances in relationships	✓		✓	✓	
Sexual orientation	✓		✓		
How to get help if you were sexually abused, assaulted or touched inappropriately	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
How to recognise when someone is being groomed including for sexual exploitation	✓		✓	✓	✓
Identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships, including sexual pressure		✓	✓	✓	
The risks of alcohol and drugs, including how it can impact risks in sexual behaviour	✓	✓		✓	
Gender identity and information relevant to people who are trans and non-binary	✓		✓		
How to access local sexual health services				✓	
FGM	✓				
Pornography		✓	✓	✓	
Sexual pleasure				✓	
Making decisions about intimate and sexual relationships	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recognising pressure to take a risk			✓	✓	

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

To be completed by parents			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

To be completed by the school	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	