



Exeter School

Relationships and sex education and health education policy

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1. Introduction and Aims

Effective relationships, health and sex education (RSHE) enables young people to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives, regardless of the challenges and influences they will inevitably face. Through our teaching of RSHE, we strive to prepare our pupils for adult life, enabling them to embrace and navigate experiences and opportunities safely and confidently. To lead happy, healthy, and successful lives, pupils must learn the importance of their own health and wellbeing, and those of others, and understand how to enjoy positive relationships. In learning about healthy relationships and sex, pupils can develop resilience and independence, and learn how, when, and where to ask for help or support. Effective RSHE also creates a culture of safety, equality, and inclusivity.

This policy has been produced in consultation with pupils, parents, staff, and governors, and is reviewed yearly by a deputy head in collaboration with the head of PSHE. Parental feedback will be sought as part of the review process, to ensure that our provision is meeting the needs of their child. In addition, new government guidance is considered and incorporated. The policy will be updated annually, signed off by the governors' Education Committee and shared with parents each September.

2. Statutory requirements

All secondary schools are required to provide relationships and sex education to all pupils as per section 34 of the **Children and Social Work Act (2017)**.

The school's policy on RSHE is based on the requirements of the DfE statutory guidance **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2025)**. It is informed by the following documents:

- **Equality Act (2010)**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)**

The following school policies and guidance are also relevant to our RSHE policy:

- Child protection (safeguarding) policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Acceptable use policy
- Transgender policy and extended guidance
- Equal opportunities policy

Should you like to see the government guidance and statutory requirements for relationships and sex education in secondary schools please visit this link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6970e7e67e827090d02d42e0/Relationships_education_on_relationships_and_sex_education_RSE_and_health_education_for_intro_1_September_2026.pdf.

Our RSHE policy outlines a key part of our whole-school approach to wellbeing and positive relationships and is supported by our behaviour and safeguarding policies.



3. Definition

Relationships and sex education enables pupils to learn about the emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up, about relationships, sex, human sexuality, diversity, and sexual health. It should allow them to build self-efficacy, equipping them with the information, skills, and virtues to have safe, fulfilling relationships; to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and wellbeing. The role of parents and carers in the development of children's understanding about relationships and sex is vital. Parents and carers are their child's primary educators and, as such, have the most significant influence in enabling their child to mature and to form healthy relationships.

4. Delivery of RSHE

The content of the RSHE curriculum is delivered through the curriculum areas of Character and Practical Wisdom (CPW) and science is also delivered in the following ways:

- timetabled lessons
- assemblies and tutor time sessions delivered by members of staff and / or external agencies
- collapsed timetable sessions delivered by members of staff and / or external agencies.

The curriculum content is delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way which allows scope for pupils to ask questions.

5. The RSHE curriculum

Teaching involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and virtues and we use the PSHE Association program of study to inform our curriculum, alongside staff and pupil focus groups.

In Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils have weekly CPW lessons, taught by qualified teachers and overseen by the head of PSHE. This is supplemented through assemblies and follow-up tutor sessions, overseen by the head of PSHE and the deputy head (enrichment, character and community). At Key Stage 5, RSHE is delivered through futures lessons, assemblies and follow-up form time sessions. Assemblies are delivered by the head of sixth form, the head of PSHE, and the deputy heads. Regular visiting speakers and organisations are also involved in the delivery of RSHE, working with individual year groups and discussing age-appropriate topics and issues. These speakers and organisations have included: The Self-Esteem Team, Digital Awareness UK, The Rap Project, Natasha Devon, MBE, and RePhraseSW. The school nurse also supports the delivery of RSHE where appropriate.

Through this policy, the school complies with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics. The teaching of RSHE will reflect the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that pupils clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

Lessons, assemblies, and group discussions are planned carefully to ensure that RSHE content is accessible and engaging for all pupils, regardless of their academic ability or educational requirements. We understand that those with special educational needs or disabilities might be more vulnerable to exploitation and bullying; to equip them with the necessary knowledge and emotional 'toolkit' to keep themselves safe, advice will be sought from organisations including South West Autism Devon. Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities will be given the opportunity to fully participate in RSHE, and a differentiated program will be offered if required.



RSHE will be inclusive, helping pupils to understand important issues. Where necessary, these will be taught gradually, taking into consideration the age and maturity of the pupils. In accordance with the 2024 government consultation, we aim to avoid any direct references to suicide in lessons before Fourth Form, and no explicit discussion of sexual activity before Lower Fifth. Regardless of gender identity or sexual identity, it is our aim to ensure that all can learn in a safe and respectful environment. Openness and curiosity will be encouraged, so that pupils feel comfortable asking questions and exploring new topics.

The RSHE curriculum is designed to build on what pupils have already learnt in primary and junior school, enabling them to develop their understanding of the following core topics:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships, and the impact of misogyny and incel culture on both boys and girls.
- Online and media, including online harms. This now extends to AI literacy.
- Being safe, including knife crime and conflict resolution.
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health and pornography and its impact.
- Health, including menstrual and gynaecological health and how to access healthcare services

As some of these topics are taught within the context of family life, care is taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents; families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers, amongst other structures) and at the same time remembering that some pupils may have a different structure of support around them (e.g., looked after children or young carers).

In line with statutory government guidance (2025), we teach the legal definitions of biological sex and gender reassignment and the legal protections that come with this, whilst avoiding teaching that all people have a 'gender identity'. We recognise this topic is contentious and emphasise neutrality in our teaching of it.

In recognition of the fact that the world is a fast-changing place and young people are faced with many new challenges, especially online, we review our PSHE curriculum annually and ensure that it is relevant and up-to-date. This includes, but is not limited to, updates in the law, developments in online dangers including AI-generated imagery, and incel culture.

6. Roles and responsibilities

The RSHE program will be led by the Deputy Head (Enrichment, Character and Community) and the head of PSHE, who is responsible for creating and updating resources. It will be taught by qualified teachers.

a) The governing body

The governors approve the RSHE policy and hold the acting deputy head (enrichment and community) to account for its implementation.

b) The Head



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The Head is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSHE.

c) The Deputy Head (Enrichment, Character and Community) will:

- ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.
- respond appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSHE.
- monitor this policy on a regular basis and report to governors on its effectiveness.

d) Teachers are responsible for:

- delivering RSHE in a sensitive way.
- modelling positive attitudes to RSHE.
- monitoring progress.
- responding to the needs of individual pupils.

Staff will reply to, and answer, pupils' questions sensitively and openly. They will ensure that balanced information is provided which will consider different faith views and avoid any negative impressions.

e) Pupils

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

f) Parents/carers

The school understands the primary role in children's RSHE lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents and carers of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and transparency. The school will:

- Inform parents/carers about the school's RSHE policy and practice.
- Answer any questions that parents/carers may have about their child's education.
- Provide opportunities for parents/carers to view the resources that are used in lessons. The curriculum overview will be sent to parents in September with the opportunity for questions to be raised with the Deputy Head (Enrichment, Character and Community).
- Take seriously any issue that parents/carers raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSHE in school.

Parents/careers have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory components of sex education (see **Parents' right to withdraw**, below). However, this should rarely happen as, by working in partnership with the school, they recognise the importance of this aspect of their child's education.

g) Visitors

"Visitors should complement but never substitute or replace planned provision. It is the PSHE subject leader and teacher's responsibility to plan the curriculum and lessons" (Sex and Relationship Guidance" DfEE 0116/2000). Visitors to Exeter School, such as parents/carers, health professionals and members of voluntary organisations, may be invited to plan and contribute to RSHE lessons. They will be given a copy of this policy and will be expected to work within the virtues framework described within. The head of PSHE will ensure that the



visitors' contributions to sessions are in line with the learning outcomes of the school's RSHE program. A teacher will be present during any RSHE sessions.

7. Parents'/carers' right to withdraw.

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of the statutory RSHE except for those parts included in the science curriculum, which cover the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Head. A register of any pupils who are withdrawn from lessons will be kept and distributed to all teachers involved. The school will plan accordingly for these pupils so that they receive appropriate, purposeful, alternative education, and a record of this provision will be kept in the pupil's file.

Where a pupil asks a question relating to sex education from which they have been withdrawn, a teacher will answer it when it is relevant to the course of study.

8. Confidentiality

Teachers will conduct RSHE lessons in a sensitive manner. In discussion about sex or sexuality, pupils may ask questions which go beyond the school's curriculum. Our approach is to ensure that teachers are confident to deal with such questions in an age-appropriate manner, recognising that pupils whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information. INSET and other training will seek to include information on how teachers can respond. The school will follow Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and will ensure pupils are taught about safeguarding, including about how to stay safe online. Pupils will also be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. Teachers will manage an appropriate level of confidentiality. Pupils should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained, but teachers cannot offer or promise absolute confidentiality. Teachers will follow the school's safeguarding policy if a child protection issue is raised. The school will encourage pupils to talk to their parents or carers and support them to do so. The school will also inform pupils of sources of help, for example, the school nurse, chaplain, GP, or local young person's advice service.

9. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSHE will be monitored by the deputy head (enrichment, character and community), supported by the head of PSHE, through drop-ins, observations, and pupil voice. It will be reviewed and evaluated regularly by the acting deputy head (enrichment and community) and head of PSHE.

Pupils' development in RSHE is monitored by the CPW teachers and head of PSHE. The head of sixth form monitors that of L6 and U6 pupils.

Regular lesson and assembly observations, as well as opportunities for pupils to give their feedback, will ensure that content conforms to current guidance and meets the needs of our pupils.