



WHICKHAM SCHOOL

**Relationships and Health Policy
2025-2026**

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Policy Review

Last reviewed	By whom	Next review
June 2025	D Crosland & M Phillipson	July 2026

1. 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 pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene;
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy;
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships;
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies;
- Promote healthy and positive outcomes for students ;

2. Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy school we must provide RSE to all pupils as per the *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers 2022*.

At Whickham School and Sports College we teach RSE through a combination of our PSHCE Provision and mapped across different curriculum areas (see appendix 3).

3. Definition of RSE in Secondary settings

The aim of RSE 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 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.

Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

Knowledge about safer sex and sexual health remains important to ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This should be delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allow scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment. Many teachers use approaches such as distancing techniques, setting ground rules with the class to help manage sensitive discussion and using question boxes to allow pupils to raise issues anonymously.

Pupils should understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect. Through gaining the knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, they can be empowered to identify when relationships are unhealthy. They should be taught that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing.

4. Delivery of RSE

RSE is delivered as part of our PSHCE Programme, through a combination of tutor-time sessions, drop-down sessions, as well as some topics being embedded within the schemes of learning for different curriculum areas such as Science and PE.

Pupils also have the opportunity to attend workshops/talks from trained specialists visiting the school.

Resources will be adapted by key individuals to ensure that work is differentiated to include all students.

5. 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/radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)

6. Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing

The aim of teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing is to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. It should enable them to recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others and, when issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

Physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked, and it is important that pupils understand that good physical health contributes to good mental wellbeing, and vice versa.

It is important that we promote pupils' self-control and ability to self-regulate, and strategies for doing so. This will enable them to become confident in their ability to achieve well and persevere even when they encounter setbacks or when their goals are distant, and to respond calmly and rationally to setbacks and challenges. This integrated, whole-school approach to the teaching and promotion of health and wellbeing has a potential positive impact on behaviour and attainment.

Effective teaching should aim to reduce stigma attached to health issues, in particular those to do with mental wellbeing. We should engender an atmosphere that encourages openness. This will

mean that pupils feel they can check their understanding and seek any necessary help and advice as they gain knowledge about how to promote good health and wellbeing.

We have flexibility to design and plan age-appropriate subject content, but this guidance sets out core areas for health and wellbeing that are appropriate for primary and secondary aged pupils.

Puberty including menstruation should be covered in Health Education and should, as far as possible, be addressed before onset. This should ensure male and female pupils are prepared for changes they and their peers will experience.

7. Menstruation

The onset of menstruation can be confusing or even alarming for girls if they are not prepared. Pupils should be taught key facts about the menstrual cycle including what is an average period, range of menstrual products and the implications for emotional and physical health. In addition to curriculum content, we should also make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls prepare for and manage menstruation including with requests for menstrual products.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The governing board

The governing body will approve the RSE policy, and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

8.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from components of RSE (see section 8).

8.3 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;
- Answer genuine questions as clearly and simply as possible to avoid mystification;
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the 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.

6.4 Pupils

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

7. Parents' right to withdraw

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

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

8. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar and as part of half-termly year group meetings.

The assistant 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.

9. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by The PSHCE Team through:

- Learning walks by Pastoral Team, PSHCE and senior staff;
- Student voice;
- Review and reflect booklets;

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

Appendix 1: What students should know by the end of secondary education

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	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
Online and Media	<p>Pupils should know</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Being safe	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Pupils should know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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,

	<p>including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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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	
Headteacher signature	

Appendix 3: Cross-curricular mapping of RSE Provision

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14qJQ8L4RfcIgU0281B8HsEOVcGhHWF7xEtCxMpJXZE/edit#gid=465637960>