

RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION (RE) AND RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

Updated June 2025

Policy statement:

Definition of Relationships Education (RE) - *The focus in primary school should be on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults¹*

Definition of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) – *Relationships and sex education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.²*

Shrewsbury High School takes its responsibility to provide relevant, effective, and responsible Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) to all its pupils as part of the school's personal, social, health and economic education curriculum (PSHE) very seriously. At our school we want parents and pupils to feel assured that sex education will be delivered at a level appropriate to both age and development of pupils. This teaching is not intended to replace advice or guidance which is ideally received at home, but to supplement and broaden knowledge and understanding.

This policy is drafted by the Head of PSHE in consultation with the Head, Pastoral Deputy Head, the School Nurse and SENDCo. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss this policy content through surveys and discussion at parent breakfasts. All written and interactive resources are available for inspection. This policy is reviewed annually.

Aims of policy

RE and RSE are opportunities for lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching about relationships, sex, sexuality, and sexual health in a way that is fully understood and effectively retained by pupils in our care. This includes emphasis on good health, the value of self - esteem in making choices and judgements, the nature of healthy and consensual relationships, and knowledge about how the body works, all within a context of moral issues and values.

We want our pupils to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle and care and respect their bodies, and we provide them with the right tools that will enable them to seek information or support, should they need it, both during their school years and after.

Our values

RE and RSE are taught within the framework of our core pillars – Character, Endeavour and Achievement. All those who teach aspects of RE and RSE within school, including visitors,

¹ DfE Guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-education-primary#:~:text=The%20focus%20in%20primary%20school,other%20children%20and%20with%20adults.>

² Sex Education Forum - <https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/>



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are expected to be guided by the following whole school values – moral integrity, respect for self and others, compassion, social responsibility, and ambition.

The teaching of RE and RSE will encourage students to:

- Value and respect themselves
- Value and respect others for who they are, not for what they have or what they can do
- Value healthy sexual relationships which are based on mutual respect and care
- Value and respect difference in people's religion, race, culture, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability and social background
- Value and respect their own and others' rights to make choices in sexual relationships after having considered the consequences of those choices
- Value stable and loving relationships for the nurturing of children and as the basis of a society in which people care for one another

Provision

Our provision has regard to the Department of Education statutory guidance for Relationships and Sex Education³ for all secondary schools. We aim to provide a relevant, broad and balanced curriculum that not just fulfils, but exceeds externally set standards. The Shrewsbury High School curriculum is spiral, so that topics can be re-visited in later years in an age-appropriate manner. There is a clear progression from Reception all the way to the topics that are covered by Sixth Form as outlined in the curriculum content below.

- Lead teachers responsible for the curriculum are Mrs. C. Tonks, Head of PSHE and Mr. R. King, Junior PSHE Coordinator.
- These colleagues work alongside the pastoral leads (Heads of Stage) to ensure delivery in Climb time (form time, assemblies) and with Mrs. M. Reece, Head of Period X for the PSHE sessions.
- SLT Champion for RE/RSE is Deputy Head Pastoral -Whole school/ Head of Juniors

Equal opportunities

We support equal opportunities in education, seeing it as enabling and encouraging all our students to build self-esteem through discussion and activities in a safe environment. We are equipping them with decision-making skills irrespective of gender roles and stereotyping. As part of our delivery, we check that we are following the Equality Act 2010 carefully so that all sessions are accessible and to adhere to legal requirements. In particular, we would note that we plan sessions to ensure that pupils understand that sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics, and our values as a whole school are rooted in equality and respect for others. In terms of delivery, this must be age appropriate. At the point where we do teach pupils about LGBT+, this is integrated into programmes of study.

³DfE Guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>



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The RSE curriculum content 2025-2026

The building of positive, healthy relationships is at the heart of our community.

Curriculum content in the Junior School and EYFS

- Families and people who care for me - characteristics of a healthy family life
- Caring friendships – positive connections and managing conflict
- Consent
- Respectful relationships – importance of self-respect and respecting others
- Online relationships – recognising risks and critically considering online friendships
- Being safe – boundaries, privacy and reporting concerns or abuse
- Mental wellbeing – mindfulness and mindset
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco
- Health and prevention
- Changing adolescent body

Curriculum Content Key Stage 3 and 4

- Physical and emotional changes at puberty
- Looking after your body – keeping healthy during puberty
- Respect and responsibility
- Relationship values and capacity to consent
- Relationships – including marriage, parenthood, and legal status of other long-term relationships
- Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online.
- Peer influence
- Loss and change
- Vaping, alcohol, drugs and the law
- Keeping safe and spiking
- Self-care
- Periods: A sustainable future
- Prejudice and discrimination linked to sexual identity and orientation as well as gender, race, religion, or disability (referencing the Equality Act 2010)
- Body image and feeling good
- Sharing explicit sexual images and media influence
- Influence of the media and pornography
- Coercion, abuse, exploitation and grooming.
- Changing relationships marriage and forced marriage
- STIs, including HIV, and high- risk behaviours
- Trust, communication and boundaries
- Assessing the risks of drug and alcohol abuse on sexual behaviour
- Conception and contraception and condom negotiation



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- LGBTQ+ awareness and gender identity
- Pregnancy and miscarriage
- Festival safety
- Keeping safe – spiking
- Fertility, adoption, fostering
- Rape and abortion
- Gambling and addiction
- Accessing help and advice

Spiral Curriculum Content at Sixth Form

- Drink and Drug awareness
- Keeping safe – spiking
- Reproductive health – breast screening and smear tests.
- Contraception choices and STI's
- Body image – non-surgical cosmetic procedures
- Coercive relationships and consent and Public sexual harassment
- Sexual health in life
- Self-care
- Accessing help and advice

Delivery & accessibility

The RSE and PSHE curriculum is planned and coordinated by the Head of PSHE and overseen by the Deputy Head Pastoral and Head of Juniors. As part of the PSHE programme, Relationships and Sex Education is taught by the Head of PSHE, the School Nurse, Junior class-teachers and a Senior specialist teaching team. All sessions are planned to be delivered in a timely way and in line with children's development.

PSHE. RE and RSE Education is taught as specific PSHE timetabled lessons during Period X. Period X is a whole school wider curriculum programme from reception to Year 13 every Wednesday period 3. The Period X timetable uses the themes Mental Health, Physical Wellbeing and Personal Development. PSHE is also taught through specific sessions in the pastoral Climb time pastoral curriculum; for example, tutor time at the start of the day, specific assemblies and relevant whole year group collapsed timetable sessions.

Delivery is mainly in small groups in both the Senior and Junior school, using a range of activities with materials. Additional Key Stage assemblies and Climb Time tutorials also complement this programme. As with PSHE themes which are the foundation for all our work with our young people, some of this syllabus content is covered within the wider curriculum. Biological aspects are covered in Science; Physical Education lessons cover elements of healthy lifestyles.

Sensitive teaching styles enable pupils to feel safe and supported in these lessons. Relationships education and RSE materials are planned carefully and differentiated to be



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accessible for all pupils, taking into consideration that some students are potentially more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues on account of their SEND.

RSE and RE at SHS considers the impact of *Everyone's Invited*, the Ofsted Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges⁴ and changes since the death of Sarah Everard. In addition: the results of the Children's commissioner report on *Pornography and young people 2023*; *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes 2024*; *Children's Media Lives 2024* and *Children's AI Summit and Children's Manifesto for the Future of AI | The Alan Turing Institute*. We have considered these carefully in planning sessions and in speaking with students for their feedback and with staff in meetings or training sessions.

We recognise that because of the nature of the subject; sensitive and controversial issues are likely to arise. These may include, for example, abortion, emerging gender identity, sexuality, and sexual abuse. These are dealt with within the framework of the aims of the school and alongside this policy. Any cause for concern will be dealt with in accordance with our pastoral systems and safeguarding arrangements.

Review and consultation

The programme is developed and reviewed in consultation to ensure that it meets the needs of the whole school community. This is done in a range of ways, questionnaires and pupil, staff, and parent feedback. This feedback – for example in student panels – informs the planning for RE and RSE, so that the content is age relevant and appropriate across all year groups. Moreover, online questionnaires such as the GDST Undivided student survey provide information to ensure that the curriculum develops as our students do and meets their needs.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges> *Growing up with pornography: advice for parents and schools | Children's Commissioner for England (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)*



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Support and Training

Academic staff across Juniors and Seniors have attended training from Brook⁵ on classroom delivery, and specific RSE training from 'ITHappens'. New colleagues will be updated with training as related to their role. A smaller group of staff responsible for the delivery of RSE receive regular enhanced training, in order to deliver the content in an appropriate, current and relevant manner for our students.

- We ensure that staff have opportunities for regular and ongoing training on issues related to RE/RSE including confidentiality, setting ground rules and establishing positive behaviour, handling controversial issues and responding to questions
- We check that all staff are up to date with policy changes, and familiar with the school policy and guidance relating to relationships and sex education via staff meetings or professional development sessions
- We work continually with colleagues to ensure that personal beliefs and attitudes will not prevent any colleague from providing balanced RE/RSE in school; informed by the specialist teachers for example delivering at senior level

Terminology

Pupils will be taught the anatomically correct names for body parts, but slang and everyday terms used in social situations will be discussed; this will be part of the discussion about what is and what is not acceptable language to be used.

Ground rules are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter and staff will use strategies and distancing techniques to enable pupils to feel comfortable to ask questions. If controversial questions are asked, the teacher will use professional judgement about how to answer them, and pupils will be allowed to raise anonymous questions if preferred.

Monitoring and evaluation

Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RE / RSE through discussion with Head of PSHE, observations and feedback. An ongoing working party meets with lead teachers on a half termly basis, to ensure that delivery continues to fulfil the requirements and to offer the best provision for all students.

All forms of assessment are ongoing in RE /RSE as in other subject curriculum areas. Pupils will have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lessons using baseline assessment questionnaires, Padlet, mentimeter and plenary and exit polls. Continuous assessment for learning opportunities is built into lessons; hinge questions, feedback-feed forwards, mini plenaries and the use of questioning in a safe space. Summative assessments include Exit polls, I can... statements, WhatsApp dialogue, learning logs are used in a variety of ways. In Junior RE lessons, children use 'Speak out' to record diary entries and feedback and their 'Proud Journals'. We conduct pupil surveys at three points during the year. Pupil voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning

⁵ [https://www.brook.org.uk/ It Happens Education | RSHE for Schools](https://www.brook.org.uk/ItHappensEducation/RSHEforSchools)



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activities through use of the surveys, pupil voice in school council, learning council and small group discussion with pastoral leads.

Guest / external speakers

To get the best voices and expertise to work with our students, the school will on some themes invite guest speakers to complement our teaching of this content. They are asked to work within the framework of this policy and adhere to the policy for Visiting Speakers at Shrewsbury High School. A teacher will be present throughout these lessons and research undertaken before any external colleague delivers a session to students.

Partnership with parents and right to withdraw

RSE is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports the whole development of the child. The school aims to keep parents informed about all aspects of the RSE curriculum⁶, and invites parents to review this policy. Surveys as noted are shared via the school newsletter to engage with parents directly.

Parents are notified ahead of sessions with information about lesson content and its purpose. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education. Parents cannot withdraw their child from human reproduction as in lessons in science, for example. Nor can they withdraw their daughter from Health Education or the Relationships Education element of Relationships and Sex Education. Any parents considering withdrawing their child from RSE should contact the Head teacher, to discuss their concerns. Please note that pupils can opt into sex education from three terms before their 16th birthday according to Department of Education guidance paragraph 41-43

Good practice which we would aim to follow in this situation is to:

- Contact the parent who has made the request, so that the Head teacher can discuss the request with parents and (as appropriate) with their child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.
- The Deputy Head teacher or the Head of PSHE may also be involved in this discussion.
- Maintain a record of students where there has been a withdrawal at parental request
- After those discussions, should parents still wish to withdraw their child in exceptional circumstances, the school would respect the parents' request up and until three terms before the child turns 16.
- After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education, the school will make arrangements to provide RSE during those academic terms.
- We are aware that Head teachers should automatically grant a request to withdraw a child from sex education in primary schools, other than in the science curriculum but would prefer to discuss this with parents to work together where possible.
- Pupils who are withdrawn, should receive purposeful education during the period of withdrawal and be in school.

⁶ DfE Guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>



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Policy Review and evaluation:

The educational and personal needs of our pupils develop in line with varying societal pressures and other changes. For this reason, we regularly review our RSE curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed annually by Head of PSHE, in consultation with SLT leads and the Junior PSHE Coordinator.

Deputy Head Pastoral approves the policy – updated 2024.

Accompanying documentation to view alongside this policy:

- Statutory Guidance - Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education> (*updated guidance expected Summer 2025)
- [Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes 2024](#)
- [Children's Media Lives 2024](#) provided a rich and detailed qualitative complement to Ofcom's quantitative surveys of media literacy.
- February 2025, [Children's AI Summit and Children's Manifesto for the Future of AI | The Alan Turing Institute](#) brought together around 150 children from across the UK to share their messages for global leaders, policymakers, and AI developers on what the future of AI should look like.
- Ofsted Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges, June 2021 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>
- Childrens Commissioner report - Pornography and young people, May 2023 - [Growing up with pornography: advice for parents and schools | Children's Commissioner for England \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education Policy
- PSHE whole school audit
- Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- Shrewsbury High School Safeguarding Policy
- The most recent version of KCSIE



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