Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

Approved by: Governors Approved on: October 2026
STA Contact: Headteacher/SAHT Revision due: Summer 2027

1. Aims

At St Andrew's C of E High School, we believe that personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, within which relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) is taught, enriches pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding so that they can lead confident, healthy, independent lives and become informed, active and responsible citizens.

The aims of RSHE at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place, in a safe and fully supported environment
- 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, and cultivate positive characteristics such as kindness and integrity
- Create a positive culture and promote healthy norms about relationships, including sexual relationships where relevant, and about health, including mental health
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Give pupils the skills to build positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships, and to stay safe both on and offline
- Enable pupils to explore their own and others' attitudes and values, building their self-esteem and confidence
- Prepare pupils to become balanced and caring members of adult society, with an understanding of the responsibilities and experiences of adult life

Young people today face a host of different pressures, including from online content. RSHE gives them a safe place to discuss these and to understand the gap between perception and reality.

Our ethos and values

Our curriculum is mindful of the Christian values we hold at St Andrew's, and is respectful of other faiths and beliefs in our local community. As a Church of England school, we teach RSHE as part of a wider social, personal, spiritual and moral education. Our curriculum supports the following Christian beliefs and values:

- The sanctity of marriage is central in Christian teaching and practice, and marriage and families are key building blocks of our community and society
- Pupils will learn that some people choose not to engage in sexual activity, and that this should be respected and valued, including as a response to the gift of faith
- Pupils will learn to have respect for their own and other people's bodies, and about their responsibilities to others and the consequences of sexual activity
- The importance of building positive relationships with others through trust and respect
- Pupils will recognise how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and other forms of technology, and to respect the wellbeing and integrity of themselves and others
- Helping pupils move towards a mature understanding of the responsibilities involved in relationships and sexual behaviour, and giving them a basis for informed decisions that recognises the value of family life

Our Christian ethos shapes how we teach RSHE, but it does not reduce what we teach. All pupils will be taught the full content of the statutory guidance (see Appendix 2) accurately, factually and impartially, including the legal status of civil partnerships and cohabitation, contraception, and the choices available in relation to pregnancy. Our teaching will be sensitive to pupils of all faiths and none and to all family circumstances, and will not stigmatise any pupil.

2. Statutory requirements

As a maintained secondary school, we must provide RSHE to all pupils under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

In teaching RSHE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State, as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996. This policy has been updated to reflect the revised statutory guidance that applies from September 2026.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 404 to 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

We also follow the statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and the safeguarding procedures set by West Sussex (see section 9).

At St Andrew's C of E High School, we teach RSHE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, governors, pupils and parents/carers. It has been reviewed and updated to reflect the revised statutory guidance for September 2026. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. **Review** – A review of the PSHE curriculum and all relevant changes, including the revised statutory RSHE guidance, before researching local and national guidance (including guidance from the PSHE Association and West Sussex safeguarding guidance).
2. **Parent/carer consultation** – We invited parents/carers to a parent forum where the PSHE and RSHE curriculum was discussed and adjusted.
3. **Pupil consultation** – We investigated pupils' current levels of understanding and their desired curriculum.
4. **Staff consultation** – PSHE teaching staff were asked for their input, particularly relating to when aspects are taught and the addition of external specialist support.
5. **Ratification** – The policy was shared, reviewed and approved by the school's full Governing Body.

4. Definition

RSHE is part of lifelong learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It gives young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships, and for staying safe both on and offline.

For the purpose of this policy, **relationships, sex and health education** will:

- Provide young people with the information they need to develop healthy, safe and nurturing relationships of all kinds
- Focus on pupils having respect for themselves and others
- Not normalise early sexual experimentation
- Cover a range of topics, including topics related to abusive behaviour, along with teaching pupils how to stay safe, including online
- Combine sharing information with exploring issues and values
- Emphasise the relationship between physical health and mental wellbeing
- Aim to reduce stigma attached to health issues, in particular relating to mental health, and discourage the pejorative use of language related to ill health
- Support pupils to understand their changing bodies and their feelings, how to protect their own health and wellbeing, and when a physical or mental health issue requires attention
- Build on the primary health and wellbeing curriculum content

5. Curriculum

Our RSHE curriculum is set out in Appendices 1 and 2, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents/carers, pupils and staff, and taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs (such as cultural and religious needs) and feelings of our pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

Teaching will be developed to ensure the curriculum is accessible for pupils with SEND. Our SENDCO and SEND faculty are given resources and training to support pupils with SEND, including in small group settings, so that all pupils have access to appropriate and high-quality RSHE.

We will share all curriculum materials with parents/carers on request.

6. Delivery of RSHE

RSHE is taught predominantly within the PSHE curriculum. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have one hour of PSHE each week, and pupils in Years 10 and 11 have one hour each fortnight. Biological aspects of RSHE are taught within the science curriculum. Pupils also develop their awareness of RSHE through cross-curricular links with other subjects, and assemblies throughout the year support their knowledge and understanding. The topics taught in each year and term are set out in the five-year PSHE plan in Appendix 1.

The school will make sure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of manageable size

- The required content is communicated to pupils clearly, in a carefully sequenced way and within a planned scheme of work
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge, so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations
- "Over blocking" by the school's filtering and monitoring system doesn't lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught

RSHE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships, including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Health education will build on the primary health and wellbeing curriculum content.

RSHE complements several other curriculum subjects. Where appropriate, the school will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching. The RSHE curriculum will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff.

Effective teaching will be participative and interactive and will give pupils opportunities to develop skills and to discuss and critically evaluate complex relationship scenarios. When teaching sensitive topics, teachers will consider using 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.

Teachers will make sure that pupils understand the importance of equality and respect and learn about the law. This will include learning about the rights and protections from discrimination relating to the protected characteristics, including gender reassignment, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, by the end of their secondary education.

The school will:

- Make sure that all pupils are taught the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment, recognising that people have legal rights by virtue of their biological sex which are different from the rights of those of the opposite sex with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Pupils will also be taught to recognise that people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, as with the other protected characteristics, have protection from discrimination and should be treated with respect and dignity
- Be mindful, in teaching the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment, that beyond those facts and the law there is significant debate
- Not endorse any particular view or teach this as fact. For example, the school will not teach as fact that all people have a gender identity
- Avoid:
  - Any language or activities that repeat or enforce gender stereotypes
  - Any suggestion that social transition is a simple solution to feelings of distress or discomfort

Throughout each year group we will use appropriate material to assist learning, such as diagrams, videos, books, games, and discussions and practical activities.

Teachers will make sure that all pupils' views are listened to, and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively, honestly and appropriately for the age of the pupils. The programme will be designed to focus on boys as much as girls, and activities will be planned to make sure both are actively involved.

The school will make sure that all teaching and materials are appropriate for the ages and needs of the pupils, including any additional needs such as special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Assessment

Resources and materials are assessed before use against the criteria set out in section 6.2 (Use of resources), and the PSHE Line Manager is responsible for approving them. Pupils' progress in RSHE is assessed by PSHE teachers through ongoing teacher assessment of knowledge and skills in lessons, such as questioning, discussion and short tasks, set against the curriculum map in Appendix 1. Formal examinations are not used.

Consulting parents/carers

At all points of delivery of the curriculum, the school will consult parents/carers, and their views will be valued. What will be taught, and how, will be planned in conjunction with parents/carers.

The law and young people

It is important for pupils to know what the law says about certain topics covered in RSHE, particularly in relation to the law and young people. This will help pupils identify what is right and wrong, and can provide a foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion. These topics include, but are not limited to:

- Marriage, including forced marriage and civil partnerships
- Consent, including the age of consent
- Domestic abuse, stalking, rape, sexual offences, female genital mutilation (FGM), 'virginity testing' and hymenoplasty
- Sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation, including public sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour
- Online behaviours including image and information sharing (including sexual imagery, making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes and including AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes). Pupils should understand the law about online sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, including grooming and sextortion
- Pornography
- Abortion
- The protected characteristics
- The age of criminal responsibility

For more information about our RSHE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2. The school will continue to develop pupils' knowledge of the topics specified for primary schools as required, and in addition will cover the content specified for secondary schools.

We may amend our curriculum content to respond to the needs and context of our pupils, to discuss issues affecting them in an age-appropriate manner. We will inform parents/carers of any deviation from our published policy in advance, and share any relevant materials on request.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (i.e. families can include single-parent families, same-sex parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents, among other

structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children, young carers or kinship carers).

Across our school, we will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property or hate crime.

6.1 Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them
- Is accessible to pupils with SEND
- Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences
- During lessons, makes pupils feel safe and supported, and able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in a whole-class setting, small groups or targeted sessions, 1-to-1 discussions, or digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

6.2 Use of resources

We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSHE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age and maturity of the pupils
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

We will make sure that when we consult parents/carers we provide a representative sample of the resources that the school plans to use.

We will ensure that parents/carers are able to view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE on request. Parents/carers are not able to veto curriculum content.

We will comply with any applicable copyright laws when sharing resources with parents/carers, and will include a statement that parents/carers agree to, as a condition of access, that the content should not be copied or shared further except as authorised under copyright law.

7. Use of external organisations and curriculum materials

Where possible, we use external professionals to support pupils' learning, particularly on sensitive and controversial issues. Whilst the school may work with external organisations to deliver the curriculum, it remains responsible for the content and the way in which pupils are taught.

We will make sure that any agency and any materials used are accurate, age and stage-appropriate, and unbiased and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

We **will**:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSHE is balanced, and that it and the resources they intend to use:
  - Are age-appropriate
  - Are in line with pupils' developmental stage
  - Are accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND
  - Are sensitive to pupils' needs
  - Comply with this policy, the Teachers' Standards, the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case-study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on what they're going to say and their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials and lesson plans that the agency may use
- Know the named individuals who will be there, check the credentials of the visitor and/or visiting organisation, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- Make sure the visitor understands and agrees in advance how confidentiality will work in any lesson, and how safeguarding reports should be dealt with, in line with our school policies
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents/carers
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers
- Inform all external organisations that the school is legally obliged to share all content with parents/carers
- Share all external materials with parents/carers
- Consult parents/carers on the content of external resources on the topic of biological sex and gender reassignment in advance, and make all materials available to them on request
- Avoid materials that use cartoons or diagrams that oversimplify the topics of biological sex and gender reassignment, that could be interpreted as being aimed at younger children, or that perpetuate stereotypes or encourage pupils to question their gender

We **won't**, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme
- Work with agencies who don't allow their material to be shared with parents/carers. The school will communicate to agencies that it is legally obliged to have regard to the expectation that all content can be shared with parents/carers

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The governing board

The governing board will approve the RSHE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will ensure that:

- All pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes
- Teaching is accessible to all pupils with SEND
- Curriculum content and teaching materials are aligned with the statutory guidance
- Clear information is provided for parents/carers on the subject content, teaching materials and external providers, and on the right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education

8.2 The headteacher

The headteacher (Ms M Lowney) is responsible for making sure that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, for sharing all resources and materials with parents/carers, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from the non-statutory (non-science) components of sex education within RSHE (see section 10).

The Head of RSHE is responsible for the leadership and day-to-day management of RSHE, working with the headteacher.

8.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a way that is sensitive, high-quality and appropriate for each year group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory (non-science) components of sex education within RSHE
- Modelling positive behaviour and avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and being conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour and stereotypes
- Where misogynistic ideas are expressed at school, challenging the ideas, rather than the person expressing them
- Where pupils ask questions or seek information about sensitive matters, using their professional judgement to respond appropriately and honestly, consulting colleagues where needed
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL), Mr Cordwell, Deputy Headteacher

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSHE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

8.4 Pupils

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

9. Safeguarding and child protection

RSHE lessons can lead pupils to make disclosures. Staff must not promise pupils confidentiality. Any information that may indicate abuse, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour or other inappropriate activity must be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), in line with the school's Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education. Please refer to the Child Protection Policy for further clarification.

10. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents/carers **do not have** the right to withdraw their child from relationships and health education, nor can they be withdrawn from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction.

Parents/carers **have** the right to request to withdraw their child from the non-statutory (non-science) components of sex education within RSHE up to and until 3 terms before the pupil turns 16. After this point, if the pupil wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this. We will make sure that pupils know they have this option, and pupils who wish to receive sex education should speak to Mr T Pearson (PSHE Line Manager).

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

A copy of any withdrawal request will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with the parents/carers (and with the pupil where appropriate) to explain the purpose and content of the sex education being provided and to understand their concerns, will take appropriate action, and will provide the parents/carers with their decision in writing.

In exceptional circumstances, for example because of a safeguarding concern or a pupil's specific vulnerability, the headteacher can refuse a request to withdraw the pupil from sex education.

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

11. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. The SENDCO and SEND faculty are also given resources and training to support pupils with SEND.

The 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 RSHE.

12. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by the Head of RSHE through planning scrutinies, learning walks and discussions with PSHE teaching staff and pupils.

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

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher and the Head of PSHE Line Manager every two years, with the next review due in Summer 2028, or sooner if statutory guidance changes. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

Appendix 1: Curriculum map

Relationships, sex and health education sits within our five-year PSHE plan. A more detailed copy, including the resources used, is available on request.

	Autumn 1 Health & wellbeing	Autumn 2 Relationships	Spring 1 Living in the wider world	Spring 2 Health & wellbeing	Summer 1 Relationships	Summer 2 Living in the wider world
Year 7	**Transition and safety** ***(Q: How do we stay safe?)*** Transition to secondary school and personal safety in and outside school, personal wellbeing including understanding periods	**Diversity** ***(What does it mean to be inclusive?)*** Antibullying policy, diversity, prejudice, and bullying, The Equality Act 2010 including protected characteristics, LGBT+	**Developing skills and aspirations** Careers, teamwork and enterprise skills, and raising aspirations	**Health and puberty** Healthy routines, influences on health, puberty, unwanted contact, and FGM	**Building relationships** Self-worth, romance and friendships (including online) and relationship boundaries – **consent** **Prejudice and Discrimination** Protected characteristics, treating different types of people with respect, and extremism	**Finance and Careers** Saving, borrowing, budgeting and making financial choices, first aid **Media Literacy** Verifying information, media consumption
Year 8	**Managing Myself** ***(Q: What can I do to help myself?)*** Factors contributing to health, changes and coping with stress, coping with conflict, mental health, personal wellbeing including understanding periods Drugs and alcohol misuse and pressures, extreme views	**Discrimination** Antibullying policy, discrimination in all its forms, including: racism, religious discrimination, disability, discrimination, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia The Equality Act 2010 including protected characteristics, LGBT+	**Rights and the law** British values, no one is 'above the law', rights and responsibilities, law relating to young people, first aid recap	**Emotional wellbeing** Mental health and emotional wellbeing, including body image and coping strategies	**Identity and relationships** Facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment, sexual orientation, **consent**, 'sexting', and an introduction to contraception	**Media Literacy and Digital Resilience** Online safety, digital literacy, media reliability, and gambling hooks, knife crime, first aid

	Autumn 1 Health & wellbeing	Autumn 2 Relationships	Spring 1 Living in the wider world	Spring 2 Health & wellbeing	Summer 1 Relationships	Summer 2 Living in the wider world
Year 9	**Peer influence, substance use and gangs** ***(Q: Who do I want to be?)*** Healthy and unhealthy friendships, assertiveness, substance misuse, safeguarding health, and gang exploitation. Community and local issues. Possibly Summer 2: managing myself	**Being informed in relationships** Antibullying policy, taking control online, grooming and sexual exploitation, characteristics of healthy relationships, including **consent**. **Respectful relationships** Families and parenting, healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and relationship changes. The Equality Act 2010 including protected characteristics, LGBT+	**Futures** Learning strengths, career options and goal setting as part of the GCSE options process **Finance** Money, budgeting, spend and save, borrowing and interest rates.	**Healthy lifestyle** Diet, exercise, lifestyle balance and healthy choices, and first aid **Wellbeing** Testicular cancer, physical and mental wellbeing, digital resilience, managing feeling and self-care	**Intimate relationships** Relationships and sex education including **consent**, contraception, the risks of STIs, and attitudes to pornography **Families** Different families and parental responsibilities, pregnancy, marriage and forced marriage and changing relationships	**Safer Future** Violence and knife crime, vaping, preventing involvement in crime, understanding the legal system **Exploring success** Employability and online presence, first aid
Year 10	**Mental health** ***(Q: Do I have mental health?)*** Mental health and ill health, stigma, safeguarding health, including during periods of transition or change	**Healthy relationships** Antibullying policy, relationships and sex expectations – **consent**, myths, pleasure and challenges, including the impact of the media and pornography, choices for pregnancy, revision of The Equality Act 2010 including protected characteristics, LGBT+	**Financial decision making** The impact of financial decisions, debt, gambling and the impact of advertising on financial choices	**Exploring influence** The influence and impact of drugs, gangs, role models and the media, first aid	**Addressing extremism and radicalisation** Communities, belonging and challenging extremism	**Work experience** Preparation for and evaluation of work experience and readiness for work

	Autumn 1 Health & wellbeing	Autumn 2 Relationships	Spring 1 Living in the wider world	Spring 2 Health & wellbeing	Summer 1 Relationships	Summer 2 Living in the wider world
Year 11	**Careers and Post 16** ***(Q: Where will I be in 5 years' time?)*** Application processes, and skills for further education, employment and career progression	**Intimate relationships** ***(Q: How do I keep myself safe in relationships?)*** Relationships and sex education including **consent**, contraception, the risks of STIs, assertive communication, types of relationships and attitudes towards them, revision of The Equality Act 2010 including protected characteristics, LGBT+	**Masterclasses**	**Masterclasses**		

Appendix 2: By the end of secondary school pupils should know

This is the statutory content that our RSHE curriculum, set out in Appendix 1, will cover by the end of Year 11.

Topic	Pupils should know
Families	• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships • How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children • Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony • That 'common-law marriage' is a myth, and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children • That forced marriage and marriage before the age of 18 are illegal • How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships. • The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development • How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust
Respectful relationships, including friendships	• About the characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships • How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal • The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others • What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs • The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict • The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help

Topic	Pupils should know
	• Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration • The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care and attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says 'yes' to doing something that doesn't automatically make it ethically okay • How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice • How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others • How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others • How some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called 'involuntary celibates' (incels) or online influencers
Online safety and awareness	• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • About online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. They should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues • Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images • About the characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and/or may post things which aren't real or have been created with AI. They should also know that social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online • That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime (even if the photo is of themselves or someone who has consented, and even if the photo was created by that child and/or using AI generated imagery). The potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating images, indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. That sharing indecent images of people over 18 without their consent is also a crime

Topic	Pupils should know
	• How to seek support. They should also understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared • What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online • About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them • That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons • Where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamourise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong • That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice • How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns • That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. That this can affect people who see pornographic content accidentally, as well as those who see it deliberately. That pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online • That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (for example, to enable targeted advertising) • That criminals can operate online scams, such as using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion • That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. That it is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk
Being safe	• How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent • That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others

Topic	Pupils should know
	• How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others if needed • How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. About ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. That there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. About the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and they should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions • What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it • That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language, attention or touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting • About concepts, laws and where to find support relating to: – Sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault – Harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language – Domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour – Harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation – Forced marriage – The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible • That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed • That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury • That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death • That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful • How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour, or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault

Topic	Pupils should know
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	• That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive • The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex • About sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, such as the law, their faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent • 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 • That some sexual behaviours can be harmful • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision making • That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and 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) • About the use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and post exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma • About the prevalence of STIs, the short and long-term impact they can have on those who contract them, and key facts about treatment • How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour • How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms • How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment
Mental wellbeing	• How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary • The benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness • That happiness is linked to being connected to others. Pupils should be supported to understand what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel unhappy, while recognising that loneliness can be for most people an inevitable part of life at times and is not something of which to be ashamed

Topic	Pupils should know
	• That worrying and feeling down are normal, can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal • Characteristics of common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression), including carefully-presented factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental health conditions. This should not be discussed in a way that encourages normal feelings to be labelled as mental health conditions • How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall wellbeing • How to overcome anxiety or other barriers to participating in fun, enjoyable or rewarding activities – that it's possible to overcome those barriers using coping strategies, and that finding the courage to participate in activities which initially feel challenging may decrease anxiety over time rather than increasing it. • That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others • That the co-occurrence of alcohol/drug use and poor mental health is common and that the relationship is bi-directional: mental health problems can increase the risk of alcohol/drug use, and alcohol/drug use can trigger mental health problems or exacerbate existing ones • That stopping smoking can improve people's mental health and decrease anxiety
Wellbeing online	• About the benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing • The similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image); how people may curate a specific image of their life online; the impact that an over-reliance on online relationships, including relationships formed through social media, can have • How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours • About the risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt • How advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online, understanding the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation online, including conspiracy theories • About the risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online • About the serious risks of viewing online content that promotes self-harm, suicide or violence, including how to safely report this material and how to access support after viewing it
Physical health and fitness	• The characteristics of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill-health, including cardiovascular ill-health

Topic	Pupils should know
	• Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions • That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress • The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation
Healthy eating	• How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease • The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease • About the impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain
Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping	• The facts about which drugs are illegal, the risks of taking illegal drugs, including the increased risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the potential health harms, including the link to poor mental health • About the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances • About the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption • What constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England • How to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol • About the physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency • About the dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines • The facts about the multiple serious harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so • The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit
Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system	• Personal hygiene, germs and how they are spread, including bacteria and viruses, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics • Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth, reducing consumption of sugar-containing food and drinks, and regular check-ups at the dentist • How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals • The importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening • The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination, immunisation and antimicrobial resistance. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils • The importance of sufficient good-quality sleep for good health, the importance of screen-free time before bed and removing phones from the bedroom, and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn

Topic	Pupils should know
	• The importance of healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy, including the importance of pre-conception health, including taking folic acid. The importance of pelvic floor health. Information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and how to access care and support • How to navigate their local healthcare system: what a GP is; when to use A&E / minor injuries; accessing sexual health and family planning clinics; the role of local pharmacies; and how to seek help via local third-sector partners which may have specialist services • The concept of Gillick competence. That the legal age of medical consent is 16. That before this, a child's parents will have responsibility for consenting to medical treatment on their behalf unless they are Gillick competent to take this decision for themselves. Pupils should understand the circumstances in which someone over 16 may not be deemed to have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment
Personal safety	• How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around roads, railways – including level crossings - and water (including the water safety code), and in unfamiliar social or work settings (for example the first time a young person goes on holiday without their parents) • How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media • How to develop key social and emotional skills that will increase pupils' safety from involvement in conflict and violence. These include skills to support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making, as well as skills to recognise and manage peer pressure • Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about violence and/or knife crime • The law as it relates to knives and violence. Content and examples should relate to the local context and avoid using fear as an educational tool. Children should be taught that carrying weapons is uncommon, and should not be scared into the perception that many young people are carrying knives (which can lead to the misconception that they need to carry a knife too) • The risks and signs that they may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help where there is a concern
Basic first aid	• Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments • Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR • The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them
Developing bodies	• The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health • The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development • About menstrual and gynaecological health, including: what is an average period; period problems such as premenstrual syndrome; heavy menstrual bleeding; endometriosis; and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). When to seek help from healthcare professionals • The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women

Appendix 3: Parent/carer form requesting their child's withdrawal from sex education within RSHE

Please return this form in writing to the headteacher. Parents/carers cannot withdraw their child from relationships and health education, or from topics taught in the science curriculum. See section 10 of the policy for details.

To be completed by parents/carers			
Name of child		**Year/tutor group**	
Name of parent/carer		**Date**	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships, sex and health education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent/carer signature			

To be completed by the school	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents/carers	
Headteacher's decision, and date it was communicated in writing to parents/carers	