

SEAHAM HIGH SCHOOL



Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

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Review Date	Cycle	Reviewer	Adopted	Committee
December 2025	Annually	C Harbron	December 2025	Full Governors

Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education Policy (RSHE)

1. This policy was developed in response to:

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Guidance, DfE June 2019
- Children and Social Work Act, 2017
- Equality Act, 2010 and schools
- Not Yet Good Enough: Personal, social health and economic education in schools, Ofsted 2013
- Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice: 0-25 years, 2017
- Life Lessons: PSHE and SRE in schools: Fifth Report, House of Commons Education Committee, 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - Statutory Guidance, 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision, Green Paper, July 2018
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges, Sept 2021
- Teaching relationships education to prevent sexual abuse, Research report, Sept 2024
- Relationships, sex and health education, Implementation of the 2020 curriculum guidance in school, Sept 2024

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- E-safety/Online Policy
- Anti-bullying/Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy (including child sexual exploitation and harmful sexualised behaviours)
- Equality Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Promoting Mental Health and Resilience Policy
- Drugs and Alcohol Policy

2. The engagement and consultation process has Involved:

- Student focus groups / student voice surveys
- Networking with other local schools and providers
- A comprehensive review of resources and their source
- Consultation and engagement with parents / carers
- Consultation, agreement and implementation of policy by school governors
- Parental Consultation

This policy template has been developed with regard to the DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance 2019. Taking into consideration changing adolescent bodies which schools have a requirement to teach and strongly links with RSE.

3. Aims

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

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

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships both on and offline, respect, love and care for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing essential skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

RSE gives young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. RSE gives children and young people the essential skills to build positive, enjoyable and non-exploitative relationships.

Health Education - Physical Health and Wellbeing builds on the primary content to enable students to understand their changing bodies and their feelings to further the language they use to talk about their bodies, health and emotional norms. In addition to understanding variations in emotions and physical complaints and where health and wellbeing issues and concerns begin. Health education enables making the connections between physical and emotional changes, the impact on physical health and wellbeing, their capacity to learn and maintain their mental health and wellbeing.

There should be a clear progression of what is **Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE)** at primary school through to RSHE in secondary school.

Students with special educational needs (SEND)

In special schools and for some SEND students, in mainstream schools there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet specific needs of students at different developmental stages. Schools should ensure their teaching is sensitive, age appropriate, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law.

4. Principles and Values

In addition, Seaham High School believes that RSE should:

- Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
- Be an entitlement for all young people
- Encourage every student to contribute to make our community and aims to support each individual as they grow and learn.

- Be set within this wider school context and supports family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. It includes acceptance of families in all their forms.
- Encourage students and teachers to share and listen to each other's views and the right to hold/ express views.
- We are aware of different approaches to sexual identity, without promotion of a particular family make up. The important values are love, respect, kindness, generosity and care for each other.
- Generate a safe space where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- Recognise that parents/carers are the key people in teaching their children about relationships, growing up, health and wellbeing and sex. We aim to work in partnership with parents, carers and students, consulting them about the content of programmes.
- Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with other health and education professionals

RSHE has three main elements:

Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices
- learning the value and valuing family life, stable and loving relationships, and marriage/civil partnerships
- learning about the nurture of children and successful parenting
- learning the value of and demonstrating respect, love and care
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour
- Learning the importance of rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.

Personal and Social Skills

- learning to manage and managing emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively including online
- developing self-respect and empathy for others
- developing positive self-esteem and confidence
- making informed choices with an absence of prejudice
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- managing conflict
- empower students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter)
- How to report concerns of abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence to do so
- Explore societal norms and the use/misuse of alcohol and drugs and the impact on relationships

- Learning to actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn. (In all contexts, including online)

Knowledge and Understanding

- learning and understanding physical, emotional and spiritual development at appropriate stages
- understanding human sexuality, identity, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- learning about contraception, Sexually Transmitted Infections and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- the avoidance of an unintended pregnancy
- The impact of viewing harmful content through online and media
- 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
- Know the key facts about puberty, the changes in the adolescent body (including physical and emotional) and menstrual wellbeing (Health Education)
- Know the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health (Health Education)
- Learn where to go for help and advice and how to access local and national services

5. Aims and Objectives

The aim of RSHE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our RSHE programme aims to prepare all students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour.
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and non-sexual relationships.
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex including violence in teenage relationships
- understand the true meaning of consent
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology/language for sex and relationship issues.
- develop awareness of their evolving sexuality and understand human sexuality; gender identity, challenge sexism and prejudice, which is inclusive of all young people

- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity.
- understand the reasons for having protected sex.
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves in a variety of situations including from exploitation, abuse and violence and uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
- be aware of sources of help for all young people and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships enthusiastic consent, sexting/nudes and e-safety.
- be aware that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong; and addressing cultures of sexual harassment (Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges, Sept 2021).

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The school's governing body will approve the RSHE policy, and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation. Chris Harbron (Assistant Headteacher) is the SLT member responsible for overseeing students' Personal Development within school, and all aspects of the RSHE curriculum fall under his remit. He works closely with the school's designated safeguarding lead (Lynn Whitehead – Assistant Headteacher).

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes towards RSE
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory 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.

7. Organisation and Content of RSHE

Seaham High School specifically delivers Relationship and Sex Education through its PSHE Programme (delivered through SMSC lessons) and Science lessons at KS3, and KS4.

Much of the RSHE at Seaham High School takes place within SMSC lessons. A specialist team of SMSC teachers deliver the PSHE curriculum as part of regular curriculum time. These staff see their groups three times per fortnight, and therefore get to know their students very well. We therefore believe that they are well placed to work with the students on many of the RSE topics as they are aware of each student's individual circumstances. SMSC lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction are also included. The Science National Curriculum is delivered by staff in the science faculty. These lessons

are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction, although the importance of relationships is not forgotten. RSHE will be representative and inclusive of LGBTQIA+ young people.

The PSHE Programme and Science National Curriculum is taught in every year.

Any RSHE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons, a group/class agreement, formerly known as ground rules, are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson.

When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the group agreement established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time. Young people whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information.

More expert or specialist teachers and other professionals may support staff who are uncomfortable with teaching certain aspects of the curriculum. Support and professional development will be provided for staff, so that they can develop the confidence and skills in delivering the RSHE programme.

8. Inclusion

Ethnic, Cultural and Religious Groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. For some young people it may not be culturally appropriate for them to be taught subjects in mixed groups. We will respond to parental requests and concerns.

Students with Special Needs

We will ensure that all young people receive RSHE and we will offer provision appropriate to the needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary.

Gender, Identity and Sexual Orientation

The SMSC lead ensures that LGBTQIA+ content is fully integrated into the programme of study and threads across the curriculum. LGBTQIA+ content is delivered in a timely manner following consultation with other schools and professional bodies. We aim to deal sensitively and honestly regarding gender, sexual orientation and identity, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing identity and sexuality need to feel that RSHE is relevant to them. In dealing with these issues, the school takes into account the revised statutory guidance published in July 2025, particularly sections 67-72 relating to the issues of LGBTQIA+ content and the law as it stands relating to biological sex and gender reassignment.

9. Parents/carers and the wider community

Here at Seaham High School, we believe the role of parents in the development of the children's understanding of relationships is vital. Parents/carers are the first educators

of children. Therefore, we will ensure that we work closely with you to ensure you are aware of what is taught and when. This information will be communicated to parents/carers by letter, with an overview of the programme of study.

10. Students right to be excused from sex education

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some parts of sex education, delivered as part of statutory RSHE. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. It is good practice for the SLT member in charge of the RSHE programme to discuss the request with the parent/carer and as appropriate, with the child to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, the benefits of receiving the important information, and possible detrimental effects that the withdrawal might have. The SMSC lead will document the process and outcome.

Parents/carers are welcome to review any RSHE resources the school uses.

11. Safeguarding, reports of abuse and confidentiality

It should be made clear to students that teachers and all adults in school cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality if they have any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child. This should be made clear when forming and revisiting the class group agreement and the name of the safeguarding teachers will be made known. A noticeboard is displayed in school with the names and photographs of the relevant staff.

Young people under the age of 13 years

A child under 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity. Any offence under The Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving a child under 13 is serious and should be taken to indicate a risk of significant harm to the child. Cases involving under 13's should always be discussed with the nominated child protection lead.

Under the Sexual Offences Act, penetrative sex with a child under the age of 13 is classed as rape. Therefore, in all cases where the sexually active young person is under 13, a referral should be made to First Contact naming the young person, and the sexual partner if known. Following this, a Strategy Meeting or discussion will be held. The meeting will involve a Team Manager, Social Worker, Police, Health Worker, Education and Welfare and other relevant agencies, to discuss next steps.

Where the allegation concerns penetrative sex, or other intimate sexual activity occurs, there would always be reasonable cause to suspect that a child, whether girl or boy, is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. All cases involving under 13's should be fully documented and reported.

Young people between 13 – 16 years

Sexual Activity with a young person in this age group is a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The Act reinforces that whilst mutually agreed, non-exploitive, nor coercive sexual activity between teenagers does take place and that often no harm comes from it, the legal age of consent remains 16. This acknowledges that this group of young people is still vulnerable, even when they do not view themselves as such. Recent changes in law around consent places the emphasis on

proving that consent is secured by the person initiating sex, and not the assumption that it has been obtained from the other person. This is based on them being free, able, has capacity to give consent, and that on each occasion it is negotiated and agreed.

Consideration should be given in every case of sexual activity involving 13-15 year olds as to whether a discussion with other agencies and whether a referral should be made to Safeguarding and Specialist Services.

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership procedures ([link](#)) with special reference to Sections 3 'Referral and Investigation' and Section 6.13 'Sexually Active Children under 18'

12. Monitoring and Evaluation of RSHE

It is the responsibility of the SMSC lead and Assistant Headteacher for Personal Development to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PSHE, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This may take the form of learning walks, lesson drop-ins or consultation with teaching staff.

The Governors' Curriculum & Personnel Committee is responsible for overseeing, reviewing and organising the revision of the Relationship and Sex Education Policy

Ofsted is required to evaluate and report personal development, behaviour, and welfare as well as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of students. This may include evaluating and commenting on the school's relationship and sex education policy, curriculum, staff development and quality of provision.