



RSE Policy

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Rationale

The school recognises the entitlement of all learners to receive Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE), which is current, meaningful, and relevant. School embeds a respect for diversity and encourages a sense of compassion and understanding of others. We recognise and respect that members of the school community are diverse in culture, religious values, and sexual orientation. We also recognise that modern technology brings with it issues of safeguarding and we are committed to addressing online safety in its various forms.

We will ensure that Relationships and Sex Education is accessible for all learners. Delivery and resources will be differentiated and personalised to meet the needs of all young people with SEND, in preparation for adulthood and in line with the SEND Code of Practice (2014).

This policy has due regard to the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance 2025, which schools must implement by September 2026 and reflects best practice from the PSHE Association SEND Programme of Study.

Relationships and Sex Education

As our learners are secondary age, and if they can cope with more mature topics, we will follow the **DfE guidance page 25**. "The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships."

Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling, and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

RSE should provide clear progression from what is taught in primary school in Relationships Education. Learners should understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect."

"In teaching Relationships Education and RSE, schools should ensure that the needs of all learners are appropriately met, and that all learners understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of The Equality Act 2010 under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics. We expect all learners to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum." **DfE guidance page 15**.

Statutory Guidance and Legislation

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make relationships and sex education (RSE) compulsory for all learners receiving secondary education. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE Education) continues to be compulsory in independent schools; we include RSE within our whole-school PSHE programme, and Health Education as part of PSHE.

This RSE policy is also informed by the following legal guidance:

- Equality Act (2010)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)

The Sex Education Forum 2020 offers the following definitions:

"Sex education is learning about the physical, social, legal, and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual health."

"Relationships education is learning about the physical, social, legal, and emotional aspects of

human relationships including friendships, intimate, sexual, and committed relationships, and family life. Relationships education supports children to be safe, happy, and healthy in their interactions with others now and in the future."

What does the DfE statutory guidance on Relationships Education expect young people to know by the time they leave secondary school?

RSE in secondary schools will cover 'families,' respectful relationships including friendships,' 'online and media,' 'being safe' and 'intimate sexual relationships, including sexual health.'

Sex Education

The DfE Guidance page 29 integrates Relationships and Sex Education at secondary school level. Most of the DfE outcomes relating to Sex Education sit within the 'Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health' section of the guidance and include aspects like:

- the facts about reproductive health.
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices.
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, are transmitted.
- how to get further advice.
- consent and the law.

At Three Bridges Education we agree with the Sex Education Forum definition of Sex Education (as above). The PSHE Programme also reflects this, making it possible for us to identify which lessons specifically address these aspects of learning, thereby making it straightforward for us to communicate this to parents/carers in relation to their right to request to withdraw their children from Sex Education. The grid at the end of the policy shows which lessons cover which aspects of the DfE outcomes.

Aims

RSE, as part of the PSHE education curriculum, is vital to the development of the learners in our school. The planned programmes are designed to help them deal with the difficult moral, social, and health-related issues that arise in their lives and in society. They also help them to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy, independent lives as individuals, parents, workers, and members of society. Effective RSE is a key component in our approach to safeguarding our learners through the curriculum. The secondary age group is considered vulnerable with respect to the specific safeguarding issues of child exploitation (CCE and CSE) and child on child abuse, including teenage domestic violence.

Effective RSE can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by learners if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

Specifically, our RSE curriculum:

- Provides a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
- Prepares learners for puberty and gives them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- Helps learners develop feelings of self-respect, confidence, and empathy.
- Creates a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships.
- Teaches and confirms the correct vocabulary for learners to describe themselves and their bodies.

Policy Development

This policy will continually be developed in consultation with staff, learners, parents, and carers.

The consultation and policy development process involves the following steps:

1. Review all information including relevant national and local guidance.
2. Consult with staff.
3. Consult with parents/carers.

4. Consult with learners through school council.
5. Update the policy if any amendments are made and share with relevant stakeholders.

Consultation with learners takes place both formally and informally. Formally, learner's complete evaluations, with form tutors, in enrichment and with the PSHE education teacher. Informally, there is an open dialogue between staff and learners. There is also the use of plenary activities to evaluate lessons.

The Law

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships, and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos, and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people, and which ensure learners take responsibility for their actions.

Learners should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent.
- violence against women and girls
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

This policy will inform the school's Equalities Plan

Our RSE programmes recognise that learners will bring prior learning and real-life experiences to their learning. Our curriculum respects and builds on these, providing programmes that reflect both the universal and unique needs of our learners. In this way, the programmes recognise and respect learners' different abilities, levels of maturity and personal circumstances; for example, their own sexual orientation, gender identity, faith, or culture (which may, depending on their age and maturity, not be something they have yet considered or may be emerging) or the sexual orientation, gender identity, faith or culture of their immediate family, close friends, and wider community.

The Equality Act 2010 covers the way the curriculum is delivered, as schools and other education providers must ensure that issues are taught in a way that does not subject learners to discrimination. This includes protection for all the **nine characteristics** stated in the Act. Schools have a duty under the Equality Act to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) and any other groups, however they choose to identify. Inclusive RSE will foster good relations between learners, tackle all types of prejudice – including homophobia – and promote understanding and respect. The Department for Education has produced advice on The Equality Act 2010 and schools (DfE 2014b).

The DfE Guidance 2019 page 15 states, "Schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010 under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics... At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender), they should ensure this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum".

At Three Bridges Education we promote respect for all and value every individual child. We also respect the right of our learners, their families, and our staff, to hold beliefs, religious or otherwise, and understand that sometimes these may be in tension with our approach to some aspects of Relationships, Health, and Sex Education.

For further explanation as to how we approach LGBT relationships in the PSHE (RSHE) Programme please see 'Including and valuing all children. What does Jigsaw teach about LGBTQ relationships?'

Partnerships with Parents, and Carers

The school recognises that parents, and carers are crucial to the success of the RSE programme and is committed to providing both information about what is provided and accessible opportunities to comment on policy and practice.

Parents, and carers will retain the right to withdraw their child from sex education at the school. However, learners can opt into sex education from three terms before their 16th birthday and at that point, parents, carers, and guardians will not have the option to withdraw their children from relationships education or health education. Schools are advised to keep a record of the process of dialogue with parents relating to requests to withdraw from sex education. If you wish to withdraw your child from sex education, please speak to the school principal.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using a form available for this purpose and available from the office. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the learner's educational record. The school principal will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative, purposeful, and appropriate work will be given to learners who are withdrawn from sex education.

Parents' Right to Request their Child be Withdrawn from Sex Education

"Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE...

... except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those Terms". **DfE guidance pages 17/18.**

Should parents wish to discuss withdrawing their child from Sex Education, they should discuss this with the senior leadership team.

Confidentiality, Safeguarding and Child Protection

Everyone involved in RSE is clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. Teachers will discuss confidentiality with learners through the development of a group agreement at the start of lessons, making it clear that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and will report concerns or suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Lead as outlined in the safeguarding and child protection policy.

Delivery of the RSE Curriculum

To ensure both progression and coverage of the statutory curriculum. Our programmes recognise that young people will bring prior learning and real-life experiences to their learning. We respect

and build on these, providing programmes that reflect both the universal and unique needs of our learners.

Controversial topics will be covered with sensitivity and respect for all viewpoints. The programmes are not aimed at telling what is right and wrong but to consider different perspectives and provide learners with the information to make their own decisions.

Teaching of RSE may cause for early extraction if necessary, depending on when it is felt necessary. An individualised approach throughout the scheme should be taken.

Some learners at the school may either be sexually experimental or know friends who are. They will be interested to know what they should expect of a partner and how to talk to them. They will need more information on contraception, sexual health and how to access services. They will want to know about different types of relationships. They may want to know about how to cope with strong feelings and how to cope with the pressures to have sex. They will start to ask questions about parenthood and may like to know how they can talk to a trusted adult. They will also be interested in other influences on sexual decision-making such as the law, different cultures and religious beliefs, pornography, the media and the effects of drugs and alcohol.

Young people at KS4 will need more information on sexual risk, pregnancy, sexual health, fertility, and infertility. They may be keen to discuss gender stereotyping, violence, exploitation, the law, and discrimination. Learning about the relationship between self-esteem and body image and how to challenge negative messages from peers, the media and society is also important.

RSE is delivered through a structured and progressive curriculum covering:

Relationships Education (all phases)

- Families and caring relationships
- Friendships and peer influence
- Respect, kindness and equality
- Bullying and discrimination
- Online relationships and digital communication

Sex Education (secondary phase)

- Puberty and physical development
- Reproduction and sexual health
- Consent and boundaries
- Contraception and sexually transmitted infections
- Healthy and unhealthy intimate relationships

Health Education (all phases)

- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Physical health and lifestyle
- Personal safety and risk
- Online safety, including scams, exploitation and harmful content

The curriculum reflects updates within the 2026 guidance, including:

- Increased focus on online safety and digital harms
- Teaching about misogyny, harmful influences and pornography (age-appropriate)
- Inclusion of same-sex relationships and diverse families
- Teaching correct terminology to support safeguarding and communication

A PSHE/RSE overview can be seen on our school website.

Lessons may be taught as part of a discreet unit, or they may be embedded within other subjects. The school will offer a flexible approach to delivery where a particular need or concern is identified. Learners also have regular access, throughout the academic year, to PSHE lessons and RSE focused half-termly topics. Learners will also be signposted to appropriate support and services when

required. This may include counselling services, local sexual health services, and healthcare professionals.

How We Assess, Record and Report Learners' Learning and Progress

We will ensure that assessment opportunities are built into the RSE programmes and that RSE is assessed on skills and attributes as well as knowledge. Regular opportunities will be provided to enable learners to reflect on their work and learning, for example, in-class question and answer, discussion, group work, peer assessment, self-assessment and marking.

Learner progress will be tracked by the PSHE teacher and will link with the schools' overall learner tracking, including individual needs.

We will ensure that parents, carers, guardians, and other stakeholders are provided with feedback and information about learners' learning in RSE.

The curriculum itself will be quality-assured in a variety of ways including learning walks, drop-ins, lesson observations, planning and work scrutiny. This will be carried out as part of the schools' ongoing quality assessment cycle by the senior leadership team.

Roles and Responsibilities

Learners

Learners are expected to participate in RSE and treat others with respect and sensitivity. Alternative work, which focuses on values and self-esteem will be given to those who are withdrawn from RSE.

Staff delivering RSE should:

- Plan the curriculum using the school's proformas.
- Deliver RSE in a sensitive way.
- Differentiate and personalise delivery to the needs of the learner.
- Model positive attitudes to relationships and sex education.
- Monitor and tracking progress.
- Respond to the needs of individual young people and issues as they arise.
- Respond appropriately to young people whose parents, carers or guardians wish them to be withdrawn from the sex education components of RSE.
- Attend regular CPD to ensure they are confident and have up to date knowledge and understanding.

The Principal

The principal should ensure that RSE is fully covered and that it is taught consistently well. The principal is responsible for managing requests to withdraw learners from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE. The principal and RSE Lead will provide regular access to training and development to ensure that staff are confident in their subject knowledge and delivery. The principal is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the RSE programmes.

Monitoring and Review

Parents and learners are encouraged to give feedback about the PSHE and RSE programme and we will use this to inform our monitoring and review processes. The school advisory panel and senior leadership team will scrutinise and ratify teaching materials to check they are in accordance with the school's ethos.

Links to Other Policies

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documentation:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- PSHE/RSHE - whole school curriculum overview
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy

Further Information

Brook – the UK's leading sexual health charity for young people under 25 www.brook.org.uk.

Bish websites – online advice and information for both professionals and young people, created by Justin Hancock, an experienced relationships and sex educator www.bishtraining.com (for professionals) & www.bishuk.com (for young people).

Sex Education Forum – a membership organisation that works together with its members for quality relationships and sex education www.sexeducationforum.org.uk.

RSE Hub – a membership organisation that believes that relationships and sex education (RSE) should be an entitlement for all children and young people www.rsehub.org.uk.

Family Planning Association – a UK registered charity working to enable people to make informed choices about sex and to enjoy sexual health www.fpa.org.uk.

National Aids Trust – the UK's leading charity dedicated to transforming society's response to HIV www.nat.org.uk.

PSHE Association, <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/>.

Relationships and Sex Education Expectations

By the end of secondary education, learners will need to know:

Families

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- What marriage and civil partnerships are, including their legal status (e.g., that marriage and civil partnerships carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony).
- Why marriage and civil partnerships are an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered; further linked to educating on **protected characteristics**.
- The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships
- The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy; how to judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.

Respectful Relationships, including Friendships.

The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online), including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.

- Different (non-sexual) types of relationship.
- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, can cause damage (e.g., how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice).
- That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority, and due tolerance of other people's beliefs.
- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying, and how and where to get help.
- That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

Online and Media

- Their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
- About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
- The impact of viewing harmful content.
- That specifically sexually explicit material (e.g., pornography) presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviour, can damage the way people themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.

- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared, and used online.

Being Safe

- The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
- How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online).

Intimate and Sexual Relationships, including Sexual Health

- How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex, and friendship.
- That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively (e.g., physical, emotional, mental, sexual, and reproductive health and wellbeing).
- The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.
- That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
- That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
- The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy, and options available.
- The facts around pregnancy, including miscarriage.
- That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, 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) and the importance of and facts about testing.
- About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
- How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.