

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

Orange Tree School and OTS Ridgeway Site



DOCUMENT DETAILS	
Policy Owner:	Vicki Marer
Frequency of review:	Annually
Date of previous review:	26/01/2023
Date of current review:	25/9/24 20/10/25
Date of next formal review:	20/10/25
This policy is available:	To all staff, students, parents
Linked policies/documents:	PSHE Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy
To be published on:	Internally, Website
Applies to which site:	Orange Tree School and OTS Ridgeway
Comments:	PSHE is led by Barbara Maleki at OTS Ridgeway

	Name (role):	Signature:	Date:
Policy Owner:	Vicki Marer (PSHE and Maths Lead)	Vicki Marer	20/10/25
PSHE Lead OTS Ridgeway	Barbara Maleki Lead Teacher OTS Ridgeway	Barbara Maleki	17/12/24
SLT Owner:	Zoe Ramshaw (Headteacher)	Zoe Ramshaw	20/10/25

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary:

The RSHE policy outlines the planning and delivery of the Relationships, Sex and Health Education at Orange Tree School. It details the aims of RSHE, what content is covered and how it is delivered, the statutory framework, the rights of parents to withdraw from certain parts of RSHE, and the monitoring arrangements.

Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Aims of the policy.....	4
3. Statutory and regulatory framework	5
4. Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
5. Equality, diversity, inclusion	6
6. Teaching and learning.....	6
a. Curriculum.....	6
b. Delivery	7
7. Parents' right to withdraw	7
8. Monitoring and review	8
9. Appendix 1: Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) Curriculum Overview ..	9
10. Appendix 2 Content comparison of some of the major changes in Statutory RSHE 2019 vs Statutory RSHE 2025.....	12
11. Appendix 3 RSHE Statutory Guidance July 2025 Secondary relationships and sex education curriculum content and Secondary health and wellbeing curriculum.....	15
12. Appendix 4 Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSHE	27
13. Appendix 5 Learning Journeys for PSHE and RSHE at OTS 2025-2026	28

1. Introduction

Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. Orange Tree School (from here on referred to as OTS) is committed to providing a rich RSHE that, in line with the School's aims and ethos, allows students to develop the knowledge and understanding of an increasing complex world.

We believe RSHE is an important aspect of the PSHE programme which makes a significant contribution to the development of personal skills needed by students to establish and maintain positive, healthy relationships. RSHE enables young people to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their health and wellbeing. It supports students in forming positive beliefs and attitudes about sex and sexuality, relationships and feelings.

RSHE is taught in a spiral curriculum, meaning that topics are repeated as they progress up the year groups adding further detail to the subject for an age-appropriate understanding. Resources for teaching are taken from the PSHE Association and Cre8tive Curriculum. The content that is studied is summarised below and follows the statutory Health Education Guidance for RS(H)E 2021.

The RSHE curriculum encourages an exploration of values and moral issues; consideration of sexuality and personal relationships; and the development of communication and decision-making skills, which will prepare for the experiences and responsibilities of adult life.

OTS takes it responsibility to provide relevant, effective, and responsible relationships and sex education to all its students as part of the School's Personal, Social, Health, and Economic education (PSHE) curriculum, and parts of the Science curriculum.

This policy outlines the approaches and content to the planning and teaching of RSHE at OTS, the rights of parents, the statutory framework surrounding RSHE, and the monitoring arrangements.

2. Aims of the policy

The Department for Education identifies the purpose of RSHE as follows:

“to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.”

(DfE Guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education, updated 2021)

Giving due regard to the above, the aims of RSHE at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour;
- Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships.
- Avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary

3. Statutory and regulatory framework

This policy complies and/or gives due regard to the following:

- Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance - Relationships and sex education (RSHE) and health education (July 2025))
- DfE statutory guidance – Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)
- DfE statutory guidance – Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (January 2015)
- Equality Act 2010

4. Roles and Responsibilities

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

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher (Teaching and Learning), and the PSHE lead teacher are responsible for the creation and implementation of the RSHE policy in the Senior School.

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way

- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSHE

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.

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

5. Equality, diversity, inclusion

The school recognises that those with special educational needs will receive differentiated material and teaching styles as appropriate. The school recognises the differing needs of both sexes within the school and will offer single sex guidance and instruction where appropriate. The school is aware of the cultural diversity of its pupils and of the wider community and educates pupils to understand and respect differences in customs and belief. The needs of EAL pupils are acknowledged, and teachers will ensure that materials will be presented in a clear and comprehensible way.

The school recognises that because of the nature of the subject, sensitive and controversial issues are likely to arise. These may include, for example, abortion, emerging gender identity, sexuality and sexual abuse. These are dealt with within the framework of the aims of the school and of the Relationships and Sex Education policy as a whole and using the Equal Opportunities Policy. Any cause for concern will be dealt with in accordance with our pastoral systems and safeguarding arrangements.

6. Teaching and learning

a. Curriculum

The full outline of the RSHE curriculum is set out in Appendix 1 of this policy. This details the topics that will be covered by what year group and at what point in the academic year. The curriculum may change from time to time in order to adapt it to the latest guidelines and regulations as necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with staff and taking into account the particular context of our school and the needs of the students.

The school will follow the DfE's 2025 RSHE guidance to ensure all content is age-appropriate, factual, and inclusive. This includes new emphasis on topics such as online safety (e.g., understanding and challenging misogynistic content) and additional clarity on teaching about sex, sexuality and gender in an appropriate way.

b. Delivery

RSHE is taught within the PSHE curriculum and some aspects of RSHE may also be taught through the Science curriculum and in an Assembly during form time.

RSHE will be delivered through the 50 minutes PSHE lessons which are every week for Ks3 and every other half term for KS4 and Ks5. Lessons are taught by a dedicated PSHE teacher alongside input from other members of staff and external speakers and companies where it is felt to be appropriate.

When using external speakers to deliver upon aspects of RSHE, the School will comply with the School's Visiting Speakers policy and procedure to ensure the requisite due diligence has been conducted and that the content of the talk is appropriate. The learning objectives and outcomes will be agreed with the external speaker in advance of the talk.

Some areas of learning within the RSHE curriculum 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 (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers, amongst other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children or young carers).

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

7. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSHE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

The right to withdraw relates only to sex education and does not extend to the teaching of biological aspects of human growth and reproduction as provided as part of the science curriculum (whether part of GCSE Science or included as part of the curriculum for younger pupils).

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships education

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

Parents may contact the school office to arrange to view any RSHE teaching resources; we will accommodate these requests promptly, in line with DfE transparency requirements

8. Monitoring and review

The PSHE Lead and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.

This policy will be subject to review at least annually (or more frequently if changes to legislation, regulation or statutory guidance so require) by the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) and PSHE Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the relevant committee of the Advisory Board.

The date of the next review is shown on the front page.

9. Appendix 1

Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) Curriculum Overview

Friendships, Respect and Relationships

This unit looks at consent and boundaries and evaluates why personal space and boundaries are important when growing up. It then looks at the wide range of relationships that young people have and the qualities of good friendships. The unit then finishes looking at how to manage these relationships and looks at pressures and influences within different types of relationships.

Identity, Relationships and Sex Education

This unit starts with an introduction to RSHE looking at what makes a healthy relationship. It deals with conflict that can happen within relationships. Students will look at the difference between sex and gender and the harmful prejudices and stereotypes that can be associated with these. All students learn about the menstrual cycle. The unit finishes with a brief look at what is love and an introduction to the concept of contraception.

Sex the Law and Consent

This starts looking at the law concerning sexual consent and FGM. It then looks at delaying sexual activity and the pressures that can be associated with this. It covers the positive and negative reasons to have sex and explores the consequences of making a relationship sexual. Then to finish students, debate the sexualisation of the media and the impact this is having on teens.

Contraception and STIs

Students look at STIs in detail. They then look at different forms of contraception looking at how they work and the pros and cons of each type. The realities of contraception and the link between pregnancy and STIs are also studied. The laws and legal frameworks linked to sexual harassment and stalking are explored and knowing the difference between flirting and sexual harassment. The unit finishes looking at HIV and AIDS in more detail.

Exploring Relationships and Sex Education

This looks at the legal, emotional and social consequences of sending sexts. This is then explored further with pornography looking at what is and is not legal and identifying the differences between what is seen in pornography and real life. It explores how common access to pornographic material can affect attitudes and beliefs towards sex, relationships and self. Sexual violence is covered looking at assault and rape. The unit progresses onto pleasure and looks at masturbation and the risk associated with different sexual activities.

Sexual Health

Students look at the importance of their sexual health, and the impact bad choices can have. They revisit contraception and STIs in further detail. They look at respect in relationships and the importance of this. They then look at fertility and what can impact fertility, leading on to different types of fertility treatments.

10. APPENDIX 2 Secondary Statutory RSHE 2019 vs Statutory RSHE 2025

Content comparison of some of the major changes

Topic Area	2020 RSHE Statutory Guidance	2025 RSHE Statutory Guidance
Relationships & Consent	Covered healthy relationships, consent (yes/no), exploitation, harassment, domestic abuse.	Greater emphasis on power imbalances in consent (age, status, peer pressure). Explicit focus on misogyny, sexist jokes, incel culture, and challenging harmful attitudes. Must teach about Co-habitation and legal differences with marriages/ civil partnerships
Sexual Health & Safety	Covered puberty, fertility, contraception, STIs, pregnancy choices. Taught by end of secondary.	Same core, but more structured sequencing (e.g. contraception by Y9). Encourages teaching of explicit sexual violence/FGM before Y9 where appropriate. Covers porn's impact on expectations.
Sexual Harassment & Violence	Included respectful relationships and laws against sexual offences.	New dedicated sections on peer sexual harassment & sexual violence. Discusses upskirting, sexualised bullying, normalising that harassment is wrong.
Online Safety & Influences	Addressed online risks: sexting, cyberbullying, explicit content, media influences.	Expanded to include online misogyny, radicalisation, echo chambers, violent content. Teaches critical thinking: how algorithms push content, spotting manipulation. Chat Bots and AI now included.
Gender Identity	Taught under Equality Act compliance, LGBT content integrated by end of secondary.	Still covers sexual orientation & gender reassignment, but explicit not to teach gender identity as unquestioned fact but can be discussed. Focus on legal/biological facts, not advocacy.

Protected Characteristics	Must teach all under Equality Act, including sexual orientation and gender reassignment.	Same, but guidance clearer on method: integrate with anti-bullying, keep gender identity teaching neutral/factual.
Mental Wellbeing & Suicide	Covered resilience, stress, signs of ill-health, where to get help.	More on serious mental health issues (suicide prevention in KS4), coping with online pressures, addiction (gaming/gambling). Teaching of <i>Gillick Competence</i> to be included in relation to medical healthcare. Unhealthy weight gain and the risks associated with it must now be taught.
Vaping & Substances	Taught smoking, alcohol, drugs. Vaping not explicitly mentioned.	Explicitly includes vaping as harmful, also adds gambling, gaming risks, screen overuse tied to mental health.
Parental Engagement	Policy consultation, must inform parents of right to withdraw from sex ed.	Stronger transparency duty: parents can view all materials. Cannot use providers restricting sharing. Withdrawal rights same, but more proactive engagement.
Delivery & Safeguarding	Advised safe environments, trained staff, anonymous questions, handling disclosures.	More structured: avoid partisan external speakers, don't teach gender ideology as fact, ensure age-appropriate content tied closely to safeguarding.
Religion & Belief	Faith schools could teach RSHE with ethos if statutory content met.	Same principle, but clearer that statutory content can't be omitted or distorted. Ethos respected but facts must be taught.

New content in detail that did not appear in the 2020 statutory guidance for RSHE.

Personal Safety - How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around water (including the water safety code)

Health protection and prevention and understanding the healthcare system - 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.

Families

1. That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
3. 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.
4. That 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.

Respectful Relationships - Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration

Being safe - 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. 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.

Healthy Eating - The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain.

Being Safe - How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand 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. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions

11. Appendix 3: RSHE Statutory Guidance July 2025

1. **Secondary relationships and sex education curriculum content**

Schools should continue to develop knowledge of topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

Families

Curriculum content:

1. That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
2. How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children.
3. 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.
4. That 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.
5. That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.⁸
6. How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.
7. 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.
8. 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

Curriculum content:

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. 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.
4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration.
8. The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, 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 ok.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.

Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss 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

Curriculum content:

1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
2. 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. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues.
3. The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. 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.
4. 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.
5. That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should 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. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime.
6. 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.⁹
7. 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.
8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught 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 glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong.
9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.

10. 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.
11. 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. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it.
12. How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
13. That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising).
14. That criminals can operate online scams, for example 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.
15. 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. 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.

For example, see [Report Remove](#)

Being Safe

Curriculum content:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand 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. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions.
5. 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.
6. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting.
7. The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault.
8. The concepts and laws relating to 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.
9. The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.¹⁰
10. That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed.
11. The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation.
12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.
13. 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.

14. 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.
15. 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.
16. 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.

¹⁰ The [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) recognised children who see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse, and are related to either the victim of the abusive behaviour, or the perpetrator, as victims of domestic abuse in their own right (part 1 section 3). The [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory](#) guidance is designed to support statutory and non-statutory bodies working with victims of domestic abuse, including children.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Curriculum content:

1. That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive.
2. 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.
3. 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, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent.
4. 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.
5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). 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
9. The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
10. How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour.
11. How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms.
12. 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.

2. Secondary health and wellbeing curriculum content

Schools should continue to develop knowledge of topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

Mental wellbeing

Curriculum content:

1. How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
2. The benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall wellbeing.
7. Understanding 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.
8. 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

Curriculum content:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. The risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt.
5. 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.
6. The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online.

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

Curriculum content:

1. 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.
2. Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions.
3. That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress.

The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

Healthy eating

Curriculum content:

1. How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease.
2. The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

The impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain.

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping

Curriculum content:

1. 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.
2. The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
3. 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. Understanding 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.
4. The physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency.
5. The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines.
6. 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

Curriculum content:

1. Personal hygiene, germs and how they are spread, including bacteria and viruses, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.
2. 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.
3. How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals.
4. The importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.

8. 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 treat.

Personal safety

Curriculum content:

1. 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).
2. How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media.
3. 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.
4. Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about violence and/or knife crime.
5. 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).
6. 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

Curriculum content:

1. Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments.
2. Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.¹¹
3. The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.

Developing bodies

25 | Page

Curriculum content:

3. The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.
 4. The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development.
 5. 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.
-
6. The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women

¹¹ Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation is usually best taught after 12 years old

26 | Page

12. Appendix 4 Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSHE

To be completed by parents			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			
To be completed by the school			
Agreed actions from discussion with parents			

13. APPENDIX 5: LEARNING JOURNEYS FOR 2025 – 2026 PSHE AND RSHE Curriculum











