



Relationships, Sex & Health Education

Ratifying Committee	Standards & Curriculum
Date	June 2026
Review	Annually

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

The Purpose of this policy

- Clarify the legal requirement and responsibilities of the school.
- Clarify the school's approach to relationships and sex education (RSHE) for the 21st Century for all staff, pupils, governors, parents/carers, external agencies and the wider community.
- Give guidance on developing and implementing and monitoring the RSHE education programme.
- Provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the school RSHE programme.
- Reinforce the role of the schools in contributing to local and national strategies.
- For pupils to make progress in their personal development.

Aims

RSHE is based on individual pupils prior knowledge and understanding/ developmental needs and personalised where necessary linked to individual needs. The overall aims of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) at our school are to:

- Develop each pupils awareness of self and others and increase their independence.
- Develop each pupils skills and confidence in making decisions, communication, assertiveness, self-expression, respect for self and others.
- Support pupils in developing skills and understanding in key communication of yes/no and more/ finished/ stop/ like/dislike/ private.
- Help pupils communicate and understand their feelings and emotions and for adults to be observant and understand behaviour in relation to communication and also emotions.
- Supporting pupils to build personalised emotional regulation, develop coping strategies and build resilience.
- Help pupils to have an increasing awareness and understanding of their own bodies.
- Support pupils to engage, develop awareness of other, interact with other and build friendships.
- Provide pupils with skills and knowledge necessary to keep themselves happy and safe including on-line.
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies and functions.
- Raise and promote positive self-esteem.
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- To understand the value of family life and the range of family structures, the implications of parenthood and the need for the proper care of all young things.

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Develop the confidence to seek help, support and advice
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Challenge media stereotypes, oppression and prejudice and promote equal opportunities.

Statutory Requirements

- as a maintained Special School with Primary and Secondary aged pupils we must provide relationships education set in the statutory guidance Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education 2025
- as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017 for primary aged pupils and relationships and sex education for secondary aged pupils, we must have regard to the guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

Primary aged pupils are not required to provide sex education but elements of sex education is required in the science curriculum. As a school we have made the decision to provide sex education in an appropriate way to meet the developmental needs and cognitive ability of our pupils. This will not be determined by age. The statutory guidance 2026 says that 'Schools can use their professional judgement to determine when content is appropriate.

At The Bridge School we teach RSHE as set out in this policy.

This policy was developed in consultation with staff and parents. Some pupils were consulted where appropriate. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – RSHE task group comprising of teaching staff, Assistant Head Teachers, PSHE coordinators, a School Governor and parents of students from Primary and Secondary phases of School pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were consulted and invited to attend a meeting about the policy including being shown a representation sample of materials used to support the curriculum.
4. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSHE where appropriate.

5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

The school gave opportunities for consultation again with all parents/carers and also liaised with Parent Governors.

Definition

RSHE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, healthy lifestyles, personal identity and diversity, sexual health and sexuality, as pupils progress from the primary to secondary phase of a school.

RSHE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values, which our pupils understand through accessible education.

RSHE is **not** about the promotion of sexual activity

RSHE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Self awareness
- Communication and social skills
- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe – personal safety including roads, rail and water.
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health (Secondary and within the Bridge linked to their development)

Pupils will have bespoke access to work around:

- bereavement
- protected characteristics, including sexuality

Within the Bridge School, this is delivered linked to the developmental needs of the pupils.

Curriculum Guidance.

The DFE has published statutory guidance titled Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (2021). The document gives guidance for pupils with SEND and states:

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

The Curriculum at the Bridge School and implementation

Curriculum progression of skills and knowledge

PHSE, RE and Science (biological aspect) through communication and understanding in English have progressive skills and knowledge progression. The progression enables teachers to know what a pupil already understands to enable this to be sustained and also to work on next steps. The content of the curriculum will be developmentally appropriate to the pupils understanding. The lead adult may plan individual lessons or a sequence of lessons to:

- Support engagement in learning.
- Consolidate existing skills and knowledge to retain them and embed in the long-term memory.
- Work on next steps (understanding for some pupils this can be an uneven profile linked to their SEN) and break steps down further if needed.
- For some pupils exposing them to the foundations of higher skills as pupils may have particular strengths or motivations and it may lay foundations for later learning.
- Work on the application of the skills and knowledge e.g. using in a different context, with different materials, with different people or applying within a different task.
- Work on early underpinning foundational knowledge.

The skills and knowledge progression for pupils within the school documents are sequential and progressive and are detailed in school curriculum. They broadly include:

- Interpreting pupils' responses that are pre-intentionally including like/dislike/ more/finished/ yes/ no and range of emotions linked to behaviour, body changes and reactions.
- Development of awareness of own surroundings and peers and adults in own environment
- Understanding own actions impact on environment and communication through cause and effect. Understanding that objects have meaning and anticipating and increasing understanding of routines.
- Actively engaging in wider range of groups and situation and increasing attention and co-operation in preferred and adult directed activities. Increasing understanding of two-way communication with others.
- Making choices from per-intentional level to increasing complexity.
- Understanding/ communication of single words and increasing understanding/communication of wider range of vocabulary linked to RSE which may include body parts, feelings, key target words (yes/no/more/finished/ stop/ like/dislike/ private (using whatever the pupil's own system of communication)).
- Asking for help from trusted person.
- Increasing understanding and communication of more complex language levels.

- Increasing interactions with adults and peers including participation with growing independence of group games and activities.
- Development of understanding of family members, family structures and roles of people around them and in the community.
- Understanding of qualities of positive and healthy relationships
- Understanding some similarities and differences of people,
- Identifying things, people and places that they need to keep safe from and knowing strategies for keeping safe and healthy including who to go to for help.
- Understand how boys' and girls' bodies change on the inside/outside during the growing up process and how changes are necessary so that their bodies can make babies as people grow up.
- Recognising how they feel about these changes happening to and how to cope with these feelings.
- Awareness of relevant legal ages, for example, buying alcohol, buying cigarettes, voting and consensual sex.
- Communicate about positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships.

Alongside the above, work in school personal care, eating and drinking, dental hygiene, washing and drying, dressing and undressing, healthy foods, toileting. In all cases this will be based on each pupils profile of needs and current knowledge and skills and will be progressive.

Bespoke work will take place as described to support pupils through puberty changes.

Cross curricular/ everyday opportunities

RSHE is also taught through everyday interactions. There is a culture that every lesson and every moment is an opportunity for personal development following individual methods of communication. Staff supporting pupils understanding and communication linked to their own individual profile is key part of delivery of RSHE. Alongside this, regular routines are used to teach RSHE e.g. linked to snack time, lunch time, personal care, dressing and undressing for swimming etc.

Correct language used

Common language, when referring to body parts is used in school from the foundation stage to key stage 5 by staff across the school where appropriate; in order for students to have the chance to understand about their own bodies and be equipped with the correct names for their body parts from an early age.

As appropriate when referring to body parts staff consistently use the following language from the Foundation stage upwards *with the exception of clitoris as noted*. RSHE co-ordinator will have access to InPrint symbols to support understanding.

- Bottom
- Vagina (symbol of pubic area and not vaginal opening)
- Penis

- Breasts
- Testicles
- Nipples
- Period
- Sperm
- Clitoris – this word will be introduced during the Secondary phase and within a Science lesson when developmentally appropriate

Adult Modelling

Alongside the use of language, adult modelling to pupils and though interaction with adults is key also to delivery in PSHE.

Adult should demonstrate to pupils high standards of care and consideration. For example, using movement cues and preparation.

Policy on Intimate Care should be followed.

Safeguarding Policy Link

All staff should follow the school Safeguarding Policy including any changes to behaviour and changes to pupils usual nature and reactions.

Staff are pupils with SEND are more vulnerable to abuse and remain vigilant.

Supporting pupils through puberty

Pupils at the Bridge experience body changes and changes of emotions linked to puberty whatever their developmental understanding of the changes are.

The approach to supporting pupils therefore is individual and the following may apply:

- a) Pupil who have an understanding of language that is abstract may be prepared for changes in their body or things that may happen to them as they get older e.g. menstruation or wet dreams. This would be in agreement with parents/carers and will usually be when there are indicators of puberty changes physically or emotionally. The pupil may be supported with resources that can be provided by the PSHE co-ordinators and may include social stories or visual strips or simple story books or resources.
- b) For pupils who do not have the understanding of language or understanding that is abstract, then preparation and support for changes will be through supporting parents/carers and where possible preparing all adults in advance on how to support the

individual pupil. From March 2023, this will be discussed with parents and carers at each review from year 5 onwards (or earlier if puberty signs are showing). Parents will receive a leaflet of the support school can give. Where appropriate resources can be made so that if aspects of puberty take place resources are available and strategies agreed.

- c) Parents/ carers can attend a course that school offers every 2 years on Challenges of Adolescence. Parents and carers can also access bespoke 1-1 sessions with PSHE co-ordinator to support parent/carers in their questions around changes through Puberty.

Links to Behaviour Policy

It is important that work in RSHE sits within the guidance of the Schools Behaviour Policy.

It is important that adults model correct words and that adults react calmly to interactions or behaviour that may occur e.g. linked to puberty or body part exploration. Behaviour that is new can then be planned for with strategies and also where needed with agreement with parents/carers.

Sensitive issues may also arise relating to specific students, for example, body exploration or masturbation. As a school we will be relaying the message to students, as appropriate, that it is ok to explore their own bodies, but that they are only to do this in a private place at an appropriate time - in general this will be the bedroom when they are alone and that it is not acceptable in school. With students who are unable to understand this message we will reinforce it using specific strategies for that individual e.g. distracting them. This will be managed by all staff sensitively. Teachers will liaise with parents/carers if specific incidents or issues surrounding this arise so that a clear and consistent message can be given to the individual and approaches can be planned for and within support plans.

E safety

Please refer to the E Safety Policy and computing curriculum and the teaching as appropriate to pupils understanding.

Staff will remain vigilant and curious and any aspects of on-line behaviour.

Personal and Social Development and Health Lifestyles

Work in school takes place in supporting all pupils on personal and social development and healthy lifestyles.

This includes a strong emphasis on adult care and supporting access to pupils care routines and when agreed implementing health professionals advice including use of equipment.

Work includes areas such as continence and toileting, eating and drinking, dressing and undressing, participation in school life and the wider community, dental hygiene, washing and drying etc.

Pupils are supported through Healthy Eating Policy and the catering service on site.

Pupils are also supported through the PE Policy and for Secondary pupils Hobbies and Careers.

Family relationships and community diversity

Any learning dealing within the context of family life will be done so to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances. We respect that families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures. We also respect and recognise that some children may have a different structure of support around them. Where available, resources are selected that show the range of family structures and diverse community life.

Key concepts

There is a strong emphasis in school on communication and understanding and the following are key and linked to RSE: yes/no and more/ finished/ stop/ like/dislike and private.

For Secondary aged students at The Bridge

Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) is compulsory from age 11 onwards. It involves teaching children about reproduction, sexuality and sexual health where appropriate. It doesn't promote early sexual activity or any particular sexual orientation. All teaching and learning is based on individual pupil prior knowledge allowing personalised curriculum content.

A speak easy approach

We want all students within the school to feel confident and secure and as part of this; we want them to feel they can ask questions or discuss RSHE in comfortable and relaxed way. This would include CSE if appropriate in line with stage of development (rather than age) and individual context.

In order for this to happen, teachers and support staff need to also feel comfortable and confident. Within each phase there is a PSHE coordinator who can be used to support teachers with planning and/delivery of sessions to ensure they feel confident about the area they are teaching particularly with any content for pupils who are working at Bridge higher band level or if

anyone does not feel confident with the common language. Mandi Davies is also the named person in school who has completed the PSHE CPD and has extended training within RSHE and can be contacted for advice and support.

Parent information and consent

Parents/Carers will be informed about taught explicit sex education as part of the RSHE curriculum content. It may be that this is taught individually to a pupil or to a small group based on their developmental understanding. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact class teachers if they have any questions or concerns or would like additional information about what their child is learning about in a specific area, so that they can support this learning at home. Parents are asked if they need any support with adolescence and puberty at home during their annual review from year 5 and upwards.

As the Bridge School has a speak easy approach areas relating to RSHE may come up at other times in the school day and these will be discussed in a sensitive and appropriate way. If a pupil does ask questions, parents/carers will be talked to in relation to response and content. If a pupil asks a question and staff member is unsure on how to respond, they are to listen carefully and say to the pupil they will find an answer and then talk to them. Staff member can liaise with PSHE co-ordinator and a planned approach can be agreed.

Any disclosures made by students will be followed up by staff using the whole school child protection policy and procedures.

At the Bridge School we show respect, understanding and empathy towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, sexuality, feelings and views, and through opportunities within RSHE to develop this respect within the students who attend the school.

Relationship to other connected policies

This policy has links to School policies on Safeguarding, Child Protection, Health and Safety, Confidentiality, PSHE, Science, Communication, Teaching and Learning Policy, Healthy Schools, School Visits, Manual Handling and Intimate Care, Behaviour including anti-bullying Policy and also Equality Policy.

The Governing body

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

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory/non-science components of RSHE.

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Understanding that a child's RSHE curriculum is highly personalised and the content of lessons may not depend on age related expectations.
- Teaching aspects that mainstream pupils will acquire through their development, such as understanding the term 'private'.
- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way, ensuring that all pupils and students understand the terminology.
- Revisiting learning
- Adapting learning to meet the learning needs of the pupils and students
- Using appropriate vocabulary
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science 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.

All staff working in school are responsible for supporting RSHE.

All classroom staff are responsible for supporting the RSHE curriculum.

Class teachers are responsible for delivering effective RSHE curriculum and encouraging the speak easy approach within their classes.

Parents' right to withdraw.

For primary aged pupils parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSHE.

For secondary aged pupils parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science 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.

For primary and secondary aged pupils, requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 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.

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

In all cases the Headteacher/PSHE/RSHE Lead will meet with parents to understand their decision to withdraw and highlight the benefits of receiving this education with their peers. In this way pupils and students will receive accurate information.

Professional Development and Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The headteacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE.

Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by Mandi Davies and Senior Leadership Team.

Monitoring arrangements take form in a subject co-ordinator self review, which includes adding, removing or tweaking the progression strands as appropriate, feedback from teachers, looking at pupil work in folders, collating pupil voice where appropriate, and brief lesson observations.

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

This policy will be reviewed by Mandi Davies, PSHE/RSHE Lead on an annual basis. At every review, the policy will be approved by [the governing board/committee name/governor name/the headteacher].

Local and national guidelines

This policy has been written in consultation with the following guidance.

- statutory guidance from the Department for Education issued under Section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996
- Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education 2025
- National curriculum in England: framework for key stages 1 to 4.
- National Healthy Schools Standards 2006
- Ofsted (2002) *Sex and Relationships*. Office for Standards in Education, London.
- Social Exclusion Unit (1999) *Teenage Pregnancy Strategy*. Social Exclusion Unit, London.
- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)
- Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)

- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- Equality Act 2010 and schools
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (statutory guidance)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools (advice for schools)
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools (guidance for maintained schools on promoting basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC))
- Preparation for Adulthood

This policy applies to all staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors, and outside agencies working within the school.

Appendix 1: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

The Bridge Special School – Parents Request to withdraw their child from the non-statutory/non-science aspects of the curriculum.

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS				
Name of child		Class		Child's D.O.B
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	
School signature and date	