

Heatherside Junior School – Policy for Relationships, Sex and Health Education



Rationale and ethos

At Heatherside Junior School we are committed to delivering a Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) that is built on positive relationships. Our ethos of 'Learning for Life' encompasses physical, moral and emotional development. This is embedded in our whole school approach and is delivered alongside key objectives from the Science and PSHE curriculum. Our aim is to enable our pupils to develop the knowledge, strategies and skills to progress confidently from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood. We recognise the importance of the relationship between home and school in providing the context for successful learning, which prepares pupils for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities in later life.

Context

This policy sets out our school's approach to statutory Relationships and Health Education and non-statutory Sex Education. We have based our school's relationships and sex education policy on the statutory guidance document ["Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education"](#) (DfE, 2025, effective September 2026) and the PSHE Association's supplementary guidance PSHE Association: Writing your RSE Policy (updated for 2025 RSHE requirements.)

Department for Education guidance stated that from September 2020, all primary schools must teach Relationships and Health Education. The teaching of Sex Education in primary schools remains non-statutory, with the exception of the elements of sex education contained in the Science national curriculum including the main external body parts, the human life cycle (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. Other related topics that fall within the statutory requirements for Health Education are puberty and menstrual wellbeing.

'Children and young people need knowledge and skills that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships. High quality, evidence-based teaching of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) can help prepare pupils for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life, and can promote their moral, social, mental and physical development. Effective teaching will support young people to cultivate positive characteristics including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness, and trustworthiness. Effective teaching will support prevention of harms by helping young people understand and identify when things are not right '

Within the statutory guidance document for RSE and Health Education, the DfE also encourages schools to deliver age-appropriate sex education if they feel their pupils need this information:

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, but we recommend that primaries teach sex education in years 5 and/or 6, in line with content about conception and birth, which forms part of the national curriculum for science. The national curriculum for science includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. Schools may also cover human reproduction in the science curriculum, but where they do so, this should be in line with the factual description of conception in the science curriculum."

Within this policy, as in the DfE guidance, Relationships Education is defined as teaching about the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. Our definition of Relationships Education includes all of those elements defined within this statutory topic – these are detailed below in the 'Curriculum' section.

Sex Education is defined as teaching children how human reproduction occurs, including how a baby is conceived. This draws on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for Science. For the purposes of this policy, we specifically identify any non-statutory Sex Education that falls outside of Science and those related elements (the physical changes associated with puberty) within statutory Health Education.

We believe that Relationship, Health and Sex Education should:

- Be accurate and factual, covering a comprehensive range of age-appropriate information about relationships, health, emotional wellbeing and changes experienced during puberty.
- Be positively inclusive in terms of gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, religion or belief.
- Include the development of skills to support healthy and safe relationships and ensure good communication about these issues.
- Promote a critical awareness of the different attitudes and views on relationships within society such as peer norms and those portrayed in the media.
- Provide opportunities for reflection in order to nurture personal values based on mutual respect and care.
- Be part of lifelong learning, starting early in childhood and continuing throughout life.
- Ensure children and young people are clearly informed of their rights such as how they can access confidential advice within the boundaries of safeguarding.
- Be relevant and meet the needs of children and young people, and actively involve them as participants and evaluators.
- Be delivered by competent, caring and confident educators.
- Be provided within a learning environment which is safe for the children and adults involved and based on the principle that prejudice, discrimination and bullying are harmful and unacceptable.

Roles and responsibilities

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) forms part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum in our school. The RSHE programme is led by the PSHE Subject Leader with the support of the Senior Leadership Team. PSHE lessons are taught by class teachers, supported by expert visitors as appropriate and necessary. Teaching staff receive training in the delivery of the RSHE curriculum through dedicated staff meetings, led by the PSHE Co-ordinator with the support of external experts as required. As a school we are aware that the primary responsibility for providing children's RSHE lies with parents and carers. We recognise the need to work with parents and carers to ensure a shared understanding of RSE and to deliver an effective programme that meets the needs of our pupils.

The RSHE Curriculum

Throughout the key stage, our curriculum will build on the following key aims and help children to:

- Learn the value of family life, marriage and other stable and loving relationships;

- Learn the value of respect, love and care;
- Develop self-respect and empathy for others
- Develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships;
- Be able to name parts of the body using correct vocabulary and their functions;
- Have strategies to protect themselves and ask for help and support;
- Understand in scientific terms how a baby is conceived and born;
- Know about changes in the body related to puberty, such as menstrual cycles and voice breaking;
- Understand when these changes are likely to happen and what issues may cause anxiety and how they can deal with these

A summary of the key objectives from the statutory Relationships and Health Education curriculum is set out below. It states that children should know:

Families and people who care for me

- That families are important for children growing up because they can provide love, security and stability.
- The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
- That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.
- That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up.
- That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.
- How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.

Caring friendships

- How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
- That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.
- That not every child will have the friends they would like at all times, that most people feel lonely sometimes, and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it.
- The characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties
- That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened.
- How to manage conflict, and that resorting to violence is never right.
- How to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to get support when needed.

Respectful, kind relationships

- How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others, including in families and friendships. Pupils should be encouraged to discuss how we balance the needs and wishes of different people in relationships and why this can be complicated.
- The importance of setting and respecting healthy boundaries in relationships with friends, family, peers and adults.
- How to communicate effectively and manage conflict with kindness and respect; how to be assertive and express needs and boundaries; how to manage feelings, including disappointment and frustration.
- Pupils should have opportunities to discuss the difference between being assertive and being controlling, and conversely the difference between being kind to other people and neglecting your own needs
- That they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and the importance of respecting others, including those who are different (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices, or have different preferences or beliefs.
- Practical steps they can take and skills they can develop in a range of different contexts to improve or support their relationships.
- The conventions of courtesy and manners
- The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. Pupils should have opportunities to think about how they foster their own self-esteem and build a strong sense of their own identity, including through developing skills and interests
- The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult), and how to get help.
- What a stereotype is, how stereotypes can be unfair, negative, destructive or lead to bullying and how to challenge a stereotype.
- How to seek help when needed, including when they are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

Online safety and awareness

- That people should be respectful in online interactions, and that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including where people are anonymous. For example, the importance of avoiding putting pressure on others to share information and images online, and strategies for resisting peer pressure.
- How to critically evaluate their online relationships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. For example, that people sometimes behave differently online, including pretending to be someone else, or pretending to be a child, and that this can lead to dangerous situations. How to recognise harmful content or harmful contact, and how to report this.
- That there is a minimum age for joining social media sites (currently 13), which protects children from inappropriate content or unsafe contact with older social media users, who may be strangers, including other children and adults.
- The importance of exercising caution about sharing any information about themselves online. Understanding the importance of privacy and location settings to protect information online.
- Online risks, including that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once a picture or words has been circulated there is no way of deleting it everywhere and no control over where it ends up.

- That the internet contains a lot of content that can be inappropriate and upsetting for children, and where to go for advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online.
- Pupils will learn to critically evaluate online content and recognise misinformation, manipulation, scams, fraud and other online financial harms. They will understand how personal information and data may be used online and how privacy settings can help keep them safe.

Being safe

- What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including online). This can include learning about boundaries in play and in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources etc
- The concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
- That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe contact, including physical contact.
- How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) including those they do and do not know.
- How to recognise when a relationship is harmful or dangerous, including skills for recognising who to trust and who not to trust.
- How to report abuse, concerns about something seen online or experienced in real life, or feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

In addition, there are two other key PSHE themes which link with and support the Relationships and Health Education curriculum; these are Economic Wellbeing and Careers Education.

Non-statutory sex education

As part of statutory Health Education, children are taught in an age-appropriate way about puberty and the associated physical and emotional changes from Year 3 onwards. As part of the Science curriculum, children learn in Year 5 about how reproduction occurs in some plants and animals. The DfE guidance 2025 also recommends that all primary schools have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of pupils, and this should include how a baby is conceived and born. Although sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, we believe children should understand the facts about human reproduction before they leave primary school. We therefore provide some non-statutory sex education covering how human reproduction and conception occurs.

Year Group	Curriculum content (Summer Term)
4	What changes happen emotionally and physically during puberty? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have you changed since before you started at the infant school? • What is exciting about growing up? What is worrying about growing up? • Body changes, personal hygiene and introduction to puberty
5	What changes happen emotionally and physically during puberty? What changes happen to boys and girls during puberty? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the physical and emotional changes approaching and during puberty • to identify the external genitalia and internal reproductive organs in males and females • how to discuss the challenges of puberty with a trusted adult • how to get information, help and advice about puberty • key facts about the menstrual cycle • correct names for body parts, including genitalia • strategies to manage the changes during puberty including menstruation and body changes • how the process of puberty relates to human reproduction

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> about how hygiene routines change during the time of puberty, the importance of keeping clean and how to maintain personal hygiene
6	<p>What changes happen emotionally and physically during puberty? How is a baby conceived? How does a baby develop during pregnancy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> about the physical and emotional changes approaching and during puberty identify the external genitalia and internal reproductive organs in males and females how to discuss the challenges of puberty with a trusted adult how to get information, help and advice about puberty key facts about the menstrual cycle strategies to manage the changes during puberty including menstruation and erections how the process of puberty relates to human reproduction about how hygiene routines change during the time of puberty, the importance of keeping clean and how to maintain personal hygiene about the processes of reproduction and birth as part of the human lifecycle; how babies are conceived and born age of consent

In each year group, lessons will recap on the content of previous years as a reminder and to allow for children to develop an understanding when they are ready. We recognise that children in younger year groups may ask questions that cannot be answered without reference to content from older year groups. Should this occur, we will respond by telling them that they will learn about that when they are older. Please see the relevant section within this policy for further information on how teachers manage difficult questions in RHSE.

We believe that teaching this additional content to pupils will ensure that they are better prepared for transition to secondary school and also support their personal and social development as they grow into young adults. As is legally prescribed, parents have a right to withdraw their children from these additional non-statutory sex education lessons - please see the relevant section within this policy in regard to this process.

Delivery

All elements of our Relationships, Health & Sex Education programme will be delivered in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner as part of our regular weekly timetabled PSHE education programme. RSHE is delivered predominantly by class teachers in mixed gender groups, other than when it is deemed more appropriate for topics to be covered in single sex groups; this will be decided by the class teacher after discussion with the subject lead and Headteacher. Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSHE in school, for example the school nurse. All visitors will be familiar with and understand the school's RSHE policy and be expected to work within it.

Teaching and learning strategies – agreed principles in class

We aim to provide an environment and atmosphere for RHSE where pupils feel safe, comfortable, and secure where they have confidence and trust in the knowledge, ability and skills of staff in school. This ensures that both pupils and staff feel fully confident in engaging in age-appropriate discussions around potentially sensitive topics and themes. To provide clarity and create a safe learning environment, at the beginning of each session a set of ground rules will be agreed by the class based on our school's agreed protocols. These include the following basic guidelines:

- Listen politely to each other.
- Everyone gets a turn - if they want one.
- Respect everybody's contribution.
- No personal information - no names.
- No personal questions.

- Responding positively and sensitively.
- Reminders not to share content with younger siblings/friends who may be too young to understand.
- Explanations will be given in a factual way.
- An age-appropriate expectation regarding confidentiality and safeguarding

Other teaching and learning strategies utilised in RHSE (and across the PSHE curriculum) to establish a safe learning environment include the following techniques:

- Using 'distancing' techniques such as case studies, videos etc. to depersonalise sensitive issues.
- Anonymous question boxes. These can help children to have the confidence to ask sensitive questions and they provide an opportunity for teachers to pre-empt questions that might not be age appropriate or that might raise safeguarding or child protection concerns.
- Emphasising to children that any voluntary sharing of information should be anonymous (for example "someone I know..." rather than "I" or naming names).

Dealing with Sensitive Issues

Teachers will:

- use specific ground rules for this work which will clarify boundaries for children and mitigate any disclosures made in class.
- clarify that personal questions should not be asked.
- clarify that pupils should not give out personal information in class but speak to someone they trust after the lesson, e.g. teacher, support staff, parent.

In accordance with national guidance, the school believes that teaching methods need to take account of the developmental differences of children and the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. If a teacher does not know the answer to a question or if a question is felt to be inappropriate, this should be acknowledged and, if considered necessary, this may be followed up outside of the classroom environment with individual pupils and/or parents. Teachers will use the Key Stage 3/4 statutory content as a general guide as to what sort of questions or issues might not generally be considered appropriate for primary aged children in our setting. Children may also be encouraged to talk to their parents and carers who have ultimate responsibility for talking to their children about content which falls beyond Key Stage 2. We will also encourage parents to talk with school if they have any questions or queries and if they would like advice on how to better support their child and continue learning outside of the classroom.

Where a member of staff is concerned about a Safeguarding issue matter, it is their responsibility to follow the school's Child Protection policy immediately and report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Special educational needs and inclusion

All children have different needs based on their emotional and physical development, life experiences, and learning differences, but we aim to ensure that all pupils are properly included in RSHE. Teachers will plan and deliver work in a variety of ways, in order to meet the needs of individual pupils with SEND. We focus on activities that increase a pupil's confidence, communication and relationship skills, their self-esteem and understanding. Teachers may also meet with parents of children with specific SEND prior to the lessons being taught so that a support plan and approach can be agreed.

Equalities and diversity

Schools, like all public institutions, have specific responsibilities in relation to equality and protected characteristics. Planning and resources are reviewed to ensure they comply with equalities legislation and the school's Equalities Statement. All RHSE is taught without bias and in line with legal responsibilities such as those contained within the Equality Act (2010). Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect others that may have different opinions. Any personal beliefs and attitudes of staff delivering RHSE must and will not influence the teaching of the subject in school.

In our school we seek to recognise and embrace the diverse nature of our community. We aim to value and celebrate religious, ethnic and cultural diversity as part of modern Britain. We will explore different cultural beliefs and values and encourage activities that challenge stereotypes and discrimination and present children with accurate information based on the law. We will use a range of teaching materials and resources that reflect the diversity of our community and encourage a sense of inclusiveness. Our curriculum reflects and respects the diversity of modern Britain and complies with the Equality Act 2010. Teaching about different families, relationships and protected characteristics is factual, age-appropriate and promotes respect for all people.

Monitoring and evaluating

- Teachers will critically reflect on their delivery of the curriculum during the unit of study.
- Pupils will have the opportunity to reflect on their learning at the end of each lesson.
- Pupil voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned activities.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum will be evaluated as part of the School Improvement Plan.

Resources

At Heatherside we use a range of resources, including materials from the PSHE Association, the BBC and Kapow Primary. The PSHE Subject Leader and teachers ensure that resources will be selected to ensure they are consistent with the school's ethos and values, support our aims and objectives, and meet the needs of our pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities.

The resources we use in delivering non-statutory sex education include short films by Kapow Primary used in Years 5 and 6. This series of videos is designed to provide an age-appropriate perspective and contextualises the facts about human conception and reproduction within a committed, loving adult relationship. These materials are shared with parents via an information event held annually prior to the learning taking place in school. All RSHE resources are reviewed annually by the Subject Leader and Senior Leadership Team to ensure that they remain accurate, age-appropriate, evidence-informed and compliant with current statutory guidance.

The role of parents/parental right of withdrawal

We recognise that parents and carers are the primary providers of RHSE for their children. Our RHSE curriculum is designed to support and complement this. We aim to build a positive and supportive relationship with parents and carers through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation.

In promoting this we will:

- Inform parents about the school's RHSE policy and practice;
- Provide opportunities to view videos, lesson plans and resources used in the RHSE programme;
- Answer any questions that parents may have about RHSE for their child;

- Take seriously any issues or concerns that parents raise.

We believe that all of the content within our school's PSHE curriculum, including RHSE, is of the utmost importance and relevance to all pupils. However, parents have the legal right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all **non-statutory** sex education other than that which is part of the National Curriculum for Science. Please note there is no parental right of withdrawal from Relationships Education or Health Education content within the school curriculum, or from any statutory sex education that forms part of the National Curriculum for Science. These are statutory requirements which the DfE mandates schools to teach; please see the statutory document if further information is required.

We will inform parents of the right to withdraw in advance of non-statutory sex education lessons being taught. Parents and carers who wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child from non-statutory sex education should talk with the Headteacher who will explore any concerns and discuss resources being used. If parents still wish to withdraw their child from non-statutory sex education lessons, this request will be recorded, and suitable alternative arrangements made for pupils during relevant lessons. The issue of withdrawal will be handled as sensitively as possible. Parents should also understand that the decision to remove their child from these lessons means that they themselves will assume responsibility for talking to their children about any related sex education themes covered outside of National Curriculum Science.

Next review date: June 2027