HOWE GREEN HOUSE
BISHOP'S STORTFORD

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) POLICY

ISI Reference	2f
Issue Number	
This policy is endorsed by	Governing Board and the Co-Headteachers
This policy is owned by	PSHE Co-ordinator
Review Body	Education Committee

Most Recent Revision Date	September 2025
Last Reviewed by Governors	September 2025
Period of Review	Annual
Next Review Date	September 2026
Previous Reviews	September 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023,2024

To be made available	YES
To be on website	YES
Internal staff only	NO
Internal students only	NO
Internal staff and students	YES

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction

This policy complies with the Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Pupils and Social Work Act 2017.

From September 2021 Relationships Education and Health Education became compulsory for all primary pupils. As a school, Howe Green House School supports the DfE's recommendation that all primary schools should have a sex education programme and that it is tailored to the age and maturity of its pupils.

The staff and governors of Howe Green House School believe that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is lifelong learning about personal, physical, moral and emotional development. It should teach children and young people to develop and form positive values, attitudes, personal and social skills and increase their knowledge and understanding of how to make informed decisions and life choices.

Statement of Intent

At Howe Green House School, RSE is taught within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. In addition, some aspects of the RSE programme will be covered through:

- Science curriculum
- Computing
- Form time
- Assemblies
- Stories
- PE in the context of health and hygiene

Aims

Through our PSHE programme, we aim to provide children with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active and responsible citizens. In providing children with an understanding of healthy and respectful relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider effective Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) to be a fundamental part of our approach to supporting pupils to grow into confident, caring, responsible and respectful young citizens.

The aims of Relationships and Sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a consistent standard of relations, sex and health education across the school
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Promote responsible behaviour

- Create a positive culture of communication around issues of relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- 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
- Give pupils an understanding of reproduction and sexual development
- Ensure that all pupils, by the time they reach secondary school age, are well equipped and on an equal footing, to deal with the secondary RSE curriculum.
- To provide all pupils with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to make positive and healthy choices concerning relationships as they grow up and deal with risk.
- Combat exploitation.

These aims complement those of the Science curriculum in the Pre-Prep and Prep.

Statutory requirements

The RSE policy is produced in consultation with our staff, board of governors, and parents. We will ensure that our policy is effectively communicated to staff and parents, including through publishing the policy on our school website.

Department for Education guidance states that 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 knowledge of the main external body parts; the changes as humans develop to old age and reproduction in some plants and animals. Other related topics that fall within the statutory requirements for Health Education, such as puberty and menstrual wellbeing, will be included within PSHE education lessons.

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:

"*It will be for primary schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. Many primary schools already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so, although it is not a requirement…"*

"It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department continues to recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science – how a baby is conceived and born."

Definition

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 particular reference to respectful friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults, including online.

For the purpose of this policy, Health Education is defined as teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing, focusing on recognising the link between the two and being able to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Sex Education is defined as teaching children how human reproduction occurs, including how a baby is conceived and born. 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.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Curriculum

Statutory RSE Curriculum Content

Our RSE curriculum is embedded within our PSHE curriculum, and this is adapted when necessary. We have developed the curriculum considering the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an age appropriate manner so they are fully informed and do not seek answers online.

Key objectives of the statutory Relationships Education curriculum are outlined below:

Families and people who care for me	1. that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability. 2. 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. 3. 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. 4. 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. 5. that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment

	of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong. 6. 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	1. how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. 2. the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties. 3. that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. 4. that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right. 5. how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
Respectful relationships	1. importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs. 2. practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. 3. the conventions of courtesy and manners. 4. the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. 5. that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority. 6. about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help. 7. what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. 8. the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.
Online relationships	1. that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not. 2. that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous. 3. the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. 4. how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never

	met. 5. how information and data is shared and used online.
Being safe	1. what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). 2. about 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. 3. that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact. 4. how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know. 5. how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. 6. how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard, 7. how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. 8. where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to ensure 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, 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).

Statutory Science Curriculum Content

EYFS

Early Years Foundation Stage children learn about life cycles of different living things. Through ongoing personal, social and emotional development, they develop the skills to form relationships and think about relationships with others.

In Pre-Prep (years 1 – 2) children learn:

- To identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is to do with each sense
- To notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults
- To find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)
- To describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food, and hygiene

In Prep (years 3 – 6) children learn:

- To identify that animals, including humans, need the right types and amount of nutrition, and that they cannot make their own food; they get nutrition from what they eat
- To identify that humans and some other animals have skeletons and muscles for support, protection and movement
- To describe the simple functions of the basic parts of the digestive system in humans
- To identify the different types of teeth in humans and their simple functions
- To describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals
- To describe the changes, as humans develop to old age
- To identify and name the main parts of the human circulatory system, and describe the functions of the heart, blood vessels and blood
- To recognise the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle on the way their bodies function
- To describe the way nutrients and water are transported within animals, including humans
- To recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents

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 4 onwards. As part of the science curriculum, children learn in Year 2 that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults. In Year 5, they describe the changes as humans develop to old age and about how reproduction occurs in some plants and animals.

Alongside this, children in Year 4 and 5 are taught to recognise the signs and changes that may occur during the onset of puberty, in preparation for further lessons on this subject which also focus on emotional changes and menstruation in Year 4 and 5. These lessons form part of the statutory requirements for Health Education.

The DfE guidance 2019 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. This is taught in Year 6. Children are taught:

- that for a baby to begin to grow, part comes from a mother and part comes from a father; that in most animals including humans the baby grows inside the mother
- that when a sperm and egg meet, this is called conception; that conception usually occurs as a result of sexual intercourse, and what sexual intercourse means
- how a baby develops in the womb and how babies are born

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.

The resources we use when teaching the non-statutory sex education units are shared with parents prior to these lessons taking place.

Delivery of RSE

Our Relationships and Sex Education programme will be delivered in an age appropriate and sensitive manner by the class teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, alongside the specialist science teacher. Teaching is normally taught in mixed gender groups, and children are provided with opportunities to ask questions confidentially if they feel more comfortable to do this.

We aim to provide a learning atmosphere where children feel safe and relaxed, and where they feel confident to engage in discussions around potentially sensitive subjects and themes.

Ground rules in class and across the school are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter and teaching RSE. Clear ground rules are established in partnership with the class, then reinforced at the start of each relevant lesson. As a minimum, ground rules are likely to include the following basic guidelines:

- Listen politely to each other
- Everyone gets a turn to speak, if they want to
- Everyone has a right not to speak
- Everyone's contribution is respected
- We don't ask or have to answer any personal questions
- We use anatomically correct language when we have learnt it

Dealing with sensitive issues and difficult questions

Pupil's questions will be dealt with honestly and sensitively and in an age appropriate way.

A question box will be available for pupils to ask anonymous questions.

If staff are faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, techniques such as distancing, the use of a question box, or creating a time to talk to a child individually will be used. Children may also be signposted back to parents/carers and the teacher will contact the parents/carers to give a context to the conversations that have been held in class.

If any questions raise safeguarding concerns, teachers will refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Since RSE incorporates the development of self-esteem and relationships, pupils' learning does not just take place through the taught curriculum but through all aspects of school life including the playground. It is important then that all staff understand they have a responsibility to implement this policy and promote the aims of the school at any time they are dealing with children.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body
The governing body has been consulted on this policy in collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team.

The Co-Headteachers
The Co-Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE (see Appendix 2). A Co-Headteacher also ensures that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The RSE and PSHE Lead
Responsibility for:

- Policy development and review involving staff, governors, parents/carers and relevant partners.
- Implementation and monitoring of the policy, assessing its effectiveness in practice and using this information to inform policy review
- Monitoring and quality assurance of content to ensure continuity and progression within the spiral curriculum
- Co-ordinating training and support for staff as necessary.

Staff
Responsibility for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE
- Monitoring progress

Staff will reply to, and answer, children's questions sensitively and openly. They will ensure that balanced information is provided which will consider the different faiths' views and avoid any negative impressions. Teachers will need to answer questions that may arise

through the direct teaching of sex education, as well as those that may be asked at other times. All questions will be handled sensitively and set within a general context.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Co-Headteachers. Questions which teachers feel uncertain about answering should be discussed with a senior member of staff and answered at a later date. Consideration should be given to religious or cultural factors, and to parents' wishes before questions are answered.

Pupils

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

Parents

The school understands that the primary role in children's RSE lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. In promoting this objective, we:

- Will carry out our statutory duty to consult with parents and governors on the contents of this policy
- Inform parents about the school's RSE policy and practice; this includes informing parents by letter or email before beginning to teach a unit of RSE
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RSE of their child; this includes providing opportunities for parents to view the resources that are used in lessons
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSE in the school
- Acknowledge parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE. However, this rarely happens as, by working in partnership with parents, they recognise the importance of this aspect of their child's education
- Keep a register of any pupils who are removed from lessons and distributed to all teachers involved.

Parents' right to withdraw

As previously stated the RSE curriculum consists of both statutory and non-statutory elements:

- Parents do have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE.
- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from statutory relationships education, health education or the science curriculum.

Parents wanting to withdraw their children are invited to speak to the PSHE/RSE coordinator who will explore the concern of the parents and the possibility of adjusting the programme or approach and will discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. He/she will talk with the parents about the possible negative experiences or feelings that may result from withdrawal of the child and the ways in which these may be minimised. If the parent still wishes to withdraw the child, requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Co-Headteachers. Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in sex education until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education and that child will go to another class for the duration of the lesson.

Confidentiality

Teachers at Howe Green House School conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as outlined in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse or exploitation. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw these to the attention of the designated safeguarding lead. Disclosure of female genital mutilation must be reported to the police (either by the teacher to whom it is disclosed or by the DSL).

Legally, Howe Green House School cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. We aim to ensure that pupils' best interests are maintained and try to encourage pupils to talk to their parents or carers to provide support. If confidentiality has to be broken, pupils are informed first and then supported by the designated teacher throughout the whole process.

SEND

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities will be given the opportunity to fully participate in RSE lessons, and a differentiated program will be provided where necessary, to ensure that all pupils gain a full understanding.

Equalities and Diversity

In accordance with the school's Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Policy, all children will be given full access to the RSE curriculum. Staff will use a variety of teaching and recording methods to endeavour to help all children to reach their potential.

At Howe Green House School, we ensure that the Relationships and Sex Education programme is relevant to all pupils. All pupils learn together about the changes that someone may experience as they go through puberty to help to develop empathy and understanding and to reduce incidences of teasing or stigma.

Our school acknowledges different ethnic, religious and cultural attitudes as well as recognising that pupils may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. These different families are acknowledged through our teaching and the use of resources that promote diversity and inclusion. 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.

The personal beliefs and attitudes of staff delivering RSE will not influence the teaching of the subject in school. 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 do not use RSE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation.

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints or concerns about the Relationships and Sex Education programme at Howe Green House School should be made to the class teacher or PSHE/RSE Coordinator in the first instance. Parents can choose to follow the Howe Green House School complaints procedure if they feel things are not resolved.

Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the PSHE/RSE Coordinator and the Co-Headteachers. Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by the PSHE/RSE Coordinator.

The School Environment

The school will ensure that the whole school environment reflects the values of respect for themselves and others. It will:

- Ensure that posters and displays use positive images and celebrate difference and diversity.
- Use anonymous question boxes or similar items enabling children to have questions and concerns answered privately where needed.
- Ensure that communication between staff and pupils is welcomed and encouraged, and children know how to access members of staff.
- Provide provisions for pubertal girls, including sanitary products
- Ensure that discriminatory behaviour is always challenged in any context.

Equal Opportunities

Howe Green House School is committed to equality of opportunity in all aspects of school life. In RSE this will include:

- Examining and challenging gender stereotyping,
- Celebrating difference and diversity
- Ensuring a programme of Relationships Education that is relevant to all pupils

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Howe Green House Policies:

- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education policy (PSHE)
- Building Better Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Online safety policy
- Equality and Inclusion policy

An overview of the content to be covered in our PSHE and RSE curriculum for Pre-Prep and Prep is available on the school's website. Our Programme of Study, based around the PSHE Association Education Programme was provided to parents as part of our consultation process. Should you wish to view this information, please contact the PSHE/RSE Lead.

Please see below a useful guide for parents on understanding Relationships and Health Education in primary schools.

Understanding Relationships and Health Education - a guide for primary school parents (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Should you like to see the guidance from the government please visit:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education__Relationships_and_Sex_Education__RSE__and_Health_Education.pdf

Reviewed by Education Committee: September 2025

Chair: Mary Sanders

Co-Headteachers: Paul Bailey and Anna Lipani

Next Review: September 2026