Westways Primary School

Relationships and Health Education (RHE) Policy

July 2026
This policy will be reviewed every two years

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Ratified by Co-chair of Governors:	Paul Robinson
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Overview

Department for Education states:
Relationships Education and Health Education are fully statutory at this school under Section 80A of the Education Act 2002. Parents hold no legal right to withdraw children from any statutory element of this curriculum, including lessons covering healthy relationships, physical changes (puberty), or National Curriculum Science.

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance

Why is Relationships and Health Education needed?

Today our pupils are tasked with navigating an increasingly intricate, connected world whereby their online and offline lives are blended. Whilst this offers children many opportunities, it also presents complex risks for which they should be adequately prepared. To support this, pupils need the skills to look after their physical health, protect personal data and seek help should they need it. This policy reflects how our school implements the updated DfE Statutory Guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

In primary schools, ensuring the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online are embedded. This will sit alongside the essential understanding of how to be healthy and being proactive about their personal safety.

Teaching about mental wellbeing is central to these subjects, especially as a priority for parents/carers is their children's happiness. We know that children and young people are increasingly experiencing challenges, including feeling isolated or being the target of harm online. Lessons focus on managing loss, identifying online harms (for example AI deepfakes and financial scams) and understanding who and where they can turn to for support.

What is compulsory in primary schools?

The Relationships Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2025 have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools. Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools.

The content set out in this guidance covers everything that primary schools should teach about relationships and health, including puberty. The national curriculum for science also 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. 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. This content will be addressed as a standalone session during our Growing Up Safe day. The content of these days can be found in the planning overviews for each year group.

Relationships and Health Education objectives

Effective relationship and health education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. We believe that RHE should not be delivered in isolation. It should be firmly rooted within the entire curriculum.

We aim to help pupils develop the skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy and independent lives. The objective of Relationships and Health Education is to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. A successful programme, helps young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood by preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

What is Relationships and Health Education?

Relationships and Health Education is a compulsory subject framework mandated by the UK Department for Education (DfE) for all primary school pupils. It is designed to equip children with the building blocks for healthy, respectful relationships and a strong understanding of physical health and mental wellbeing.

Why teach Relationships and Health Education?

The main aims for teaching RHE in a Primary School:

- To enable young people to understand and respect their bodies, and be able to cope with the changes puberty brings, without fear or confusion; learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages; understanding human sexuality, reproduction, emotions and relationships.
- To help young people develop positive and healthy relationships appropriate to their age, development etc. (respect for self and others).
- To support young people to have positive self-esteem and body image, and to understand the influences and pressures around them.
- To navigate the online world safely.
- To empower them to be safe and safeguarded; learning how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse and successfully ask adults for help.
- To make choices based on an understanding of difference and with an absence of prejudice.

Openness with parents/carers and other stakeholders

We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with our parents/carers through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. We aim to respond sensitively and promptly to any comments or questions from parents/carers as and when they arise. We take seriously any issue that parents/carers raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RHE in the school.

<u>Implementation</u>

Planning and resources

Our school's RHE curriculum is adopted from the Sheffield Local Authority – this was produced and then followed by a city-wide consultation with faith and community groups. The school has worked hard to adapt this recommended curriculum (produced by the Sheffield ILS eLearning Service) so that materials are more tailored to the age, needs and the physical and emotional maturity of our pupils.

Our school is committed to ensuring that pupils are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate, having regard to the age and cultural background of the pupils concerned.

We also ensure that children are protected from accessing unsuitable materials on the internet and have rigorous filtering systems in place in school. Children also learn about online safety as part of their computing curriculum and this helps to further ensure they remain safe online both in and outside school. The school and parents/carers use resources from the National Online Safety Network (https://nationalonlinesafety.com/) to support learning around online safety and safeguarding of children online.

Parental responsibilities

Parents'/Carers' role in the development of their child's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents/Carers are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.

Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their child from some or all elements of Sex Education provided in Year 5 and 6 at school except for those parts included in the statutory curriculum.

The role of the subject leader

The role of the RHE subject leader is to:

- Be a role model and expert in the subject.
- Provide a lead and direction for RHE through school.
- Support and advise colleagues.
- Audit and manage physical resources.
- Keep up-to-date with developments in RHE both locally and nationally.
- Review the way RHE is taught and planned, and plan for improvement.
- Ensure progression and continuity in RHE through school.
- Work collaboratively within the locality of schools to develop and promote RHE.
- Report periodically to Governors (end of year reports).

The role of governors

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body or management committee should also ensure that:

- All pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- The subject is well-led, effectively managed and well planned.
- The quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND.
- Clear information is provided for parents/carers on the subject content and the right to request that their child can be withdrawn from Relationship, Reproduction and Puberty Education.
- The subject is resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

Equality

The governing body has wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010, to ensure that no pupil(s) are discriminated against because of their sex, gender, identity, sexual orientation, disability, educational needs, religion or belief, nationality, ethnic or national origin or home circumstances.

The role of the headteacher

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure that both staff and parents/carers are informed about the school RHE policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the headteacher's responsibility to ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity. The headteacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors on its effectiveness.

The role of teaching staff

The role of the teacher is to follow the school's RHE curriculum and ensure content is taught in line with policy and training.

If a child misses the compulsory lessons due to absence, teachers will ensure that the child has an opportunity to cover the content at a later date.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

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

Visitors

Visitors complement but never substitute or replace planned provision or teach anything that contradicts the content and the spirit of this policy. We will also offer children the opportunity to listen to other visiting speakers such as health workers, road safety, police and religious leaders, who we invite into the school to talk about their role in creating a positive and supportive local community.

Confidentiality

Teachers conduct RHE lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, or indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse, this will be dealt with in line with our safeguarding policy.

Answering difficult questions

Pupils are encouraged to ask questions during RHE lessons. Teachers will respond to questions that are age-appropriate for their pupils. Teachers will remind pupils that personal questions should not be asked. In some lessons, an anonymous question box may be used to allow children to ask questions about potentially embarrassing or sensitive topics. We will also encourage parents/carers 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 the classroom. If a child asks an explicit or difficult question, staff will work with parents/carers to support the pupil. This may be through individual work, discussion with the pupils and parents/carers. If the staff member is concerned, they can refer to the safeguarding team.

Parental rights and procedures for withdrawal of pupils

Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their child from Sex Education lessons but not statutory science lessons or statutory relationships education. If a parent/carer should wish to withdraw their child from the non-statutory Sex Education lesson, a request should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 2 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

Children with SEND

Relationships Education and Health Education must be accessible for all pupils. We ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility. Teachers will use a range of strategies to help all pupils engage in the teaching and learning that may include, small group or individual lessons, additional time, specialist resources or adapting resources to enable access. For more able pupils, teachers will provide additional opportunities to take responsibility, develop leadership skills, think creatively and use their talents for the good of the class or wider community.

Assessment

Pupils will have the opportunity to reflect on their learning within lessons and at the end of each unit. In addition to the pupils' self-assessment, teachers will assess through informal methods such as observations and class or group discussions. Observations may have a particular focus (e.g. children's listening skills).

Early years foundation stage (EYFS)

School relates the RHE aspects of the curriculum to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Curriculum. EYFS follows the Development Matters curriculum which develops a child's personal, emotional and social development; this also includes the use of the NSPCC Talk PANTS resources.

Development of the policy

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, governors and parents/carers. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

- Review: the senior leadership team (SLT) and curriculum leader pulled together all the relevant information including national and local guidance.
- Staff Consultation: all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
- Governor consultation: governors were briefed on the draft policy and curriculum and given a period of time to consult and feedback.
- Review: recommendations from teaching staff and governors were considered and updates to the policy and curriculum implemented prior to parental consultation.
- Parent/Carer consultation: all families will be given the opportunity to look at the draft policy and curriculum overviews and make recommendations.
- Ratification: after consideration of feedback from parents/carers, the policy will be finalised and shared with governors for ratification.

Monitoring and evaluating the policy

Teacher assessment will inform discussion about the successful implementation of the policy. Judgements about the success of the policy can also be made through gathering evidence from school staff about how the policy supports them, from parents/carers and governors about the clarity of the information provided, and from pupils about how RHE provision is meeting their needs.

Monitoring the standards of children's work, planning and quality of teaching in RHE is the responsibility of the subject leader and the SLT. Evaluations will be carried out periodically over the year along with lesson observations.

This RHE policy represents a statement of a whole-school commitment to the teaching of relationships and health education and will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1

Statutory elements of the curriculum outlined by the Department for Education

Relationships Education (Primary)

By the end of primary school:

Families and people who care for me	Pupils should know: ● That families are important for children growing up safe and happy because they can provide love, security and stability. ● The characteristics of safe and happy family life, such as 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 the families of other children, 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 are at the heart of safe and happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up. ● That marriage and civil partnerships represent 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	Pupils should know: ● 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. Pupils should learn skills for developing caring, kind friendships. ● 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 relationships	Pupils should know: ● 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 relationships	Pupils should know: ● 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.
Being safe	Pupils should know: ● 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 its implications 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.

Health and Wellbeing: Primary

The focus in primary school should be on teaching the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. Teachers should be clear that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.

This starts with pupils being taught about the benefits and importance of daily exercise, good nutrition and sufficient sleep, and giving pupils the language and knowledge to understand the normal range of emotions that everyone experiences. This should enable pupils to articulate how they are feeling, develop the language to talk about their bodies, health and emotions and judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate for the situations that they experience.

By the end of primary school:

General wellbeing	Pupils should know: ● The benefits of physical activity, time outdoors, and helping others for health, wellbeing and happiness. Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family, as well as hobbies, interests and community participation. ● The importance of promoting general wellbeing and physical health. ● The range and scale of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) that they might experience in different situations. Pupils should understand that worrying and feeling down are normal, affect everyone at different times, and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition. ● How to recognise feelings and use varied vocabulary to talk about their own and others' feelings. ● How to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate. ● That isolation and loneliness can affect children, and the benefits of seeking support. ● That bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing and how to seek help for themselves or others. ● That change and loss, including bereavement, can provoke a range of feelings, that grief is a natural response to bereavement, and that everyone grieves differently. ● Where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including who in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online). ● That it is common to experience mental health problems, and early support can help.
Wellbeing online	Pupils should know: ● That for almost everyone the internet is an integral part of life. Pupils should be supported to think about positive and negative aspects of the internet. ● Pupils should be supported to discuss how online relationships can complement and support meaningful in-person relationships, but also how they might be in tension, and the reasons why online relationships are unlikely to be a good substitute for high quality in-person relationships, looking at the pros and cons of different ways of using online connection. ● 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. ● How to consider the impact of their online behaviour on others, and how to recognise and display respectful behaviour online. ● Why social media, some apps, computer games and online gaming, including gambling sites, are age restricted.

	● The risks relating to online gaming, video game monetisation, scams, fraud and other financial harms, and that gaming can become addictive. ● How to take a critical approach to what they see and read online and make responsible decisions about which content, including content on social media and apps, is appropriate for them. ● That abuse, bullying and harassment can take place online and that this can impact wellbeing. How to seek support from trusted adults. ● How to understand the information they find online, including from search engines, and know how information is selected and targeted. ● That they have rights in relation to sharing personal data, privacy and consent. ● Where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online.
Physical health and fitness	Pupils should know: ● The characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle. ● The importance of building regular physical activity into daily and weekly routines and how to achieve this; for example, walking or cycling to school, a daily active mile or other forms of regular, moderate and/or vigorous physical activity. ● The risks associated with an inactive lifestyle, including obesity. ● How and when to seek support including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health.
Healthy eating	Pupils should know: ● What constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content). ● Understanding the importance of a healthy relationship with food. ● The principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals. ● The characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health)
Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping	Pupils should know: ● The facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, vaping, alcohol use and drug-taking. This should include the risks of nicotine addiction, which are also caused by other nicotine products such as nicotine pouches.
Health protection and prevention	Pupils should know: ● How to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss, or unexplained changes to the body. ● About safe and unsafe exposure to the sun, and how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer. ● The importance of sufficient good quality sleep for health, the amount of sleep recommended for their age, and practical steps for improving sleep, such as not using screens in the bedroom. The impact of poor sleep on weight, mood and ability to learn. ● About dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, cleaning between teeth, and regular checkups at the dentist. ● About personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and treated, and the importance of handwashing. ● The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination and immunisation. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils.
Basic first aid	Pupils should know: ● How to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary, including the importance of reporting incidents rather than filming them. ● Concepts of basic first aid, for example dealing with common injuries and ailments, including head injuries.
Developing bodies	Pupils should know:

	● About growth and other ways the body can change and develop, particularly during adolescence. This topic should include the human lifecycle, and puberty should be discussed as a stage in this process. ● The correct names of body parts, including the penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples. Pupils should understand that all of these parts of the body are private and have skills to understand and express their own boundaries around these body parts. ● The facts about the menstrual cycle, including physical and emotional changes, whilst the average age of the onset of menstruation is twelve, periods can start at eight, so covering this topic before girls' periods start will help them understand what to expect and avoid distress.

Year 5 and Year 6 (Parents/Carers) have the right to withdraw	
Sex Education	● Pupils can describe fertilisation through sexual intercourse. ● Pupils can explain how a baby is made and that different people use different methods to do this. ● The different types of birth including natural birth and a caesarean section. ● Pupils can describe what consent means. ● Pupils know the age of consent.

Appendix 2

Parents'/Carers' right to withdraw

Parents/Carers do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education. Parents/Carers do have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of Sex Education within RHE.

Specifically, this means parents may choose to withdraw their children from the non-statutory aspects of the Year 5 and 6 RHE curriculum. Resources for this lesson can be made available for parents/carers to view in order to support their decision making process.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form below and addressed to the headteacher. Alternative work will be given to pupils who withdraw from Sex Education.

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/CARER			
Name of child		**Class**	
Name of parent/carer		**Date**	
Reason for withdrawing from Sex Education within Relationships and Health Education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent/Carer signature			
TO BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL			
Agreed actions from discussion with parent/carer			
Headteacher signature			