

# Hartismere School



## Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy

### Policy No.3

1. **Introduction and Statutory Requirements:** This policy sets out Hartismere’s commitment to high-quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), in line with statutory requirements under the Department for Education statutory RSHE guidance (effective from September 2026). Hartismere School aims to provide the learning experiences that support pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development — preparing them for adult life and enabling them to form healthy, respectful relationships. It acknowledges that education on matters affecting sexual and relationship issues is part of achieving this aim. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education are taught as part of the School’s RSHE programme. Copies of this policy have been made available to all concerned parties including the LA, teachers and parents. In drawing up the School’s policy due regard has been given to:

- consultation with parents, governors, teachers, the school nurse and others in the local community;
- the issues of content, organisation, methodology, resources, outside speakers, the explicitness and presentation of their material (including the presence or intervention of teachers as appropriate);
- encouraging pupils to have regard to moral considerations and to appreciate the value of a stable family life, self-restraint, dignity, respect and to behave responsibly in sexual matters.

2. **Curriculum and Statutory Requirements:** The new DfE statutory requirements separate RSHE into “Relationship and Sex Education” (RSE) and “Health and Wellbeing”.

According to the new DfE statutory requirements, the “Relationship and Sex Education” (RSE) element of RSHE should provide young people with the information they need to develop healthy, safe and nurturing relationships of all kinds. This should include the knowledge they need in later life to keep themselves and others safe, and how to avoid sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies. The guidance states that effective RSE should focus on respect for oneself and others and does not encourage or normalise early sexual experimentation. By supporting confidence and self-esteem, RSE will enable young people to make their own choices about whether or when to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, once they reach the age of consent, and to resist pressure to have sex. The DfE’s statutory requirements mean schools must teach as part of their RSE curriculum content on families; respectful relationships; online safety and awareness; being safe; intimate and sexual relationships; and sexual health.

“Health and Wellbeing” education should support pupils to understand their changing bodies and their feelings, how to protect their own health and wellbeing, and when a physical or mental health issue requires attention. Topics covered under the DfE statutory requirements include mental wellbeing; wellbeing online; physical health and fitness; healthy eating; drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping; health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system; personal safety; basic first aid; and developing bodies.

The full statutory guidance document is available on the DfE website at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68b8499e11b4ded2da19fd92/Relatio>

[nships education relationships and sex education and health education - statutory guidance.pdf](#). The curriculum delivered at Hartismere can be viewed under the “Curriculum” section on the school website, available at: <https://apps.hartismere.com/programmes/>. At Hartismere, all students from year 7 to year 11 receive a fortnightly single period RSHE lesson (some students in year 10 and year 11 may be removed from these lessons for a set period of time to take part in English or Maths interventions). Hartismere’s curriculum is a spiral curriculum, where similar topics are covered year on year but in greater depth as students mature. It has been designed by the RSHE Coordinator (Mrs C Wootton), taking into account the DfE requirements and the local context of our school. It is regularly audited by an external expert curriculum reviewer, and both students and teachers have been consulted as part of the curriculum review in 2026. Parents can request to view curriculum materials by contacting the RSHE Coordinator (Mrs C Wootton, [cwo@hartismere.com](mailto:cwo@hartismere.com)).

3. **Specific Aims:** The following aims reflect those of the School and the general aims of the Cross-Curricular Themes, and show how RSHE is delivered within the context of a moral framework. The full programme of study is available to view on the school website. We will provide a broad and balanced programme of RSHE which:
  - 3.1. offers full entitlement and access for all including pupils with Special Needs;
  - 3.2. operates in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect so as to encourage pupils to put forward and explore their ideas;
  - 3.3. explores moral and sexual issues and values to endow the pupils with positive proactive attitudes, patterns of behaviour, lifestyles, values, communication and decision making skills with respect to sexuality and personal relationships. For example (but not limited to):
    - those appropriate to informed decision-making and evaluation of the socio-economic/cultural influences on sexual behaviour;
    - non-exploitation, commitment and trust in sexual relationships;
    - an understanding that both sexes have responsibilities in sexual matters;
    - the skills to identify, avoid, resist and report unwanted sexual experience.
  - 3.4. fosters self-esteem, self-awareness and a sense of moral responsibility;
  - 3.5. supports students to:
    - understand the characteristics of healthy, respectful relationships (including friendships, intimate relationships and family relationships);
    - develop knowledge of human sexuality, sexual health, consent, and legal issues;
    - understand how to manage risks in relationships and online environments;
    - respect diversity in sexual orientation, gender identity, cultures and family structures;
    - recognise unhealthy and abusive behaviours and know how to seek help and support.
4. **Roles and Responsibilities:** The Governing Body ensures this policy meets statutory requirements and is reviewed regularly. The Headteachers (Ms S Gray and Mr G Luxton) ensure policy implementation, staff training and resource allocation. The RSHE Coordinator (Mrs C Wootton) oversees curriculum planning, evaluation,

continuity and progression. All classroom teachers may deliver RSHE content and ensure inclusive practice, supported with ongoing internal training and professional development. All teachers involved in this work do not necessarily have to be 'experts' on the issues concerned. However, they do require sensitivity to the needs of the group, an ability to deal with questions openly/honestly and a preparedness to refer to more expert advice if necessary.

5. **The Role of Safe and Effective Practice:** All teaching staff in RSHE are supported by the RSHE coordinator (Mrs C Wootton) with professional development sessions throughout the academic year. Teachers are taught to ensure a safe learning environment by outlining classroom expectations at the start of the year with each class, including giving the opportunity to design a “class agreement” where the students contribute to the rules of the classroom as all agree to behavioural expectations such as mutual respect and confidentiality in stories and/or questions. Teachers are issued with clear guidelines for delivering RSHE lessons to safeguard both themselves and their students, taking into consideration the PSHE Association’s guidance for best practice.
6. **Offering Advice:** The Governors and staff believe that the School's function is to provide a general education about sexual matters and issues and not to offer individual advice, information or counselling on aspects of sexual behaviour and contraception - however sources of professional information and advice will be identified when appropriate. If the offering of outside expert advice is not taken up, then a teacher may only give such advice after receiving written permission from the Headteachers and the parents/guardians - clearly this would not be done if the pupil did not wish it. Advice does not legally require consent but the following procedure protects the teacher and the pupil, and acknowledges that teachers may not be qualified to give the required advice.
  - 6.1. **Staff cannot:**
    - give personal advice or counselling on sexual matters (including contraception) to a pupil (either individually or within a group).
  - 6.2. **Staff can:**
    - provide pupils with education and information about where and from whom they can receive confidential sexual advice and treatment, e.g. school nurse, their GP or Brook Advisory Centre. This is not the provision of sex education, but merely the imparting of factual information as to where advice, counselling (and treatment) can lawfully be obtained. Appointments to see the nurse can be arranged by the pupil through the form tutor or Head of Year.
7. **Explicit Questions:** We will provide learning experiences appropriate to ensuring that students are healthy, safe and enjoy a sense of well-being. We will ensure that discussions take place in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect so as to encourage pupils to put forward and explore their ideas. In doing so it is likely that pupils may need to ask explicit questions. However with our duty of care under Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) in mind any element of the RSHE programme that is likely to lead to pupils asking explicit questions relating to sexual behaviour must be preceded by the teacher explaining the protocols surrounding:

- 7.1. Confidentiality (see Section 8)
- 7.2. The need to frame questions in ways that are not personal, do not in their nature identify individuals and which deal with matters of fact
- 7.3. The need to frame questions in ways that are sensitive and respectful

It is not appropriate to deal with a pupil's explicit questions e.g. questions on oral and anal sex in front of the whole class when it is clearly about the pupil who is asking it rather than a more general question. In practice this means that teachers have to say 'I'm sorry but the School Policy and legislation does not allow me to answer that question'. The teacher may deem it appropriate to discuss the child's question with their parents, the Headteachers, DSL and/or the Wellbeing Team - a decision may then be taken on how best to deal with it (see Section 8). Answers to the 'questions in a box' approach must only be given after very careful screening of the questions.

8. **Safeguarding and Confidentiality:** Teachers are aware that effective RSHE delivery can at times lead to an increased chance of being informed of disclosure of a child protection issue. Teachers will follow school safeguarding policies if a pupil discloses information indicating risk of harm. In RSHE lessons, staff will not provide pupils with information beyond what is appropriate or lawful for their age and maturity. Having considered all available advice and guidance, the Governors and Headteachers state that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at any sort of risk or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) via the schools' usual procedure (MyConcern). Confidentiality must not be promised to any student making a safeguarding disclosure (it is good practice for teachers to explain this to students when setting up class expectations at the start of the year). All information relating to the disclosure must be passed to the DSL as quickly as possible, and must not be shared beyond that to any other colleagues, friends or family unless necessary for the welfare of the child.

9. **The division between biological and non biological aspects of sex education.**

- 9.1. The division between biological and non biological aspects of sexual behaviour has been decided upon, and is indicated by the contribution to the Sex Education Programme made by the Science Department. The themes of parenting, relationships and the ethical and moral considerations of sex education are covered mostly within the timetabled RSHE lessons.
- 9.2. The Science Department deals only with the biological aspects of human sexual behaviour in its timetabled lessons. The separate but strategically coordinated RSHE course deals with:
  - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV);
  - any other sexually transmitted infections and diseases (STIs & STDs);
  - aspects of human sexual behaviour, other than biological aspects.

N.B. It is the work covered in timetabled RSHE lessons and non science lessons upon which parents can exercise their right to withdraw their child - see below.

## **10. Withdrawing pupils from the Sex Education Programme**

- 10.1 Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSHE, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education.
- 10.2 Parents are asked to contact the school in writing to request that their child is withdrawn from the sex education programme. They do not have to give reasons for withdrawal, but we respectfully invite them to do so - sometimes we can then resolve misunderstandings. Parents are reminded about the benefits of receiving this important education, as well as any detrimental effects of being excluded. Once a parent's request to withdraw is made, that request must be complied with until revoked by the parent.
- 10.3 A full audit of the RSHE programme has shown that issues such as overpopulation, birth control and other sexual matters are met in a minor way in subjects such as Geography and Religious Studies. However, as any discussion is limited and set within the context of the other subject concerned, it does not constitute part of the Sex Education Programme.

## **11. Using Visiting Speakers and others:**

- 11.1 We believe that most of the RSHE programme is best discussed openly with teachers who are known and trusted by the pupils. However visitors such as nurses, family planning or sexual health workers, can greatly enhance the quality of the provision as long as they are used in addition to, not instead of a planned programme of sex education. N.B. health professionals are able to offer young people confidentiality and can provide a link between the School and support services.
- 11.2 After gaining approval from the Headteachers for the visit the organiser will make the visitor aware of the ethos of the School and the manner of delivery of the RSHE programme.
- 11.3 Care will be taken to provide the visitor, well in advance of the visit, with a copy of this policy document.
- 11.4 Visitors will be given advance notice of the composition of the audience/target group and an idea of how their contribution fits into the scheme of work.
- 11.5 In order to inform the visitor of the precise requirements of a group it is advisable for the group to draw up questions in advance and these should be forwarded to the visitor. This will involve the pupils in the visit and will make the experience more relevant for them - it also facilitates planning.
- 11.6 As part of joint planning between the visitor and the visit organiser the following issues must be considered:
  - the degree of explicitness of the content and presentation;
  - the teaching and/or support staff who will accompany the visitor
  - the extent of participation of staff in the visitors activities
  - how will the visitor be prepared for the visit
  - how will the visit be built upon and followed up
- 11.7 Reception will be informed of the date and name of the visitor.
- 11.8 Where applicable, refreshments should be arranged with the catering staff.
- 11.9 The visitor should be welcomed at the main door (usually by a pupil from the form on duty) and escorted to the office.

- 11.10 At the reception the visitor will 'sign in', wear a visitor's lanyard and be escorted to the appropriate venue.
- 11.11 At the end of the session a vote of thanks should be given by a pupil and the visitor escorted to reception before the pupils are dismissed.
- 11.12 After the visit the visitor will sign out, return the visitor's lanyard and exit.
- 11.13 A written acknowledgement of their contribution should be sent to the visitor.

## **12. Equal Opportunities Issues and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

- 12.1 The curriculum and its delivery is designed to be sensitive to the religious and cultural views of our students; the experiences of LGBT pupils and those with LGBT family members; and the needs of all pupils, with their diverse experiences, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- 12.2 The nature of work undertaken must be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. As pupils mature and develop at different rates, the RSHE is a 'spiral system' in as much as key concepts are revisited several times throughout the programme. This allows for reinforcement as well as the differentiated stages of pupil maturity.
- 12.3 Children with SEND may need more help than others in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up; they may also need more help in learning what sorts of behaviour are and are not acceptable, and in being warned and prepared against abuse by others. We adapt RSHE content and delivery for pupils with SEND to ensure they can access and understand the curriculum effectively, referring to Hartismere's SEND Policy which is available to view on the school website.

- 13. Assessment and Evaluation:** RSHE is assessed informally at Hartismere. Teachers use formative assessment strategies in the classroom to assess students' learning and progress. At the end of each lesson students are asked to self-assess their learning with a written prompt which is completed in their workbooklets; teachers can then circulate the classroom and lead discussions based on this self-reflection. At the end of each term, students are taken to a computer room to complete an online quiz-type assessment, which the RSHE coordinator can use to assess student understanding and progress overall.

## **14. Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing RSHE**

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. Specifically important to the RSHE programme are:

- pupil feedback;
- staff review and feedback, particularly at pastoral meetings;
- regular liaison with the safeguarding team;
- parental feedback.