



William Henry Smith School and Sixth Form

Personal, Social Health Education Policy (PSHE), including Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

Policy Details

Status:	In-house
Frequency of review:	Annually
Lead member of staff:	Karl Adamski
Responsibility of:	Amy Carr
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Context:

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is an important and necessary part of all students' education. All schools should teach RSHE/PSHE, drawing on good practice, and this expectation is outlined in the introduction to the new national curriculum.

It is an expectation that schools use their RSHE/PSHE education programme to equip students with a sound understanding of risk and with the knowledge and skills necessary to make safe and informed decisions. It is our aim to use RSHE/PSHE education to build, where appropriate, on the statutory content outlined in the national curriculum, the school curriculum and in statutory guidance on drug education, financial education, relationship and sex education (RSE) and the importance of physical activity and diet for a healthy lifestyle.

Safeguarding and safety are at the core of the PSHE and RSHE curriculum at The William Henry Smith School & Sixth Form.

All PSHE and RSHE provision is underpinned by a clear safeguarding framework that prioritises students' physical safety, emotional wellbeing, online safety and protection from harm. The curriculum is designed not only to inform students, but to equip them with the knowledge, language, confidence and trusted routes to disclosure needed to keep themselves and others safe.

Safeguarding considerations inform curriculum content, teaching approaches, staff training, external visitors, and responses to student disclosures. PSHE and RSHE play a vital preventative role in helping students recognise unsafe situations, understand consent and boundaries, identify abuse and exploitation (including online), and seek help appropriately.

All the compulsory subject content will be age and developmentally appropriate. All curriculum materials and objectives are always adapted to meet the needs of our individual students.

It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of students and parents/carers, while always aiming to provide students with the knowledge they need of the law.

Relationships (RSHE) is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. This is a statutory requirement and is covered in its own section within this policy.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education) — current edition (Sept 2024) and subsequent Part One guidance (2025) on staff responsibilities and Part Five on child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- DfE Relationships, Sex and Health Education statutory guidance (July 2025) — schools must have regard to this guidance and prepare for implementation from 1 September 2026.
- Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education (2019) (as updated by the DfE 2025 guidance)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

1.0 Introduction

At The William Henry Smith School & Sixth Form, we believe that Personal, Social and Health education (PSHE) and Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) explicitly reflect and are reflected in the values and ethos of our school. Close collaboration, compassionate curiosity, unwavering integrity, visionary thinking and empowering communities underpins the core practice behind our curriculum delivery. We believe that all our students should have the opportunity to develop as individuals in a wider society. We encourage our students to be aware of themselves physically, emotionally, socially and sexually and show an awareness of their relationships with others; in adopting this approach we hope to build positive self-esteem. We believe our students need opportunities to develop personal autonomy, to make choices and decisions, and to have an opportunity to make a difference by their individual or collective actions. We also feel that it is important, where possible, to help our students respect the views of others. We have therefore adopted a whole-school approach to the delivery of PSHE and RSHE because many aspects of school life influence students' personal and social development.

At The William Henry Smith School & Sixth Form, we work to promote and develop a whole school ethos, an environment and curriculum that enables students to recognise personal qualities, build on their achievements, fulfil their potential, and manage their health and wellbeing. We are increasingly concerned with promoting the understanding of sexual harassment and the importance of consent and acknowledging the importance of promoting an understanding of safeguarding and online risks, as outlined in KCSIE Part 5 (child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment) and the DfE sexual violence and harassment advice (Sep 2021). Lessons where this is covered will ensure sexual harassment, consent, online harms and pornography harms are delivered in an age-appropriate way.

These issues are addressed within the whole curriculum and in terms of cross-curricular themes across the 24-hour curriculum, which include social care experiences and extended day places. Our school recognises and embraces the significant updates introduced in the Department for Education's revised RSHE statutory guidance published in July 2025, ahead of full implementation in September 2026. The new guidance places a stronger emphasis on addressing misogyny and violence against women and girls, expands expectations around personal safety education—including risks related to roads, railways, water and public spaces—and acknowledges emerging safeguarding concerns linked to rapid technological change such as AI-generated deepfakes and harmful online influencers. It also strengthens requirements relating to mental health, including grief and loneliness, and highlights the importance of recognising diverse family structures. In line with this updated framework, our curriculum continues to prioritise safeguarding, inclusivity, and age-appropriate learning, while supporting teacher expertise and maintaining clear communication with parents and carers

2.0 Aims of RSHE/PSHE

- To develop confidence and responsibility
- To prepare students to play an active role as citizens
- To develop a healthy, safer lifestyle
- To develop good relationships and respect the differences between people

- To safeguard students by developing their understanding of risk, personal safety, healthy boundaries, consent and how to seek help when they feel unsafe or concerned about themselves or others.

3.0 Intent

At The William Henry Smith School & Sixth Form, we believe that Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) enables children to be able to understand what good relationships are like and how to keep them; know how our bodies change and feel as we grow and marvel in the awe and wonder of the creation of new life and how to nurture emotional and physical health. RSHE is the underpinning of everything we do at The William Henry Smith School & Sixth Form. Good relationships are fundamental to our ethos and our success in being a happy, caring and safe school. RSHE/PSHE is lifelong learning about relationships, emotions, looking after ourselves, different families, sex, sexuality, sexual health and the importance of informed consent. We want our students to be confident in independent life skills, to feel safe and able when they leave our care. We promote the safe inclusion of LGBTQ+ community, preventing sexual harassment and misogyny as required curriculum objectives in the updated RSHE guidance.

We aim for the children in our school to acquire the appropriate knowledge, develop their skills and form positive beliefs, values, and attitudes. RSHE/PSHE has a key part to play in the personal, social, moral, and spiritual development of young people. No matter what our children's starting points, we aim to ensure that all our young people leave us with the skills to build an independent, happy and safe future. Our aim is to help our children become confident and independent young people, by providing them with the appropriate skills and knowledge and by using a robust and collaborative approach to learning.

Safeguarding is central to the intent of our PSHE and RSHE curriculum. Learning is deliberately sequenced to support students to recognise unsafe behaviours, understand the impact of abuse, harassment and exploitation, and develop the confidence and vocabulary to disclose concerns. This includes explicit teaching around consent, peer-on-peer abuse, misogyny, online risks, coercion and power imbalance, delivered in an age-appropriate and trauma-informed way.

4.0 Implementation

We achieve this by offering a broad and balanced curriculum. Our curriculum will reflect the statutory content categories as outlined in the updated July 2025 guidance from the Department for Education. Using planning and guidance from the PSHE Association, we will ensure statutory changes will be implemented by September 2026. RSHE/PSHE materials and lesson plans will be made available to parents on request and key resources published on the website in advance.

Our students are provided with two discreet RSHE/PSHE sessions weekly, as a non-negotiable on our timetable. We use the PSHE Association programme of study, a spiral curriculum which we adapt to the needs of our students. The mapping of RSHE/PSHE using these resources supports our approach to adaptive practice. Over learning is an important part of our delivery, to make sure students can revisit and build on key learning objectives. The PSHE Association resources are adapted to the needs of our students where needed, while ensuring learning objectives are covered and age-appropriate knowledge is taught in a way that meets the needs of our students. It is key our students have the knowledge to understand what is going on around them and the understanding of what is happening to their bodies. Supporting materials are also threaded throughout the curriculum. Our focus for our

students is to ensure that have had opportunities to explore the key aspects of RSHE/PSHE, as set out in our curriculum map, to give them the right stepping stones to an age-appropriate curriculum study. High quality resources support the delivery of our curriculum and are regularly reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of our students. Our curriculum content is carefully chosen to ensure students can access education they may have previously missed, but also build on skills they learn with us at WHSS. As well as this discreet teaching of both PSHE and statutory RSHE, our students also experience quality RSHE/PSHE through key working, QoL sessions, weekend provision, our 24-hour curriculum, healthy lifestyles and accredited OCR life and living skills. Specific RSHE related issues are also supported by Big Talk Education, who have worked with us at WHSS for several years. Big Talk education meet frequently with the RSHE/PSHE lead to ensure external content aligns to statutory guidance. Sessions run by Big Talk complement our growing and changing topics, ensuring that all children receive quality assured, relationships and sex education to help to keep them healthy and safe. All external visitors delivering RSHE content are subject to appropriate safeguarding checks and procedures. Content is quality assured in advance, aligned to statutory guidance, and delivered in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection policies. All PSHE and RSHE lessons are delivered within a clear safeguarding framework. Staff establish ground rules, reinforce respectful language, and remind students of appropriate boundaries and support routes at the start of sensitive learning. Teaching staff remain alert to signs of distress or disclosure, and follow the school's safeguarding procedures immediately where concerns arise. Where lessons may elicit strong emotional responses, additional support from keyworkers, therapists or safeguarding staff is planned in advance or made available immediately following sessions.

By the time our children leave our school they will:

- be able to approach a range of real life situations and apply their skills and attributes to help navigate themselves through modern life
- be on their way to becoming healthy, open minded, respectful, socially and morally responsible, active members of society
- appreciate difference and diversity
- recognise and apply the British Values of Democracy, Tolerance, Mutual respect, Rule of law and Liberty
- be able to understand and manage their emotions
- be able to look after their mental health and well-being
- be able to develop positive, healthy relationships with their peers both now and in the future
- understand the physical aspects involved in RSHE at an age appropriate level, adapted to meet the needs of our children
- have respect for themselves and others
- have a positive self-esteem.
- be able to recognise when situations, relationships or behaviours are unsafe or harmful
- know how to report concerns, seek help and access trusted adults and services when needed

5.0 Sex and Relationship Education

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

Equality Act 2010

DfE (last updated 2024) 'Keeping children safe in education'

DfE (2025) 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education'- To be implemented by September 2026.

DfE (2015) 'National curriculum in England: science programmes of study'

Children and Social Work Act 2017

RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity. RSHE is a key safeguarding subject that supports students to understand consent, bodily autonomy, exploitation, abuse and sexual harm, and to know how to protect themselves and others.

The aims of Relationships, Sex and Health Education at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Provide students with the understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence, and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Promote the importance in understanding consent
- Ensure students understand sexual harassment.
- recognising abusive, exploitative or coercive behaviour, including online
- understanding how and where to report safeguarding concerns

Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RSHE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Students will be taught age- appropriate information where possible to ensure they are aware of what is happening to them and others around them. This will always be taught in a way which meets the needs and developmental stage of our students.

It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

The school has an integrated approach to RSHE. Alongside two discreet taught weekly sessions in the classroom, care staff, keyworkers, therapists, and the school nurse work collaboratively to identify need and plan support and intervention for individual students.

Sex Education will begin to be taught at stage 6 (how a baby is made). This is then covered and built upon throughout our curriculum up to stage 11.

Across all Key Stages, students will be supported with developing the following skills:

- Communication, including how to manage changing relationships and emotions
- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- Assertiveness
- Seeking help and support when required
- Informed decision-making
- Self-respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and maximising a healthy lifestyle
- Managing conflict
- Discussion and group work.

Parents/Carers will be informed when topics such as Growing and Changing are being covered. Parents/Carers are welcome to contact the school for further information on the RSHE/PSHE curriculum.

The PSHE and RSHE subject lead is responsible for:

- Overseeing the delivery of RSE and health education.
- Working closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the curriculum compliments, and does not duplicate, the content covered in national curriculum subjects.
- Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate and of high-quality, while meeting the needs of our students.
- Reviewing changes to the RSHE/PSHE curriculum and advising on their implementation.
- Monitoring the learning and teaching of RSHE/PSHE, providing support to staff where necessary.
- Ensuring the continuity and progression between each year group.
- Helping to develop colleagues' expertise in the subject.
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the curriculum.
- Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to RSHE/PSHE.
- Leading staff meetings and ensuring all members of staff involved in the curriculum have received the appropriate training.
- Organising, providing and monitoring CPD opportunities in the subject.

All Subject teachers are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with, and promoting, this policy
- Delivering RSHE/PSHE in a sensitive way and that is of a high-quality and appropriate for each year group.
- Ensuring they do not express personal views or beliefs when delivering the curriculum.
- Planning lessons effectively, ensuring a range of appropriate teaching methods and resources are used to cover the content.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE/PSHE
- Liaising with the SENCO about identifying and responding to the individual needs of all students
- Liaising with the RSHE/PSHE subject leader about key topics, resources and support for individual students
- Monitoring student progress in RSHE/PSHE.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the teaching of RSHE/PSHE to the RSHE/PSHE subject leader or a member of the Leadership Team
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that students may make as a result of the subject content to the DSL.
- maintaining a clear focus on safeguarding when delivering PSHE and RSHE content
- responding appropriately and promptly to any disclosures, concerns or indicators of harm in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures

- Responding appropriately to students whose parents have requested to withdraw them from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSHE, by providing them with alternative education opportunities.

In line with the above, teachers who will be delivering relationships, sex and health education are outlined below:

Amy Carr - Subject Lead

Helen Illingworth
Benjamin Asquith
James Hind
Michelle Bedford
Katie Arey
Jordan Boyce
Hollie Wilinski
Adele Greenleaf
Brogan Wightman
Siobhan Roe
Theresa Clark

6.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Schools are required to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Further guidance is available for schools in The Equality Act 2010 and schools' advice.

Schools should pay particular attention to the Public sector equality duty (PSED) (s.149 of the Equality Act). Under the provisions of the Equality Act; schools must not unlawfully discriminate against students because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership 11, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics).

Preventative PSHE education that teaches acceptance, tolerance and empathy as well as strategies to respond appropriately to bullying, prejudice and discrimination plays an important part.

At The William Henry Smith School & Sixth Form we actively promote high levels of respect for each other, are supportive of one another's wellbeing and recognise self-control. Our ethos and PSHE education helps our students to know how they can support each other, manage their own behaviour and get help and support for themselves or their friends when they need it.

Our RSHE/PSHE curriculum promotes and reflects our values of respect, equality and cooperation. Students learn to recognise, develop and communicate their qualities, skills and attitudes. As they explore similarities and differences between people and discuss social and moral dilemmas, they learn to deal with challenges and accommodate diversity in all its forms.

Safeguarding and inclusion are intrinsically linked. The PSHE and RSHE curriculum provides a safe space for all students to explore identity, relationships and wellbeing, while ensuring their safety, dignity and right to protection from harm are upheld at all times.

The world is full of complex and sometimes conflicting values. Personal well-being helps students explore this complexity and reflect on and clarify their own values and attitudes. They identify and articulate feelings and emotions, learn to manage new or difficult situations positively and form and maintain effective relationships with a wide range of people. Personal well-being makes a major contribution to the promotion of personal development.

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated sources of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. The Act uses the term “protected characteristics” to refer to aspects of a person’s identity. Treating a person less favourably because they have one or more of these characteristics would be unlawful. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

The Act defines a number of types of unlawful behaviour, including:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Failing to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students or staff
- Discrimination arising from disability
- Harassment related to a protected characteristic
- Victimisation of someone because they have made, or helped with, a complaint about discrimination.

We promote the needs and interests of all students, irrespective of gender, culture, ability or aptitude by creating an inclusive, safe learning environment. Teaching will take into account the ability, age-readiness and cultural background of students in order that all students can access the RSHE/PSHE curriculum. The school will respond to requests from pupils who are questioning their gender identity using a child-centred safeguarding approach. Requests relating to names, pronouns, single-sex spaces, uniform and records will be considered on a case-by-case basis with the pupil and, where appropriate, their parents/carers and relevant professionals. The school will follow the principles in the DfE non-statutory guidance on Gender-questioning children (Dec 2023) to ensure that decisions balance safeguarding, equality, and the child’s welfare. Staff must not disclose a pupil’s gender identity to others (including parents) without the pupil’s consent unless there is a safeguarding reason to do so.

7.0 Working with parents/carers

All schools should work closely with parents/carers when planning and delivering these subjects. Schools should ensure that parents/carers know what will be taught and when.

All schools must have in place a written policy for RSHE. Schools must consult parents/carers in developing and reviewing their policy.

Schools should ensure that the policy meets the needs of students and parents and reflects the community they serve.

We believe that the successful teaching of RSHE involves parents/carers and schools working together. We also believe that parents/carers can play an important role in the RSHE of their children through exploring discussions at home that have taken place in school.

Our policy has been shared with parents and carers, who have been invited to provide feedback.

We continually work with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of what we teach and when through the following methods:

- Accessible media and materials for parents and carers made available on the school website
- Inductions to the school – parents/carers informed of the school's PSHE and RSHE provision upon entry
- Sharing copies of the policy via direct mail, emails and the school website
- Letters to parents/carers giving information about when RSHE will be delivered and when certain classes (including classes that involve sex education) will take place

If parents/carers have any concerns or special circumstances the school should be aware of or would like any further information about the curriculum they are free to approach the school Principal to discuss.

We may share examples of some of the key resources we use with parents/carers to reassure them of the content and to enable them to continue the conversations started in class at home.

Safeguarding underpins our communication with parents and carers about PSHE and RSHE. Where curriculum content relates to personal safety, online risks or harmful behaviours, parents and carers are supported to continue safety-focused conversations at home.

Parental right to request their child be excused from sex education

All schools should work closely with parents and clearly communicate the fact that parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSHE.

As outlined with the Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSHE.

Parents may request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education that is part of statutory RSE; they do not have the right to withdraw from relationships education or health education.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of Relationships Education, it is our aim to encourage parents to see the value of RSHE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice.

Should a parent/carer decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the Head of School to discuss their concerns. The Head of School will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum. If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the Head of School in writing, and the school will keep a record of this.

Where a child has been withdrawn from sexual education sessions, alternative lesson content on Health and Wellbeing will be taught to support SEMH needs where appropriate.

Except in exceptional circumstances, we will respect the parents' request to withdraw their child 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 during one of those terms.

We will remind parents/carers annually that the request to withdraw is still in place and invite them to confirm whether they still want it.

8.0 Links to other policies

Subject Policies

Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion

School visits

Careers Education, Information and
Guidance

Child Protection Policy

Drugs

Anti-bullying Policy

Healthy School Policy