

HEBBURN

Comprehensive School



WORK HARD | BE KIND | ASPIRE

Relationship and Sex and Health Education Policy

Review Period	Recommended Annually		
Date of next review	Spring Term 2026	Author	A Phillips
Type of Policy	Statutory	Approval Status	Governing Body, Individual Governor or Head Teacher
Signed by:			
Head Teacher	Mr D Thompson	Date:	
Chair of Governors	Mr G Thompson	Date:	

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Statement of Intent

At Hebburn Comprehensive School, we understand the importance of educating pupils about sex, relationships and their health, for them to make responsible and well-informed decisions in their lives.

The teaching of RSE and health education can help to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. It allows us to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and in the wider society.

We have an obligation to provide pupils with high-quality, evidence and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects. This policy outlines how the school's RSE and health education curriculum will be organised and delivered, to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils.

1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- 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
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Help pupils make informed choices
- To inform pupils of how and when to seek support and guidance

2. Legal Framework

As a maintained secondary school, we must provide RSE to all pupils as per the Children and Social work act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

At Hebburn Comprehensive School we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

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

- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2019) 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education'
- DfE (2021) 'Teaching about relationships, sex and health'
- DfE (2015) 'National curriculum in England: science programmes of study'
- DfE (2019) 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education'
- DfE (2021) 'Teaching about relationships, sex and health'
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour and Rewards Policy
- SEND Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- Cyberbullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Preventing Extremism and radicalisation Policy

3. Policy Development

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

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to comment on this policy and the curriculum offer via email
4. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified.

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

- All schools providing secondary education are required to deliver statutory RSE and all state funded schools are required to deliver health education.
For the purpose of this policy, “**RSHE**” is used to refer to the overall programme of relationships, sex and health education.
- For the purpose of this policy, “**relationships and sex education (RSE)**” is defined as teaching pupils about developing healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, and helping them to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.

- For the purpose of this policy, “**health education**” is defined as teaching pupils about how they can make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, and how physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked.
- The RSE and health education curriculum will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff.
- The curriculum will proactively address issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on pupil’s physical, emotional and sexual development.
- RSE and health education will be delivered in a non-judgemental, age-appropriate, factual and inclusive way that allows pupils to ask questions in a safe environment.
- Teaching of the curriculum reflects requirements set out in law, particularly in the Equality Act 2010, so that pupils understand what the law does and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of the decisions they make.
- All teaching and resources are assessed by the RSE and PHSE subject leader to ensure they are appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils, are sensitive to their religious backgrounds and meet the needs of any SEND, if applicable.
- Throughout every year group, appropriate diagrams, videos, books, games, discussion and practical activities will be used to assist learning.
- The school will integrate LGBTQ+ content into the RSE. LGBTQ+ content will be approached in a sensitive, age-appropriate and factual way that allows pupils to explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships.
- Inappropriate images, videos, etc. will not be used, and resources will be selected with sensitivity given to the age and cultural background of pupils.
- Pupils will be prevented from accessing inappropriate materials on the internet when using such to assist with their learning. The prevention measures taken to ensure this are outlined in the school’s E-safety Policy and Acceptable Terms of Use Agreement.
- Teachers will ensure that pupils’ views are listened to and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively and honestly.
- Teachers will talk about the importance of marriage and healthy relationships when teaching RSE, though sensitivity will always be given as to not stigmatise pupils on the basis of their home circumstances.
- Teachers will ensure lesson plans focus on challenging perceived views of pupils based on protected characteristics, through exploration of, and developing mutual respect for, those different to themselves.
- In teaching the curriculum, teachers will be aware that pupils may raise topics such as self-harm and suicide. When talking about these topics in lessons, teachers will be aware of the risks of encouraging these behaviours and will avoid any resources or material that appear as instructive rather than preventative.
- The RSHE curriculum will be informed by topical issues in the school and wider community, to ensure it is tailored to pupils’ needs.

The procedures for assessing pupil progress are outlined in section 13 of this policy.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, pupils and staff, taking into account the experiences, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner, so they are fully informed and don’t seek answers online.

Curriculum Links

The school seeks opportunities to draw links between RSE and health education and other curriculum subjects wherever possible to enhance pupils' learning.

Elements of the RSHE curriculum are delivered as content in the following subjects:

Science

ICT and computing

PE

PSHE

RE

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

For more information about our RSE provision, please refer to the curriculum map and topics covered at the end of this policy.

6. Delivery of RSE

- The RSE and health education curriculum will be developed in consultation with teachers, pupils and parents, and in accordance with DfE recommendations.
- The majority of the RSE and health education curriculum will be delivered through PSHE education, with statutory elements taught via the science curriculum.
- The RSE and health education subject leader will work closely with their colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the curriculum complements and does not duplicate the content covered in national curriculum subjects.
- The curriculum has been developed in line with the DfE's 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' guidance.
- The school will consider the religious background of all pupils when planning teaching, to ensure all topics included are appropriately handled.
- The RSE and health education curriculum is informed by topical issues in the school and wider community, to ensure it is tailored to pupils' needs, for example, if there was a local prevalence of specific sexually transmitted infections, our curriculum would be tailored to address this issue.
- The school will integrate LGBTQ+ content into the RSE curriculum. LGBTQ+ content will be approached in a sensitive, age-appropriate and factual way that allows pupils to explore gender identity, stereotypes, and the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships. All pupils are expected to learn about LGBTQ+ content, and parents do not have a statutory right to withdraw their children from lessons that include LGBTQ+ content.
- Pupils also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained staff.

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, LGBTQ+ 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). Ground rules will be set within the classroom and, if a need arises, a pupil will be given the option to use a brief time out.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Body

- The governing board will approve the RSE policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.
- Ensuring all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- Ensuring the RSE and health education curriculum is well-led, effectively managed and well planned.
- Evaluating the quality of provision through regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Ensuring that teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND.
- Providing clear information to parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.
- Ensuring RSE and health education is resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations.
- Ensuring that all teaching staff receive ongoing training on issues relating to PSHE and RSHE and how to deliver lessons on such issues.
- Ensuring that all staff are up to date with policy changes, and familiar with school policy and guidance relating to RSHE.
- Ensuring that the RSHE curriculum covers the teaching of safeguarding, including in relation to online safety.

7.2 The Head Teacher

The overall implementation of this policy.

- Ensuring all staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects.
- Ensuring there is adequate time on the school timetable to deliver RSHE as a statutory curriculum subject.
- Ensuring parent are fully informed of this policy.
- Reviewing all requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory elements of the RSE and health education curriculum.
Discussing withdrawal requests with parents, and the child if appropriate, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, including the benefits of receiving the education.
- Ensuring withdrawn pupils receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- Encouraging parents to be involved in consultations regarding the school's RSE and health education curriculum.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Reporting to the governing board on the effectiveness of this policy and the curriculum.

7.3 The Member of SLT with Responsibility for RSE

- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non statutory components of RSE
- Working closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the RSE and health education curriculum compliments, and does not duplicate, the content covered in national curriculum subjects.
- Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate and of high-quality.
- Reviewing changes to the RSE and health education curriculum and advising on their implementation.
- Monitoring the learning and teaching of RSE and health education, providing support to staff where necessary.
- Ensuring the continuity and progression between each year group.
- Helping to develop colleagues' expertise in the subject by facilitating access to appropriate training
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the curriculum.
- Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to RSE and health education.
- Leading staff meetings and ensuring all members of staff involved in the curriculum have received the appropriate training.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subjects and providing reports to the headteacher.

7.4 DSL

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Offering advice and consultation for safeguarding-related subjects in the RSHE curriculum.
- Promoting knowledge and awareness of safeguarding issues amongst staff.
- Being an appropriate point of contact for staff who have concerns about the welfare of a pupil that have arisen through the teaching of RSHE.
- Organising a safe space for pupils to go should they need additional support or time to talk after an RSHE session.
- Ensuring staff teach in a trauma-informed manner and are particularly mindful of more vulnerable pupils who may have Adverse Childhood Experiences or potential triggers related to the material.

7.5 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with, and promoting, this policy.
- Delivering RSHE in a manner that is sensitive, of high quality and appropriate for each year group.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- 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 RSE and health education.
- Liaising with the SENCO about identifying and responding to the individual needs of pupils with SEND.
- Liaising with the RSHE subject leader on key topics, resources and support for individual pupils.
- Monitoring pupil progress in RSE and health education.

- Reporting any concerns regarding the teaching of RSE or health education to the RSHE subject leader or the member of the SLT with responsibility for RSE
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the DSL, following the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Providing an inclusive approach to their lesson delivery.
- Engaging in training in relation to the teaching of safeguarding, including in relation to online safety.

7.6 The SENCO

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Advising teaching staff how best to identify and support pupils' individual needs.
- Advising staff on the use of TAs in order to meet pupils' individual needs.

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 headteacher/member of the SLT with responsibility for RSE

Member of the SLT with responsibility for RSE: Mrs Angeline Phillips, Head of Science: Mrs D Pullen, Head of RE: Mrs C Sharp, PSHE Co-ordinator: Mrs A Spark.

7.7 Pupils

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

8. Parents' Right to Withdraw

- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. Parents **do not** have a right to withdraw their child from the relationships or health elements of the programme. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.
- Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.
- For requests concerning the withdrawal of a pupil with SEND, the Head Teacher may take the pupils' specific needs into account when making their decision.
- A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.
- As a school, we value the importance of RSE education for all and will discuss any requests for withdrawal with parents.

9. Training

- Training will be provided to the relevant members of staff to ensure they are up-to-date with the RSE and health education curriculum
- Training will also be scheduled around any updated guidance on the curriculum and any new developments, such as "sexting", which may need to be addressed in relation to the curriculum

10. Working with External Agencies

- Working with external agencies can enhance our delivery of RSE and health education, and brings in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging pupils. External experts may be invited to assist from time-to-time with the delivery of the RSE and health education curriculum but will be expected to comply with the provisions of this policy.

When working with external agencies, the school will ensure:

- A teacher is present throughout these lessons.
- Visitors are given a copy of this policy and expected to comply with the guidelines outlined within it.
- All resources used by guest speakers are available to parents to view on request.
- The lesson the external expert has planned fits with the school's planned curriculum and this policy.
- The expert's credentials are checked before they are able to participate in delivery of the curriculum, in line with the Visitor Policy.
- The expert's lesson plan is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils.
- That the materials the expert intends to use, as well the lesson plan, meet all pupils' needs, including those with SEND.
- That procedures for confidentiality are in place; this includes ensuring that the expert understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The school will use visitors to enhance teaching by an appropriate member of teaching staff, not to replace teaching by those staff.
- The school will ensure the teaching delivered by the external experts fits with the planned curriculum and provisions of this policy. The school will discuss with the visitor the details of how they intend to deliver their sessions and ensure the content is age-appropriate and accessible for all pupils.

11. Equality and Accessibility

The school will comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure the curriculum does not discriminate against pupils because of their:

➤ **Age** ➤ **Sex** ➤ **Race** ➤ **Disability** ➤ **Religion or belief** ➤ **Gender**
➤ **reassignment** ➤ **Pregnancy or maternity** ➤ **Marriage or civil partnership** ➤
➤ **Sexual orientation**

- The school will consider the backgrounds, gender, age range and needs of its pupils and determine whether it is necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with the above protected characteristics.
- The school understands that pupils with SEND are entitled to learn about RSE and health education, and the curriculum will be designed to be inclusive of all pupils.
- The school is aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND – teachers will understand that they may need to liaise with the **SENCO** and be more explicit and adapt their planning or work to appropriately deliver the curriculum to pupils with SEND.

- Where there is a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the needs of pupils at different developmental stages, the school will ensure the teaching remains sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and is delivered with reference to the law.
- The school will take steps to foster healthy and respectful child-to-child communication and behaviour between boys and girls and provide an environment which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic.
- The school will be actively aware of everyday issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture within which these are not tolerated. Any occurrences of such issues will be identified and tackled promptly.
- The school will make clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

12. The Law

It is important for pupils to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. The school curriculum will include teaching pupils about a range of important facts, including, but not limited to, the rules regarding personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help pupils to identify what is right and wrong in law, but it can also be useful in providing a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships.

Pupils will be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including but not limited to:

- Marriage, including forced marriage and civil partnerships
- Consent, including the age of consent
- Domestic abuse, stalking, rape, sexual offences, FGM, 'virginity testing' and hymenoplasty
- Sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation, including public sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour.
- The Online Safety Act.
- Online behaviours including image and information sharing, "sexting," youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc, including AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes.
- Pornography
- Abortion
- Protected characteristics – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation
- Alcohol, smoking, vaping and nicotine products and illicit drug use
- Gambling
- Carrying knives and weapons

- Extremism and radicalisation
- Grooming or exploiting children into criminal activity, which can include gang involvement and county lines drug running
- Hate crimes
- The age of criminal responsibility
- Medical consent, Gillick competence and parental responsibility

13. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

- All pupils will be taught about keeping themselves safe, including online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- In teaching about safeguarding, the RSHE curriculum will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual pupils, including pupils who are victims of abuse and pupils with SEND.
- Confidentiality within the classroom is an important component of RSE and health education, and teachers are expected to respect the confidentiality of their pupils as far as is possible.
- Teachers will, however, understand that some aspects of RSE may lead to a pupil raising a safeguarding concern, e.g. disclosing that they are being abused, and that if a disclosure is made, the **DSL** will be alerted immediately.
- Pupils will be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report, and how their report will be handled – this includes the process for when they have a concern about a peer.
- When teaching issues that are particularly sensitive, e.g. self-harm, consent or suicide, teachers will be made aware of the risks of inadvertently encouraging or providing instructions to pupils. Teaching of these subjects will always prioritise preventing harm to pupils as a central goal.

In relation to safeguarding, the RSHE curriculum will cover the following aspects:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- The concepts of, and laws relating to:
 - Sexual consent
 - Sexual exploitation
 - Abuse
 - Grooming
 - Coercion
 - Harassment
 - Rape
 - Domestic abuse
 - So called 'honour'-based violence, e.g. forced marriage and FGM, and how to access support
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable

The RSHE curriculum will be kept under constant review and the school will consider scenarios in which safeguarding concerns and patterns of concerning behaviours, e.g. reports of sexual harassment, should be addressed by updating relevant parts of the RSHE curriculum.

14. Assessment Procedures

- a. The school has the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in RSE and health education as for other curriculum areas.
- b. Lessons are planned to provide suitable challenge to pupils of all abilities.
- c. There are no formal examinations for RSE and health education; however, to assess pupil outcomes, the school will capture progress in the following ways:
 - Lesson observations
 - Learning Walks
 - Work scrutiny
 - Self-evaluations

15. Monitoring Arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Mrs A Phillips, the member of the SLT with responsibility for RSE, Mrs Annette Spark, PSHE coordinator and relevant Heads of subject.

The delivery will be monitored as part of the school SSE programme.

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems if addressed as part of the curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed by Mrs A Phillips, the member of the SLT with responsibility for RSE annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the headteacher and the governing body.

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the **Head Teacher** and **the member of the SLT with responsibility for RSE** annually in conjunction with the **RSE and health education subject leader**.

Any changes needed to the policy, including changes to the programmes, will be implemented by the **Head Teacher**.

Any changes to the policy will be clearly communicated to all members of staff and, where necessary, parents and pupils, involved in the RSE and health education curriculum.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **Spring Term 2027**.

17. RSE subject overview

RSE will continue to develop pupils' knowledge on the topics taught at a primary level, in addition to the content outlined in this section.

Families

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing and their importance for bringing up children.
- Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples.
- The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony.
- That ‘common-law marriage’ is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.
- That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.
- How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.
- About the roles and responsibilities of parents with regard to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child’s life for brain development.
- How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

Pupils will also know how to:

- Determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy.
- Judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe, and recognise this in others’ relationships.
- Seek help or advice if needed, including reporting concerns about others.

Respectful relationships

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- About the characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds (including online), including romantic relationships, for example:
 - The role of consent.
 - Trust.
 - Mutual respect.
 - Honesty.
 - Kindness
 - Loyalty.

- Shared interests and outlooks.
 - Generosity.
 - Boundaries.
 - Tolerance.
 - Privacy.
 - The management of conflict.
 - Reconciliation and ending relationships.
- How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers.
 - About the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal.
 - About the importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with themselves, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others – including developing interests, hobbies, friendship groups and skills.
 - About what it means to be treated with respect by others.
 - What tolerance requires, including the importance of other people’s beliefs.
 - About the practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships, including skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict.
 - About the different types of bullying, including online, the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.
 - Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feeling that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration.
 - About the role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships and that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils will also understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn’t automatically make it ethically ok.
 - How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage.
 - How to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice.
 - How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships.
 - How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviour and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others.

Pupils will also have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called “involuntary celibates” (incels) or online influencers.

Online safety and awareness

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- About their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, and that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts.
- About online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online.
- About the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues.
- About the characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake or post things which aren't real or are created with AI.
- That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online.
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which they receive.
- That any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up.
- About the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images.
- That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the pupil and/or using AI generated imagery.
- About the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment.
- How to seek support if an image of themselves has been shared.
- That sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime.
- What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online.
- About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them.
- That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons.
- Where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online.
- That online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong.
- That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.

- How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns.
- That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners and that this can affect pupils who see pornography accidentally as well as deliberately.
- That pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it.
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
- That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use for commercial purposes, e.g. to enable targeted advertising.
- That criminals can operate online scams, e.g. using fake websites to extort money or valuable personal information, and how this can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society.
- About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion.
- That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice.
- How to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk.

Being safe

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing and touching.
- That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent.
- That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and to avoid putting pressure on others.
- How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe and how to seek help, advice and report concerns about others.
- How to increase personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers.
- How to learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour.
- About the strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour.
- About reflecting on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions.
- What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it.

- That sexual harassment includes:
 - Unsolicited sexual language, attention, touching or talking.
 - Sharing intimate images without consent.
 - Public sexual harassment.
 - Pressuring other people to do sexual things.
 - Upskirting.
- About the concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.
- That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed.
- About the concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation.
- About the concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.
- About the physical and emotional damage which can be caused by FGM, virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas.
- That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences and that strangulation is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury.
- That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death.
- That pornography presents some extreme activities as normal, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful.
- How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including how to report abuse and where to seek medical attention.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- That, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, sex can and should be enjoyable and positive.
- About the law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex.
- About sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values.
- That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively and negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual, and reproductive health and wellbeing.

- That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
- The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision making.
- That there are choices in relation to pregnancy, with legally and medically accurate impartial information on all options, including parenthood, adoption, abortion and where to get further help.
- How the different sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, are transmitted.
- How risk can be reduced through safer sex.
- About the use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis and Post Exposure Prophylaxis and how and where to access them.
- The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma.
- About the prevalence of STIs and the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour.
- How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms
- How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

RSE programmes of study

The school will determine an age-appropriate, developmental curriculum which meets the needs of pupils and includes the statutory content outlined in the [‘RSE subject overview’](#) section of this policy.

18. Health education subject overview

Health Education in the school will equip pupils with the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to make informed, responsible decisions about their health and wellbeing. Teaching will support pupils to understand the links between physical and mental health, recognise when something is not right in themselves or others, and know how and where to seek appropriate support.

The school will support pupils to develop resilience and positive coping strategies, including self-regulation, perseverance and determination, particularly when experiencing challenge or setbacks. High-quality health education will actively reduce stigma around health issues, particularly around mental health, and will promote

respectful language, discouraging derogatory or pejorative terms relating to illness or wellbeing. The school will promote a culture of openness so pupils will feel confident asking questions, checking their understanding, and seeking advice or support when needed.

Teaching about puberty and menstruation will be delivered sensitively and will be supported by practical arrangements that help pupils manage menstruation with dignity. This will include ensuring pupils will be able to request and access period products. The school will use clear and appropriate language such as period pads and menstrual products, and will avoid terms such as sanitary items or feminine hygiene products.

Health education in the school will build on learning from primary school. It will support pupils to understand the physical and emotional changes of adolescence, how to protect and promote their health and wellbeing, and when a physical or mental health concern will require further help or intervention.

The school may choose to include additional health-related topics beyond statutory curriculum content, such as eating disorders and self-harm. Where these areas are taught, the school will ensure this is done carefully and sensitively, using reliable high-quality resources and, where appropriate, qualified support or external advice, e.g. NHS or local specialist services. The school will ensure staff are appropriately trained and confident in managing discussions safely, including responding appropriately if a pupil makes a disclosure, and ensuring clear signposting to support.

The school will also consider how to address suicide prevention safely and appropriately. Many preventative aspects will be covered through the wider mental wellbeing curriculum, including recognising emotions, building supportive relationships, understanding bullying and loneliness, and learning how to manage difficult experiences. The school will ensure pupils understand how to seek help from trusted adults, including when they are concerned about someone else.

Where suicide prevention is addressed directly, the school will consult mental health professionals and will ensure staff receive high-quality, evidence-based training before delivery.

Teaching will be factual, age-appropriate and straightforward, and will avoid discussing methods or instructions relating to self-harm or suicide. The school will ensure emotive language and potentially harmful media, including graphic videos or images, are not used.

The school will apply similar safeguarding principles when addressing eating disorders, and will avoid language that could romanticise disordered eating or introduce harmful behaviours or ideas. If staff have concerns about a pupil in relation to eating disorders, self-harm, suicidal ideation, or where a disclosure is made, the school will follow safeguarding procedures in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Mental wellbeing

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
- About the benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness.
- That happiness is linked to being connected to others.
- That loneliness can be an inevitable part of life at times and is not something to be ashamed of.

- About how to recognise what makes them happy and unhappy.
- That worrying and feeling down are normal emotions that can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal.
- About the characteristics of common types of mental ill health, e.g. anxiety and depression, including carefully presented factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental health conditions.
- How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall wellbeing.
- About strategies to overcome anxiety or other barriers to participating in fun, enjoyable or rewarding activities and that finding the courage to participate in activities which initially feel challenging may decrease anxiety over time rather than increasing it.
- That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others.
- That the co-occurrence of alcohol or drug use and poor mental health is common and that the relationship is bi-directional, i.e. mental health problems can increase the risk of alcohol and/or drug use and vice versa.
- That stopping smoking can improve people's mental health and decrease anxiety.

Wellbeing online

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- About 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.
- About the similarities and differences between the online and physical world, including the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online, how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships, including relationships formed through social media, can have.
- How to identify harmful behaviours online, including bullying, abuse or harassment, and how to report or find support if they have been affected by those behaviours.
- About the risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt.
- How advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online, understanding the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation online, including conspiracy theories.
- About the risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online.

Physical health and fitness

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- The characteristics of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight, and the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health – including cardiovascular ill-health.
- Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions.
- That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress.
- About the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

Healthy eating

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease.
- About the risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- About the impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain.

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- The facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the potential health harms, including the link to poor mental health.
- The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
- The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption, what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England.
- How to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol.
- The physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency.
- The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines.
- The facts about the harms from smoking tobacco, the benefits of quitting and how to access the support to do so.
- About the facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit.

Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- About personal hygiene, germs including bacteria and viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and antibiotics.

- About dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth, reducing consumption of sugar-containing food and drinks, and regular check-ups at the dentist.
- How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals.
- About the importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
- About the facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination, immunisation and antimicrobial resistance – aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils.
- About the importance of healthy behaviour before and during pregnancy, including the importance of pre-conception health, including taking folic acid.
- About the importance of pelvic floor health.
- Information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and how to access care and support.
- How to navigate their local healthcare system, including what a GP is, when to use A&E, accessing sexual health and family planning clinics, the role of local pharmacies and how to seek help via local third sector partners which may have specialist services.
- About the concept of Gillick competence. That the legal age of medical consent is 16. That before this, a child's parents will have responsibility for consenting to medical treatment on their behalf unless they are Gillick competent to take this decision for themselves.
- About the circumstances in which someone over 16 may not be deemed to have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment.

Personal safety

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around roads, railways – including level crossings – and water, and in unfamiliar social or work settings.
- How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media.
- How to develop key social and emotional skills that will increase pupils' safety from involvement in conflict and violence.
- Which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about violence or knife crime.
- About the law as it related to knives and violence – involving content and examples relevant to the local context whilst avoiding the use of fear as an educational tool and explaining how carrying knives is uncommon.
- About the risks and signs that they may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help where there is a concern.

Basic first aid

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- Basic treatments for common injuries and ailments.
- Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.
- About the purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.

Developing bodies

Through the curriculum content, pupils will be taught:

- About the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.
The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development.
- About menstrual and gynaecological health, including what is an average period, period problems such as premenstrual syndrome, heavy menstrual bleeding, endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome – and when to seek help from healthcare professionals.
- The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.

Letter to Parents Regarding RSE and Health Education

RE: RSE and health education at Hebburn Comprehensive School

Dear Parent

Government guidelines outline that, from the age of 11, it is compulsory for all schools to provide an RSE and health education curriculum.

At our school, we believe that it is important to provide our pupils with a thorough and balanced curriculum, including age-appropriate information about sex and relationships.

The details of what will be taught to the various year groups is detailed in the school's **RSE and Health Education Policy**, which can be accessed on our school website www.hebburn.net, or in hard copy via our **school office**.

Though schools must provide RSE and health education for pupils from the age of 11, up until the age of 19, only aspects of the science national curriculum are compulsory for pupils to learn. Therefore, as parents, you are entitled to request that your child be removed from sex education lessons up to and until three terms before they turn 16-years-old. After that point, if your child wishes to receive sex education, the school will make arrangements to provide them with sex education during one of those terms.

Requests for withdrawal should be submitted using the form on the school website to myself, the **Head Teacher**, who will discuss this with you and your child's teacher, and determine an appropriate substitute for these lessons. In most instances, children will be provided with self-directed reading or exercises which they can complete under the supervision of a trainee teacher.

If you have any concerns or queries about your child's participation in these lessons, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or your child's class teacher to discuss these.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Thompson
Head Teacher

Appendix 3: Parent Form: Withdrawal from Sex Education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	