

RSHE Policy



Pride
Passion
Partnership
Professionalism
Positivity

RSHE Policy

What is the policy about?

Fen Rivers believes that relationship, sex and health education makes an essential contribution to every student's health, wellbeing and preparation for adult life in society. It is an integral part of the PSHE/Citizenship programme under the umbrella of the Healthy Schools Scheme.

This policy aligns with the DfE RSE Statutory Guidance (2025) and outlines delivery across our different Pathways.

RSHE at Fen Rivers aims to:

- Equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for safe and positive relationships.
- Develop communication, emotional literacy and regulation skills.
- Teach consent, personal boundaries and bodily autonomy.
- Prepare pupils for puberty, body changes and adult life through sensitive, supportive teaching.
- Build resilience to online harms, misogyny, harmful influencers, exploitation, misinformation and digital manipulation.
- Promote mental and physical wellbeing, including strategies for coping with stress, loneliness, change, grief and loss.
- Support pupils' independence and safety in friendships, the community, online life and financial decision-making.
- Maintain strong, transparent partnerships with families

RSHE reflects our school values of respect, resilience and responsibility. We promote:

- Safe and predictable learning environments
- Trauma-informed practice
- Clear, consistent language and visual supports
- Teaching that fosters empathy, inclusion and kindness
- Recognition of diverse family structures

We celebrate families including adoptive families, young carers, kinship carers, same-sex parents, foster families, grandparent-led households and single parents.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy is for Local Governing bodies, trustees, commissioners, local authorities, Headteacher, teaching staff, parents, carers and pupils.

Statutory requirements

As an academy, we must provide Relationships Education to all pupils of primary age and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) to all pupils of secondary age, in accordance with Section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Although we are not required to follow the National Curriculum, we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar in breadth and ambition, including elements of sex education typically taught within the Science curriculum. For our cohort, all learning must be differentiated to pupils' developmental stages, communication needs and learning profiles. RSHE is therefore planned and delivered through the Explorer, Adventurer and Pioneer Curriculum Pathways.

In teaching RSHE, we must have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State under Section 403 of the Education Act 1996 and Section 80A of the Education Act 2002.

At Fen Rivers, we teach RSHE in line with this statutory guidance and as set out in this policy.

Policy Development

This policy has been developed in consultation with schools within The Bridge Trust. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. **Review** – a member of staff (RSHE coordinator) 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 at the time of development were invited to attend a meeting about the policy.
4. **Pupil engagement** – we recognise student voice in the articulation of this policy and look towards how to best use it where possible.
5. **Ratification** – once amendments were made, the policy was ratified.

Curriculum and delivery

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, pupils and staff, taking into account the age, 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 from potentially untrustworthy sources.

RSHE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSHE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in humanities and religious education (RE).

At primary, sex education is not compulsory and we do not deliver sex education outside what is in the Science curriculum which covers factual information on reproduction and puberty. Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

At secondary, RSHE 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

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them.

For details of our RSHE curriculum, please see appendices.

Withdrawal

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education or from the statutory science curriculum covering aspects of sex education.

At secondary school age, parents do have the right to withdraw their children from the non- statutory (science) components of sex education within RSHE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. 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. The Headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. 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.

Assessment

Pupils will be assessed by our usual internal assessment systems.

Monitoring and Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE, and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. Staff CPD includes training around the RSHE guidance, SEN pedagogy, trauma-informed practice, online and AI safeguarding, harmful influencers and management of sensitive discussions.

The headteacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as police officers, school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE when appropriate.

The delivery of RSHE at Fen Rivers is monitored by James Thompson, RSHE coordinator, and overseen by Amanda Fewkes through curriculum checks, lesson observations and learning walks, safeguarding trends and parent feedback. The Senior Leadership Team will also support in the monitoring process during each academic year.

Pupils' development in RSHE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. Assessment in RSHE is not about tests or pass/fail outcomes. Instead, it helps teachers and pupils understand what has been learned and how understanding has developed over time. It supports high-quality teaching and ensures that learning is meaningful and progressive.

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the CEO of the Trust.

Definitions

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

RSHE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity on its own and encompasses a broad and varied range of other areas.

Related policies

Safeguarding Policy

KCSIE Keeping Children Safe in Education

Equality and Diversity Policy

Equality Act 2010 (advice for schools)

PSHE Policy

Curriculum Policy

SMSC policy

Appendix 1: Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum Map

Year Group	Topic / Theme
11	H14. know about the health services available to people; strategies to become a confident user of the NHS and other health services; to overcome potential concerns or barriers to seeking help H26. the different types of intimacy — including online — and their potential emotional and physical consequences (both positive and negative) H27. about specific STIs, their treatment and how to reduce the risk of transmission H28. how to respond if someone has, or may have, an STI (including ways to access sexual health services) H29. to overcome barriers, (including embarrassment, myths and misconceptions) about sexual health and the use of sexual health services H30. about healthy pregnancy and how lifestyle choices affect a developing foetus H31. that fertility can vary in all people, changes over time (including menopause) and can be affected by STIs and other lifestyle factors H32. about the possibility of miscarriage and support available to people who are not able to conceive or maintain a pregnancy H33. about choices and support available in the event of an unplanned pregnancy, and how to access appropriate help and advice R18. about the concept of consent in maturing relationships R19. about the impact of attitudes towards sexual assault and to challenge victim-blaming, including when abuse occurs online R20. to recognise the impact of drugs and alcohol on choices and sexual behaviour R21. the skills to assess their readiness for sex, including sexual activity online, as an individual and within a couple R22. to evaluate different motivations and contexts in which sexual images are shared, and possible legal, emotional and social consequences
10	R1. the characteristics and benefits of strong, positive relationships, including mutual support, trust, respect and equality R2. the role of pleasure in intimate relationships, including orgasms R3. to respond appropriately to indicators of unhealthy relationships, including seeking help where necessary R4. the importance of stable, committed relationships, including the rights and protections provided within legally recognised marriages and civil partnerships and the legal status of other long-term relationships

	R5. the legal rights, responsibilities and protections provided by the Equality Act 2010 R6. about diversity in romantic and sexual attraction and developing sexuality, including sources of support and reassurance and how to access them R7. strategies to access reliable, accurate and appropriate advice and support with relationships, and to assist others to access it when needed R8. to understand the potential impact of the portrayal of sex in pornography and other media, including on sexual attitudes, expectations and behaviours
9	R32. the communication and negotiation skills necessary for contraceptive use in healthy relationships (see also 'Health'). R33. the risks related to unprotected sex R34. the consequences of unintended pregnancy, sources of support and the options available. R35. the roles and responsibilities of parents, carers and children in families R36. the nature and importance of stable, long-term relationships (including marriage and civil partnerships) for family life and bringing up children. R37. the characteristics of abusive behaviours, such as grooming, sexual harassment, sexual and emotional abuse, violence and exploitation; to recognise warning signs, including online; how to report abusive behaviours or access support for themselves or others
8	H34. strategies to manage the physical and mental changes that are a typical part of growing up, including puberty and menstrual wellbeing. H35. about the purpose, importance and different forms of contraception; how and where to access contraception and advice (see also Relationships). H36. that certain infections can be spread through sexual activity and that barrier contraceptives offer some protection against certain sexually transmitted infections (STIs). R18. to manage the strong feelings that relationships can cause (including sexual attraction). R25. about the law relating to sexual consent R26. how to seek, give, not give and withdraw consent (in all contexts, including online) R27. that the seeker of consent is legally and morally responsible for ensuring that consent has been given; that if consent is not given or is withdrawn, that decision should always be respected. R28. to gauge readiness for sexual intimacy R29. the impact of sharing sexual images of others without consent

	R30. how to manage any request or pressure to share an image of themselves or others, and how to get help. R31. that intimate relationships should be pleasurable
7	H22. the risks and myths associated with female genital mutilation (FGM), its status as a criminal act and strategies to safely access support for themselves or others who may be at risk, or who have already been subject to FGM. R4. the difference between biological sex, gender identity and sexual orientation R5. to recognise that sexual attraction and sexuality are diverse RG. that marriage is a legal, social and emotional commitment that should be entered into freely, and never forced upon someone through threat or coercion R7. how the media portrays relationships and the potential impact of this on people's expectations of relationships RS. that the portrayal of sex in the media and social media (including pornography) can affect people's expectations of relationships and sex. R9. to clarify and develop personal values in friendships, love and sexual relationships. R10. the importance of trust in relationships and the behaviours that can undermine or build trust R11. to evaluate expectations about gender roles, behaviour and intimacy within romantic relationships. R12. that everyone has the choice to delay sex, or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
6	H34. about where to get more information, help and advice about growing and changing, especially about puberty R27. about keeping something confidential or secret, when this should (e.g. a birthday surprise that others will find out about) or should not be agreed to, and when it is right to break a confidence or share a secret R28. how to recognise pressure from others to do something unsafe or that makes them feel uncomfortable and strategies for managing this. R29. where to get advice and report concerns if worried about their own or someone else's personal safety (including online).
5	H33. about the processes of reproduction and birth as part of the human life cycle; how babies are conceived and born (and that there are ways to prevent a baby being made); how babies need to be cared for. H32. about how hygiene routines change during the time of puberty, the importance of keeping clean and how to maintain personal hygiene. R25. recognise different types of physical contact; what is acceptable and unacceptable; strategies to respond to unwanted physical contact.

	R26. about seeking and giving permission (consent) in different situations.
4	H31. about the physical and emotional changes that happen when approaching and during puberty (including menstruation, key facts about the menstrual cycle and menstrual wellbeing, erections and wet dreams). R22. about privacy and personal boundaries; what is appropriate in friendships and wider relationships (including online). R23. about why someone may behave differently online, including pretending to be someone they are not; strategies for recognising risks, harmful content and contact; how to report concerns. R24. how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in 'all contexts including online) whom they do not know.
3	H30. to identify the external genitalia and internal reproductive organs in males and females and how the process of puberty relates to human reproduction. H45. that female genital mutilation (FGM) is against British law, what to do and whom to tell if they think they or someone they know might be at risk. R2. that people may be attracted to someone emotionally, romantically and sexually; that people may be attracted to someone of the same sex or different sex to them; that gender identity and sexual orientation are different. R23. about why someone may behave differently online, including pretending to be someone they are not; strategies for recognising risks, harmful content and contact; how to report concerns.
KS1	H25. to name the main parts of the body including external genitalia (e.g. vulva, vagina, penis, testicles). R13. to recognise that some things are private and the importance of respecting privacy; that parts of their body covered by underwear are private.

Appendix 2: By the End of Primary School Pupils should know:

Topic	Pupils should know:
Families and people who care about me	• That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability • The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each others' lives. • That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care. • That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up • That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong • How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
Caring friendships	• How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends • The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties • That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded • That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right • How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed
Topic	Pupils should know:
Respectful relationships	• The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • The conventions of courtesy and manners • The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help • What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive

	• The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults
Online relationships	• That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not • That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous • The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them • How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met • How information and data is shared and used online
Being safe	• What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context) • About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe • That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact • How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know • How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult • How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard • How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so • Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

Appendix 3: By the End of Secondary School Pupils should know:

Topic	Pupils should know:
Families	• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships • How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children • What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony • Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into • The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships • The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting • 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 to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed
Respectful Relationships, including friendships	• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help • That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control • What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable • The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal
Online and media	• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online • Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online • The impact of viewing harmful content

	• That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners • That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
Being Safe	• The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships • How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)
Intimate and Sexual relationships including sexual health	• How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship • That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing • The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women • That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others • That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage • That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help) • How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing • About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment • How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour • How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

September 2026 Framework implementation in RSHE and PSHE

KS2

- **Professional Judgement:** Strict age limits for specific topics were dropped. At Fen Rivers, teachers and leaders are clear about using own judgements to ensure content is "age-appropriate" for their specific pupils and adjustments where more content is essential to support student exposure and curiosities in a healthy, bespoke way.
- **Parental Transparency:** Fen Rivers continue to involve our parents in all PSHE and RSHE taught content and use parent and student voice to include additional interventions for individuals and work collaboratively.
- **Mental Health vs. Everyday Emotions:** Teaching distinguish between "normal" difficult feelings (e.g., worry, low mood) and clinical mental health conditions to avoid over-medicalisation. In our SEMH school setting conversations, activities and vocabulary around emotions starts from an early age through our curriculum and remains a priority.
- **Diverse Families:** Teachers make clear distinction that relationship can be same-sex or different sex parents and varying family structures are all healthy.
- **Body Safety:** Correct terminology for body parts (including genitalia) supports safeguarding and abuse reporting for our students.
- **Personal Safety:** New sections on fire safety and travel safety (roads, railways, and water) are included in teaching
- **Online Harms:** Flexibility to teach about online sexual imagery in late primary (Year 5/6), and under new guidance, is taught in an explorative and healthy way by teachers ongoing.

KS3-4

- **Online Misogyny & Influences:** Fen Rivers addresses misogyny, "incel" culture, and the negative impact of online influencers on sexual ethics and this extends from class discussions to 1:1 interventions where necessary.
- **Technological Risks:** Enhanced content on AI awareness, deepfakes, sextortion, and identifying fake or AI-generated social media accounts is taught.
- **Sexual Violence:** Strengthened sections on sexual harassment, stalking, "revenge porn," upskirting, and financial sexual exploitation is embedded in curriculum.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Expanded teaching on gynaecological health (e.g., PCOS, endometriosis, menopause) and suicide prevention.

Protected Characteristics & Equality Act

- **Biological Sex & Gender Reassignment:** Fen Rivers teach the "facts and the law" regarding biological sex and gender reassignment as protected characteristics.
- **Contested Views:** Under new guidance, teachers and leaders should not teach "gender identity" as fact or suggest social transition as a simple solution for distress.

Appendix 4: Parent Form (withdrawal from Sex Education within RSHE)

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	
Parental signature	
TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussions with parents – notes from discussions and arrangements for withdrawal during Sex education lessons.	

Policy Owner and Contact Details

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Next Review Date: September 2027