The Bridge Trust
Pioneer School

RSHE Policy



Pride
Passion
Partnership
Professionalism
Positivity

RSHE Policy

1. Aims

At Pioneer School, RSHE is central to preparing pupils for safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. As a specialist provision, many of our learners have complex needs, meaning RSHE must be highly structured, sensitive and accessible. RSHE is taught according to each pupil's developmental stage rather than chronological age, ensuring learning is meaningful, safe and appropriate. Our focus is on preparing our pupils for adulthood whilst ensuring they understand how to keep themselves safe. This policy aligns with the DfE RSE Statutory Guidance (2025) and outlines delivery across our different Pathways.

RSHE at Pioneer School 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.

2. 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 Pioneer School, we teach RSHE in line with this statutory guidance and as set out in this policy.

3. 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.

4. Definition

- 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.

5. Curriculum

Our Pathway Curriculum is built around each young person who attends Pioneer School. The approaches we take to supporting understanding of RSHE are reflected by their specific learning profile.

We have developed our approach to the RSHE curriculum in consultation with parents, governors', pupils, and staff, considering the learning and communication profile, age, needs and feelings of our pupils. If, pupils ask (or pose) questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner, so they are fully informed and do not seek answers online. Teachers will respond in an age-appropriate, inclusive manner. Inappropriate or personal questions may be declined, with pupils signposted to trusted sources or adults.

RSHE is delivered through a planned, developmentally progressive curriculum supported by PSHE, Life Skills, Zones of Regulation, Science and community learning. The curriculum is broken down into three key areas: relationships education, health education and sex education. The curriculum content for each key area is outlined below:

Relationships Education

Pupils learn to:

- Build friendships and recognise trusted adults
- Show respect, kindness, inclusion and empathy
- Understand boundaries and consent
- Recognise safe and unsafe relationships
- Identify bullying and discrimination
- Understand diverse families
- Develop communication and emotional awareness skills

Health Education

Content includes:

- Emotional literacy, wellbeing and regulation
- Strategies for stress, change, loneliness, bereavement and grief
- Sleep, hygiene, diet and exercise
- Puberty, body changes and menstruation
- Dental health and illness prevention
- Online safety, misinformation, influencer pressure and unsafe persuasion, digital manipulation and AI risks, safe online money management, scams, fraud and financial exploitation
- Public-space safety including road, rail/level-crossing and water safety

Sex Education (Secondary or Developmentally Ready Pupils)

Content includes:

- Human reproduction and sexual health
- Healthy intimate relationships
- Consent and communication
- Pornography harms and unrealistic expectations
- Misogyny, toxic masculinity and harmful online subcultures
- Deepfakes and AI-generated sexual imagery
- Grooming, exploitation and coercion
- Sexting, image-sharing and the law

The school may need to include new content in RSHE to respond to emerging needs or issues within the school. However, parents will be informed of any shifts away from the policy and the school will continue to share relevant materials on request.

6. Delivery of RSHE

Our RSHE curriculum is designed to meet elements of the statutory requirements of the 2025 DFE guidance and the Equality Act 2010. It is delivered through a spiral curriculum model, allowing pupils to revisit and deepen understanding over time.

At Pioneer School, RSHE is taught discretely throughout the year by the class teacher and is planned/taught according to a pupils' Curriculum Pathway which ensures suitability and appropriateness, matched to their level of understanding and ability. The focus is on supporting young people to understand public vs private spaces, build positive relationships with their team and families and help those who teach them feel confident to support them in understanding self-agency and safety. Our young people are reliant upon the team around them supporting the principles outlined above and this policy should be read in-conjunction with our safeguarding policies. Teachers use assessment, professional judgement and EHCP outcome to determine when pupils are ready for specific content.

RSHE is delivered using varied methodologies to support engagement and inclusivity, including storytelling and drama, discussion and debate, private reflection and quizzes. RSHE lessons are adapted to ensure all pupils are included and can access the curriculum. Adaptions may include visual supports, AAC, simple language structure and small-group teaching.

RSHE is not only taught as a discrete subject at Pioneer School but incorporated into the daily routines of all young people, and through additional enrichment opportunities including themed assemblies, topic days and cross-curricular links. This ensures consistent exposure and reinforcement of key concepts.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board and Governing Body

The governing board will hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Trust board has delegated the approval of this policy to the CEO.

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from components of RSHE (see section 8).

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RHSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring and where reporting progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSHE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSHE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher or the RSHE coordinator.

All teachers in the school are responsible for teaching RSHE.

Pupils

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

8. Engaging parents and other stakeholders

At Pioneer School we recognise parents and carers as primary educators in RSHE. The school fosters strong partnerships through an open-door policy for RSHE discussions and transparent communications and consultation.

Parents and carers will be notified in advance of the content of planned upcoming sex education lessons, offering an opportunity for discussion, for questions and concerns to be raised and for parents to withdraw their children if they wish.

In accordance with the Secretary of State's letter (October 2024), we share RSHE materials with parents upon request and welcome their feedback. Copyright law cannot be used to restrict parental access to teaching resources. To view RSHE curriculum materials, parents and carers can put a request in writing to Georgia Garrod, RSHE coordinator, who will respond within 28 days.

9. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education, health education or topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSHE.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the headteacher. These requests will be followed up with a discussion with the headteacher to understand the request and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

10. 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.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSHE at Pioneer School is monitored by Cheryl Narayanan, RSHE coordinator, and overseen by Joanne Allain 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.

Policy Owner and Contact Details
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