

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

2025-26



ponthigh.org.uk

Ponteland High School

Callerton Lane, Ponteland, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE20 9EG



Purpose

At Ponteland High School we believe that the purpose of the wider PSHE curriculum is to gradually build up students' level of knowledge and understanding across all aspects of Personal, Social, Health and Economic education and then be able to apply wider learning in a thoughtful and considered manner to suit the demands of any given task. We aim to develop students' ability to create and maintain healthy and nurturing relationships and understand key elements of safe and healthy sexual relationships in the future.

We believe that all students should have the right to high-quality and comprehensive relationships and sex education, which promotes equal and enjoyable relationships and good sexual health. We believe the teaching of RSHE should be founded on trust and mutual respect. We aim to develop our students into responsible citizens who can make informed decisions based on secure knowledge and understanding.

Definition

RSHE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSHE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values; it is not about promoting sexual activity or enforcing a particular worldview.

Aims and ambition

This policy provides an overall framework for the school's action to help students learn about:

- Different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships, intimate relationships, marriage or other kinds of committed relationship
- How to recognize, understand and build healthy, nurturing relationships, including self-respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent, and how to manage conflict, and how to recognize unhealthy relationships.
- How relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health
- Healthy relationships and safety online
- Factual knowledge, and the law around sex, sexual health and sexual orientation, gender identity, set firmly within the context of relationships



- Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- Female Genital mutilation (FGM), honour-based violence and forced marriage

Planning and teaching

We have ensured that the curriculum is designed with student learning at the core. Pastoral leaders have thought carefully about what students should know, understand and be able to do at various stages of their school life in relation to Relationships and Sex education.

Our RSHE curriculum is progressive and challenging as we are committed to meaningful learning rather than superficial coverage of curriculum content recognising that the materials taught should develop our students as informed citizens able to make well-informed decisions as they progress to young adulthood.

We focus on ensuring that our teachers have strong RSHE subject knowledge to underpin their teaching. We value and emphasise creating positive relationships in classrooms as we believe this enables great teaching to flourish. We are committed to offering a broad and balanced RSHE curriculum that is accessible to all students across all key stages.

The specific content will be taught in an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate way. Topics will be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to backgrounds and the protected characteristics of students, while always providing students with the knowledge they need of the law.

Teaching will build on the knowledge acquired at primary school (Appendix 1) and develop further students' understanding of health, with an increased focus on risks such as drugs and alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex (Appendix 2).

Commitment to Equalities and Diversity

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is the enforcement body for equalities legislation and may serve a school with a Compliance Notice if it fails in its specific duties under the Acts. If a school was found wanting in any respect it would be provided with the opportunity to put this right within 3 months.



Ponteland High School is fully committed to discharging its equalities duties for all students, employees and visitors to the school site. Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations of sexual or other forms of harassment or discrimination and for recording incidents which challenge equality.

We will ensure that the RSHE policy and accompanying documentation are accessible by publishing them on the school website. Complaints or concerns can be raised with the school through the Complaints Procedure, which is also available on the school website.

RSHE delivery is designed to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and will include LGBT+ content in the programme. This will include talking about LGBT+ families and teaching about sexual orientation and gender identity.

The religious backgrounds of all students will be considered when planning teaching and comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics.

Teaching will reflect the law as it applies to relationships so that students clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they make.

Under the Equality Act, the school will not unlawfully discriminate against students because of their age, sex, race, disability or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnerships or sexual orientation.

Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We are committed to RSHE being accessible to all students. This will demand that high-quality teaching is both differentiated and personalised. The school will also be mindful of the preparing for adulthood outcomes as set out in the SEND code of practice, when preparing these curriculum areas for students with SEND,

Statutory Requirements

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 are made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Relationships Education is compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools. Health Education is compulsory in all state-funded schools.



Parents' Right to Withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of RSHE (intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health), up to and including three terms before the child turns 16. Parents cannot withdraw their child from Relationships or Health Education.

Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Headteacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's file. DfE guidance states that 'except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parent's request to withdraw their child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.' Appropriate alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from RSHE.

Parents wishing to view resources

We are cognisant of DfE advice to schools and parents which reinforces that parents should be able to see what their children are being taught in RSHE lessons. We seek transparency about what is covered in RSHE lessons through publishing clear and detailed curriculum plans as well as lesson summaries with suggested actions parents may wish to take to reinforce or explore what has been taught. Should a parent wish to view specific presentations or lesson resources they should contact Mr J. Greenshields (j.greenshields@ponthigh.org.uk) to arrange this.

Working with external agencies

To support and enhance the delivery of RSHE, Ponteland High School works with external partners to draw on specialist knowledge and implement different ways of engaging with our students. Where external agencies are used, the school will ensure that all necessary checks (of the visiting organisation) are completed and any visitors linked to those agencies.

The school will work with external agencies to ensure that the content delivered is age-appropriate and accessible for all students. Any materials that are used must be approved by the school in advance of the session. The school will ensure that visitors are aware of aspects of confidentiality and understands how safeguarding and disclosure reports should be dealt with in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.



Safeguarding, Reports of Abuse and Confidentiality

We recognise that at the heart of RSHE, the focus is on keeping children safe, and acknowledge our significant role in preventive education. RSHE will provide an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports therefore students will be made aware of the processes to enable them to raise their concerns or make a report including how this will be handled. This will also include processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.

In line with the document Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020), all staff are aware of what to do if a pupil tells them they are being abused or neglected. Staff are also aware of the need to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those that need to be involved, such as referring the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within school and/or the Headteacher.

Informing and Involving Parents, Staff and Students

Parents and carers are key educators of their children and their role in education concerning relationships and sex education is seen by the school as extremely important. This policy has been designed to consider and reflect the views of parents whilst meeting our statutory obligations.

All staff play an important role in planning, delivering and reviewing RSHE. Student views will be gathered through Student Voice activities, formally and informally, and their views will be used to improve delivery of RSHE lessons.

Policy review

The PSHE curriculum including RSHE is reviewed regularly to ensure that the content and teaching materials are fit for purpose. The review process identifies what is working well and any elements that need to be altered to provide a better-quality learning experience for our students. This review process is informed by students, teachers, Pastoral and senior leaders and will also consider views shared by parents.



Appendix 1

By the end of secondary school:

Schools should continue to develop the knowledge on topics specified for primary as required, and in addition, cover the following content by the end of secondary.

Families	<p>Students should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there are different types of committed, stable relationships. • How these relationships might contribute to happiness and their importance for bringing up children. • What marriage is, including legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting. • 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 relationship. • 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 or friend; intimate or other relationship is unsafe; and how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<p>Students should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The characteristics of healthy and positive friendships (in all contexts, including online). 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 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 return 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 behaviours within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control. • What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable



<p>On line and Media</p>	<p>Students should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply to online contexts. • 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 materials to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material that 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. • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
<p>Being Safe</p>	<p>Students should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).



<p>Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health</p>	<p>Students should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 outlooks, 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 and menopause. ● That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others. ● That there is a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex. ● The facts about contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available. ● The facts about 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.
--	---

Reviewed by: Jonny Greenshields

Reviewed: Jul 25