

High Spen Primary School



Relationships Education Policy

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Introduction

From September 2026, Relationships Education is still compulsory for all primary schools but with some key changes added. For all maintained schools there is also a statutory duty to provide Health Education. This includes primary aged children learning about the 'changing adolescent body', included in the expected outcomes for Primary Health Education. This new policy has been written in response to this requirement and is to be established on the 1st of September 2026. Relationships and sex education at High Spen Primary School should be complimentary to, and supportive of, the role of parents, in educating their children about sexuality and relationships.

What is Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)?

The focus for primary relationships education should be on teaching the skills and knowledge that form the building blocks of all positive relationships, supporting children from the start of their education to grow into kind, caring adults who have respect for others and know how to keep themselves and others safe.

Effective relationships and sex education can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by pupils if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables children and young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and well being. Guidance states;

“... that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born.”

At High Spen, we use the PSHE Association programme for PSHE to support our teaching of RSE. This comprehensive programme provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex, and sexual health. It also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline.

Aims

The aim of RSE is to provide balanced information about physical and emotional changes, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health.

Our RSE programme aims to prepare pupils for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour in the real and online world.
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within personal relationships.

- avoid being pressured into uncomfortable or dangerous situations.
- communicate effectively by developing the appropriate language for body parts (now added to Y2 curriculum) and functions sex and relationship issues (Y5/6)
- develop awareness of their sexuality, challenge sexism and prejudice, and promote equality and diversity.
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves in a variety of situations.
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access advice and support if necessary.

Organisation and Content of Relationships and Sex Education

We specifically deliver relationships and sex education through our PSHE Association Programme and science lessons in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Much of the relationships and sex education in school takes place within PSHE lessons. Teachers generally deliver these aspects of the PSHE curriculum with support from professionals where appropriate. Such as visits from Northumbria Police to develop key skills of dealing with the digital world to our Y5 and 6 children. We also use Pol-Ed materials which are a police-based resources to aid covering topics such as discrimination and bullying and online lessons such as learning about AI and deep fakes. School staff are usually the best people to work with the pupils on many of the RSE topics as they are aware of each pupil's individual circumstances. RSE lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction are also taught as part of National Curriculum science. The PSHE Association Programme and science National Curriculum are taught in every year.

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some pupils will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson.

When pupils ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly at an age-appropriate level and within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. If it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the age and development of the rest of the pupils, the question will be dealt with individually at another time.

More expert or specialist teachers may support staff that are uncomfortable with teaching certain aspects of the RSE curriculum. Support and professional development will be provided for of these staff, so that they can develop their confidence in delivering the whole of the RSE programme.

Relationships education: content to be covered by the end of primary

Families and people who care for me

Curriculum content:

1. That families are important for children growing up safe and happy because they can provide love, security and stability.
2. The characteristics of safe and happy family life, such as 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 other's lives.
3. That the families of other children, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes 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.
4. That stable, caring relationships are at the heart of safe and happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up.
5. That marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.
6. 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

Curriculum content:

1. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
2. That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. Pupils should learn skills for developing caring, kind friendships.
3. That not every child will have the friends they would like at all times, that most people feel lonely sometimes, and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it.
4. The characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties.
5. That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened.
6. How to manage conflict, and that resorting to violence is never right.
7. How to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to get support when needed.

Respectful, kind relationships

Curriculum content:

1. How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others, including in families and friendships. Pupils should be encouraged to discuss how we balance the needs and wishes of different people in relationships and why this can be complicated.
2. The importance of setting and respecting healthy boundaries in relationships with friends, family, peers and adults.
3. How to communicate effectively and manage conflict with kindness and respect; how to be assertive and express needs and boundaries; how to manage feelings, including disappointment and frustration.
4. Pupils should have opportunities to discuss the difference between being assertive and being controlling, and conversely the difference between being kind to other people and neglecting your own needs.
5. That they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and the importance of respecting others, including those who are different (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices, or have different preferences or beliefs.
6. Practical steps they can take and skills they can develop in a range of different contexts to improve or support their relationships.
7. The conventions of courtesy and manners.
8. The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. Pupils should have opportunities to think about how they foster their own self-esteem and build a strong sense of their own identity, including through developing skills and interests.
9. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult), and how to get help.
10. What a stereotype is, how stereotypes can be unfair, negative, destructive or lead to bullying and how to challenge a stereotype.
11. How to seek help when needed, including when they are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

Online safety and awareness

Curriculum content:

1. That people should be respectful in online interactions, and that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including where people are anonymous. For example, the importance of avoiding putting pressure on others to share information and images online, and strategies for resisting peer pressure.
2. How to critically evaluate their online relationships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. For example, that people sometimes behave differently online, including pretending to be someone else, or pretending to be a child, and that this can lead to dangerous situations. How to recognise harmful content or harmful contact, and how to report this.
3. That there is a minimum age for joining social media sites (currently 13), which protects children from inappropriate content or unsafe contact with older social media users, who may be strangers, including other children and adults.
4. The importance of exercising caution about sharing any information about themselves online. Understanding the importance of privacy and location settings to protect information online.
5. Online risks, including that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once a picture or words has been circulated there is no way of deleting it everywhere and no control over where it ends up.
6. That the internet contains a lot of content that can be inappropriate and upsetting for children, and where to go for advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online.

Being Safe

Curriculum content:

1. What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including online). This can include learning about boundaries in play and in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources etc.
2. The concept of privacy and its implications for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
3. That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe contact, including physical contact.
4. How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online), including those they do and do not know.
5. How to recognise when a relationship is harmful or dangerous, including skills for recognising who to trust and who not to trust.
6. How to report abuse, concerns about something seen online or experienced in real life, or feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
7. How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

We will be using the new PSHE guidance from the PSHE association (see below) to teach the statutory requirements for PSHE and RSE but importantly, we will be adapting this for the specific needs of the children in our school. For example, we teach 'Zones of Regulation' which is a very important whole school approach and in KS2 we follow a programme called 'MELVA,' both of which go hand in hand with the mental health and well-

being sections seen below. We also will add in any links with Pol-Ed when they are available throughout the year.

Primary PSHE education | Long-term overview

Early years foundation stage: For guidance and resources to support foundational learning before key stage 1, see our growing range of [EYFS materials](#).

Statutory RSHE

Statutory RSHE

Economic Wellbeing & Careers

Economic Wellbeing & Careers

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 1	Making friends: playing and learning together	Mental health and wellbeing	Celebrating me, you and our families	Safety at home	Being healthy	Showing kindness to ourselves and others
Year 2	Mental health and wellbeing	Keeping safe online	Me, my body and staying safe	Money and work	Safety outside the home	Looking back and moving on
Year 3	Me, my friends and belonging	Mental health and wellbeing	Building healthy habits	Making choices online	Keeping safe out and about	Looking out for each other
Year 4	Mental health and wellbeing	Exploring ways to manage risk	Forming respectful relationships	Money matters and news literacy	Me, my body and growing up	Families and growing together
Year 5	Friendships, stereotypes and bullying	Mental health and wellbeing	Positively engaging with our world	Respecting boundaries	Safe connections online	Embedding healthy habits and learning first aid
Year 6	Mental health and wellbeing	Managing money and online spending	Changes in puberty (and sex education)	Drug education: assessing risk and managing influences	Developing our AI literacy	Looking to the future

Parents

The school is aware that the primary role in children's sex education lies with parents and carers. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents and carers of children at our school, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. To promote this objective, we:

- inform parents and carers about the school's sex education policy and practice;
- answer any questions that parents or carers may have about the sex education of their child;
- take seriously any issue that parents or carers raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about the arrangements for sex education in the school;
- encourage parents and carers to be involved in reviewing the school policy, and making modifications to it as necessary;
- inform parents and carers about the best practice known with regard to sex education, so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home.

We believe that through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, children will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing bodies and their increasing responsibilities.

Withdrawal from RSE lessons

Parents/carers still have the right to withdraw their children from sex education provided at High Spen Primary School (in line with 2025/26 guidance) except for those parts included in statutory National Curriculum science and that included within Statutory Relationships and Health Education. Those parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited in to see the head teacher who will explore any concerns and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. Once a child has been withdrawn, they cannot take part in the specific sex education lessons until the request for withdrawal has been removed. Materials are available to parents/carers who wish to supplement the school sex education programme or who wish to deliver sex education to their children at home. Parents and carers cannot withdraw from any aspect of Relationships Education and also Health Education lessons covering the changing adolescent body (puberty).

Inclusion

Ethnic, Cultural and Religious Groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic, cultural and religious groups. We encourage parents /carers to discuss any concerns with the Head teacher.

Pupils with Special Needs

We will ensure that all pupils receive relationships and sex education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the needs of all our pupils, taking specialist advice where necessary.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate question and offer support. Pupils, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that relationships and sex education is relevant to them.

Confidentiality and Child Protection / Safeguarding Issues

At the beginning of each session, the teacher will explain the rules of the session and explain to the children that they cannot guarantee confidentiality. As a general rule a child's confidentiality is maintained by the teacher or member of staff concerned; however, if this person believes that the child is at risk or in danger, she/he talks to the named child protection co-ordinator who takes action as laid down in the Child Protection Policy. All staff members are familiar with the policy and know the identity of the member of staff with responsibility for Child Protection issues. The child concerned will be informed that confidentiality is being breached and reasons why. The child will be supported by the teacher throughout the process.

The role of the Headteacher and Governing body

It is the responsibility of the Governors to ensure that as well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing boards or management committee should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes in regard to RSHE;
- RSHE is well led, effectively managed and well planned;
- the quality of RSHE provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;

- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn;
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations

The head teacher liaises with external agencies regarding the school RSHE programme and ensures that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy, and that they work within this framework. The head teacher monitors this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy. Parents should be consulted on the RSE policy and have the opportunity to express their views. They also must be informed of the limits of their right to withdraw their child from sex education and have the opportunity to do so within these limits.

Monitoring and Review

The Curriculum Committee of the governing body monitors the impact of our RSE policy on an annual basis. This committee reports its findings and recommendations to the full governing body, as necessary, if the policy needs modification. The Curriculum Committee gives serious consideration to any comments from parents and carers about the RSE programme and makes a record of all such comments. Governors require the Head Teacher to keep a written record, giving details of the content and delivery of our RSE programme. This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if necessary.