

 HOLYPORT COLLEGE	Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education Policy	
	Effective Date: 6th July 2026	Version No: v1.6

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSHE) AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

This policy has regard to the Department for Education statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE), and Health Education (September 2021 and subsequent updates, including anticipated 2026 revisions)

It is implemented in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

RSHE at the College is a core part of safeguarding and personal development education.

Person responsible for policy formulation, implementation, maintenance and evaluation	Mrs R Harding - Director of Inclusive Education and Head of PSHE
Persons consulted	Mr A Ingall - Head Teacher Mrs A Jeffery - Assistant Head Inclusion and Safeguarding
Adopted by Governors on	June 26
Date of future review	June 27

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REVISION STATUS TABLE

Revision No	Effective date	Summary of Revision	Reviewed by	Date
v1.0	2 July 2014	New Policy		
V1.1	26 April 2019	Periodic review	SMT	26 April 2019
V1.2	4 March 2021	Periodic review	GWC	4 March 2021
V1.3	9 June 2022	Annual review	GWC	9 June 2022
V1.4	29 June 2023	Annual review	FGB	20 June 23
V1.5	6 June 2024	Annual review	GWC	6 June 2024
V1.6	6 June 2026	Annual review	GWC	6 June 2027

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WHAT IS SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION (RSHE)?

RSHE is the teaching and learning about emotional, social, and physical development, relationships, sexual health, and wellbeing.

It aims to:

- support pupils in forming healthy, respectful relationships
- ensure pupils are safe, informed, and emotionally prepared for adulthood
- provide accurate, age-appropriate, and factual knowledge

RSHE is not about encouraging early sexual activity, but about ensuring pupils can make safe, informed decisions when they are ready.

RSHE forms part of the school's safeguarding curriculum and contributes directly to pupils' wellbeing and protection.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The RSHE curriculum is underpinned by the following principles:

Age and Development Appropriateness

- Content is carefully sequenced to reflect pupils' age, maturity, and developmental stage.

Accuracy and Evidence Base

- Teaching is factual, medically accurate, and based on reliable sources.

Safeguarding Focus

- RSHE supports pupils in recognising risk, abuse, exploitation, and unsafe relationships.

Parental Partnership

- Parents are consulted regularly and kept informed of curriculum content.

Inclusion and Respect

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- The curriculum is inclusive of all pupils and promotes respect for individuals in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Curriculum Neutrality

- Sensitive topics are taught in a balanced and non-judgemental manner, focusing on factual understanding, legal rights, and safeguarding.

Curriculum Integration

- RSHE is delivered through PSHE, Science, and RE where appropriate, ensuring coherence and accuracy.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE TAUGHT PROGRAMME

Our RSHE programme is built upon the following pillars, ensuring that every student, regardless of their starting point or individual needs, is empowered to navigate life safely and with dignity.

Foundations of Healthy Relationships

- To help pupils recognise the characteristics of healthy vs. unhealthy relationships, focusing on consent, mutual respect, and readiness.
- Students will be able to identify "red flags" such as coercion, control, and manipulation in both offline and online environments. They will know exactly how to seek help and report concerns.

Physical and Sexual Health (Biological & Legal Facts)

- To provide accurate, factual information regarding the human body, sexuality, and the legalities of sexual behavior.
- Students will learn about STIs (prevention and treatment), contraception, and the physical/emotional consequences of sexual activity. All learning is delivered with a focus on delaying sexual activity and understanding the importance of informed, responsible decision-making.

The Law and Digital Safety

- To ensure pupils understand the legal framework governing their actions, particularly in a digital age.
- Outcome:

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- Comprehensive teaching on laws regarding consent, exploitation, harassment, and the sharing of indecent images (including the legalities of "sexting").
- Understanding the impact of pornography, the risks of grooming, and emerging threats such as AI-generated content and deepfakes.
- Personal Reputation: Recognizing how online behavior impacts long-term safety and reputation.

Physical World Safety

- To extend safeguarding beyond social interactions into physical environment management.
- Students will receive practical instruction on managing personal safety, including fire, water, road, and railway safety, as well as the legal and personal risks associated with knife crime and peer-led conflict.

5. Inclusion, Diversity, and Neutrality

- To foster an environment of respect and equality in line with the Equality Act 2010, while maintaining statutory neutrality.
- Teaching will be inclusive and factual, supporting all pupils (including those questioning their identity) without the direct promotion of any particular lifestyle or "contested" ideological viewpoint.
 - Students will learn about the importance of marriage and stable committed relationships while recognizing that families take many supportive forms.

Curriculum Progression by Key Stage

Key Stage 3 (Ages 11–13): Foundations and Change

At this stage, pupils navigate the onset of puberty. They are concerned with physical "normality," the transition from friendship to attraction, and the influence of peer groups.

- **Physical Health:** Factual, age-appropriate instruction on puberty, the menstrual cycle, fertility, and reproduction. This includes "normality" in development and the importance of personal hygiene and self-care.
- **Relationships & Safety:** Introduction to consent, personal boundaries, and the characteristics of positive friendships. Pupils learn to identify peer pressure and how to access support from trusted adults.

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- **Respect & Diversity:** Building a foundation of respect for different family structures and relationships. Pupils learn to challenge stereotypes and harmful messages from social media and online sources in line with the Equality Act 2010.

For all pupils, with particular support for those with SEND, we teach the vital distinction between public and private spaces, behaviors, and body parts as a core personal safety skill.

Key Stage 4 (Ages 14–16): Risk, Health, and Influence

Pupils are increasingly exposed to social pressures regarding sexual experimentation. They require practical knowledge on health services, the law, and the impact of substances (drugs/alcohol) on decision-making.

- **Health & Wellbeing:** Accurate information on contraception, sexual health, and accessing confidential services. This includes specific statutory content on endometriosis, the impact of the menopause, and the risks of nicotine addiction (vaping).
- **Navigating Harm:** Advanced learning on unhealthy relationship traits, including coercion, exploitation, and manipulation. Pupils are taught the legalities of image-sharing and the impact of pornography on relationship expectations.
- **Emotional Resilience:** Strategies for managing strong emotions and pressure. This includes exploring how cultural, religious, and societal expectations influence personal choices.

Post-16 (Ages 16–19): Intimacy, Adulthood, and the Law

As young people reach the legal age of consent, the focus shifts to long-term commitments, the complexities of intimate relationships, and the legal responsibilities of adulthood.

- **Intimate Relationships:** Exploring the features of stable, respectful intimate relationships, focusing on communication, trust, and the equality of partners.
- **Health & Parenthood:** Deepening understanding of sexual health, fertility/infertility, pregnancy choices, and lifelong reproductive health.
- **Rights & The Law:** A critical examination of the law as it relates to sexual behaviour, harassment, and exploitation. Pupils will learn to critically deconstruct media influences on identity and body image.

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- **Inclusion:** Promoting a sophisticated understanding of equality and diversity, ensuring students can confidently challenge discrimination and promote inclusion in their wider adult lives.

SAFEGUARDING

RSHE plays a key role in safeguarding pupils.

Where a concern arises:

- staff must follow the school safeguarding policy immediately
- concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- external agencies will be involved where appropriate

Where a pupil under 16 is believed to be sexually active:

- staff will encourage discussion with trusted adults where safe
- pupils will be referred to appropriate health support
- safeguarding procedures will be followed without delay

All pupils under 18 are protected under child safeguarding law.

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR RSHE

To ensure that both staff and pupils feel confident and safe when discussing sensitive topics, the College employs a range of deliberate pedagogical strategies. RSHE is taught in a structured, supportive learning environment that prioritizes safety, accuracy, and dignity.

Staff Expertise and Classroom Relationships

- RSHE will be delivered by trained staff who are skilled in teaching sensitive and safeguarding-related content.
- Where possible, lessons will be taught by staff who have an established positive relationship with the pupils, ensuring a foundation of trust.
- The curriculum is carefully mapped across the academic year to ensure that "higher-risk" or more sensitive topics are introduced only after a positive working relationship has been established between the class and the teacher.

Classroom Expectations and "Ground Rules"

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At the start of every RSHE unit, clear classroom expectations are established. These "Ground Rules" are non-negotiable and designed to protect the privacy of all participants:

- No pupil or staff member is required or expected to share personal experience
- Pupils will not be forced to participate in discussions, though they will be encouraged to engage with the material at their own comfort level.
- To ensure scientific accuracy and clarity, anatomically correct language will be used. Key vocabulary will be taught factually and explained in a sensible, age-appropriate manner.
- If a question is deemed too personal, inappropriate, or beyond the scope of the lesson, staff will reinforce the ground rules and redirect the discussion to a factual basis or a more appropriate setting.

Handling Sensitive Disclosures and Questions

- Staff are trained to manage the "unexpected" within an RSHE lesson:
 - If a pupil requires specific medical or emotional answers, they will be directed to appropriate pastoral or medical support, such as the School Nurse or the Safeguarding Team.
 - Any concern that a pupil is at risk of harm, abuse, or exploitation arising from a lesson must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with our Child Protection procedures.

Professional Development and Support

The College is committed to supporting staff through:

- Mentoring, team-teaching with experienced practitioners, and peer observation.
- Regular CPD supported by external specialists to stay abreast of emerging risks (e.g., online harms, AI, and changing statutory guidance).

Values, Ethos, and Compliance

While teaching reflects the school's core values, it remains strictly compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and the 2026 statutory guidance.

- All resources are pre-vetted for age-appropriateness and are available for parental inspection.
- Teaching remains factual and balanced, ensuring that pupils are presented with objective information without the promotion of contested social or ideological viewpoints.

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WORKING WITH STUDENTS

For RSHE to be truly effective, it must be relevant to the lived experiences of our pupils. The College is committed to a curriculum that is "done with" pupils, not just "delivered to" them. Engaging students ensures that we address the real-world issues they face while fulfilling our statutory obligations.

The Role of Pupil Voice

- The College seeks pupils' views to ensure the curriculum is responsive, age-appropriate, and impactful. This engagement prevents "educational guesswork" and allows staff to tailor the delivery to the specific social and emotional needs of the current cohort.

Structured Consultation

- Pupils will be engaged in a needs assessment and evaluation of the RSHE provision as part of every policy review cycle. This will be conducted through:
 - Anonymous feedback on the relevance and clarity of RSHE lessons.
 - End-of-unit reviews where pupils can identify "knowledge gaps" or areas where they require further support.

Balancing Choice with Statutory Duty

While pupil feedback is vital for informing the delivery and sequencing of the curriculum, it does not replace the school's legal obligations.

- All feedback will be balanced against the 2026 statutory requirements and professional safeguarding standards.
- The school maintains the final authority on curriculum content to ensure it remains safe, neutral, and compliant with government "age backstops."

The Home-School Partnership

The College recognises parents and carers as the primary educators of their children regarding relationships and values. Our RSHE programme is designed to complement and support this role, rather than replace it. We acknowledge that while many parents engage deeply in these topics, some—including our boarding community—may rely on the College to provide the structured information necessary for their children to stay safe and informed.

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Consultation and Transparency

The College operates with a commitment to full transparency:

- Parents and carers are consulted each time the RSHE policy is reviewed to ensure it reflects the needs of our community.
- Parents have a legal right to view all teaching materials. These are available for inspection by appointment.
- The College will not use resources from external providers that carry "non-disclosure" clauses or contractual barriers that prevent materials from being shared with parents.

The Statutory Right to Withdraw

RSHE is a statutory requirement. While the majority of the curriculum is compulsory, the law provides parents with specific rights regarding Sex Education:

- Pupils cannot be withdrawn from Relationships Education or Health Education. This includes statutory content on puberty, the changing adolescent body, and reproductive health delivered via the Science curriculum.
- Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from the specific 'Sex Education' components of the RSHE programme.

The Withdrawal Process

Parents or carers wishing to discuss the curriculum or make a formal request for withdrawal should follow these steps:

- Contact Mrs R. Harding, Director of Inclusive Education (r.harding@holyporthcollege.org.uk), or the school office.
- The school will arrange a meeting to discuss the request, clarify the nature of the curriculum, and explain the potential social and emotional implications of withdrawal for the child.
- Requests for withdrawal will be granted except in exceptional circumstances for pupils under the age of 16.

Transition at Age 16

In accordance with statutory guidance, once a pupil is within three terms of their 16th birthday, they possess the legal right to opt back into Sex Education. If a pupil makes this request, the College will provide the education regardless of the parents' previous withdrawal request.

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Complaints and Redress

The College values open dialogue with parents and carers. If a parent has a concern regarding the RSHE curriculum or its delivery, they are encouraged to contact the Director of Inclusive Education in the first instance to resolve the matter informally.

If the concern is not resolved, parents may refer to the school's Formal Complaints Policy, available on the website. This process ensures that parental concerns are heard by the Senior Leadership Team and, where necessary, the Governing Body.

WORKING WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The College recognises that effective RSHE is a collaborative effort involving health professionals, specialist agencies, and the wider community. These partnerships bring specialised knowledge and diverse perspectives that enhance our safeguarding and educational offer.

The Role of the School Medical Centre

Our medical staff are essential partners in the delivery of health-related information:

- Medical centre staff are authorised to provide pupils with factual, age-appropriate information regarding all forms of contraception, including emergency contraception and STI prevention.
- The medical centre operates under the principle of medical confidentiality. Where a pupil is assessed as 'Gillick Competent' (possessing the maturity and understanding to make an informed decision), their privacy will be respected in line with professional clinical guidance.
- Confidentiality is never absolute. Any information that suggests a pupil is at risk of harm, abuse, or exploitation will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), overriding medical confidentiality where necessary to ensure the child's safety.

Staff Boundaries and Referrals

To protect both pupils and staff, clear boundaries are maintained during discussions of a sexual nature:

- Staff delivering RSHE may answer questions within the context of the lesson and the established ground rules.

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- All other staff should avoid prolonged or repetitive private conversations about sexual matters with individual pupils. Instead, they must direct the pupil to the medical centre or a member of the safeguarding team.
- All discussions must remain professional, proportionate, and aligned with the curriculum's educational intent.

External Contributors and Specialist Agencies

The College may engage external professionals (such as health workers, social workers, or specialist youth educators) to support the curriculum.

- All external visitors are subject to the College's safeguarding procedures. They must work within the framework of this RSHE policy and complement, rather than replace, the school's planned provision.
- When external professionals are acting in a clinical capacity (e.g., a school nurse in a 1:1 consultation), they follow their own professional codes of conduct. However, they are still required to report any safeguarding concerns identified within the school setting to the College DSL.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Careful consideration will be given to how best to teach young people with SEND. In the majority of cases, the taught programme will meet their needs. In a minority of cases, and often as part of the Education, Health and Care Plan provision, specialist advice may be sought from partner agencies to personalise provision where this is necessary.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of this policy is subject to continuous review to ensure it remains responsive to the needs of our pupils and compliant with evolving statutory requirements.

Leadership and Oversight

- The Director of Inclusive Education retains overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- Strategic responsibility is delegated to a core leadership group, including the Director of Inclusive Education, the Assistant Head Inclusion and DSL

2. Quality Assurance Processes

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Monitoring activities will be systematic and evidence-based, focusing on:

- Ensuring all statutory "backstops" and content requirements are met.
- Assessing the confidence and accuracy of staff delivery through peer observation and review of teaching materials.
- Evaluating the impact of training on staff's ability to handle sensitive disclosures and contested topics.
- Assessing changes in pupil knowledge, attitudes, and, crucially, their safeguarding awareness (e.g., their ability to identify risk and name a trusted adult).

3. The Role of Stakeholder Feedback

- As outlined in the *Working with Students* section, structured feedback will be gathered from pupils. This ensures the curriculum remains relevant to their lived experiences while remaining within the bounds of statutory law.
- Feedback from parental consultations and the "Right to Withdraw" process will be used to refine how the school communicates the curriculum and supports the home-school partnership.

4. Governance and Compliance

The Governing Body will maintain oversight of the RSHE provision. They will receive regular reports to ensure the school is:

1. Fulfilling its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.
2. Adhering to the 2026 Statutory Guidance.
3. Effectively meeting the diveRSHE needs of all pupils, including those with SEND.

ANNEXE 1

WHAT OUR STUDENTS WILL BE TAUGHT

Below are the core knowledge areas and skills our students will be taught during their time at Holyport College. Content is delivered in a carefully sequenced, age-appropriate way through RSHE, Science, RE, and Personal Development.

Further detail on curriculum sequencing by year group can be found on the school website.

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<http://www.holyportcollege.org.uk/school-life/academic-curriculum/>

1. The Changing Adolescent Body

Pupils will learn:

- Key facts about puberty and the physical and emotional changes of the adolescent body.
- About menstrual wellbeing, including the key facts of the menstrual cycle and managing physical/emotional changes.

2. Families

Pupils will learn:

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships and how these contribute to human happiness and child-rearing.
- What marriage is, including its legal status and the specific protections it carries compared to cohabitation or unregistered ceremonies.
- The roles and responsibilities of parents and the characteristics of successful parenting.
- How to determine if sources of information are trustworthy and how to report concerns if a family or intimate relationship is unsafe.

3. Respectful Relationships (Including Friendships)

Pupils will learn:

- Characteristics of healthy relationships: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, boundaries, privacy, and consent.
- How to manage conflict, reconciliation, and the ending of relationships.
- The damage caused by stereotypes (based on sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability) and how they can normalize non-consensual behavior.
- Their rights under the Equality Act 2010 and the importance of due tolerance for others' beliefs.
- The impact of bullying (including cyberbullying) and the responsibility of bystanders.
- That certain behaviors, such as coercive control and violence, are criminal acts.

4. Online and Media

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Pupils will learn:

- That expectations of behavior apply online just as they do offline.
- The permanence of digital content and the risks of sharing compromising material.
- The harmful impact of pornography, including how it distorts expectations of sex and relationships.
- That sharing indecent images of children is a criminal offense with severe legal penalties.
- Modern Harms: How to recognize and challenge toxic online subcultures (e.g., 'incel' ideologies) and the legal risks of AI-generated content and 'deepfakes'.
- Financial Risks: Managing risks associated with online gambling, in-game purchases (loot boxes), and financial scams.

5. Being Safe

Pupils will learn:

- The laws relating to sexual consent, exploitation, grooming, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, and FGM.
- How to actively communicate and recognize consent, and the fact that consent can be withdrawn at any time in any context.
- How to recognize the "red flags" of unsafe relationships and the specific pathways to seek help.

6. Intimate and Sexual Relationships (Including Sexual Health)

Pupils will learn:

- The characteristics of healthy intimate relationships: mutual respect, loyalty, and equality.
- Facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the impact of lifestyle choices.
- Strategies for identifying and managing peer pressure, including the choice to delay sex or choose intimacy without sex.
- Factual information on the full range of contraception, its efficacy, and where to access confidential advice.
- Factual, impartial information on pregnancy choices (keeping the baby, adoption, and abortion) and miscarriage.
- Facts about STIs (including HIV/AIDS): transmission, reduction of risk through safer sex (condoms), and the importance of testing and treatment.

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- How alcohol and drugs can impair judgment and lead to risky sexual behavior.

ANNEXE 2: LEGAL DEFINITIONS AND GLOSSARY

The Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010)

In line with our legal duties, the College ensures that all pupils are protected from discrimination based on:

- Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, and Sexual Orientation.

Glossary of Terms for 2026 Guidance

- **Biological Sex:** Refers to the biological attributes of male or female as assigned at birth (the focus of our factual health teaching).
- **Gender Identity:** A contested concept regarding an individual's internal sense of their own gender. In line with 2026 guidance, this is taught as a matter of belief rather than consensus fact.
- **Sexual Orientation:** An individual's pattern of emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to others.
- **Gillick Competency:** A legal term used to decide whether a child (under 16) is able to consent to their own medical treatment without parental permission.