

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

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1. Policy statement and rationale

Brunel School is committed to providing high-quality, inclusive and developmentally appropriate Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) as part of its wider PSHE education provision. RSHE supports pupils to develop the knowledge, skills, language, confidence and understanding needed to build safe, healthy and respectful relationships, protect themselves and others, make informed decisions and prepare for adult life.

Teaching is adapted to pupils' developmental stage, communication needs, cognitive profile, lived experience, vulnerabilities and individual safeguarding needs. The curriculum is designed to be accessible, trauma-informed and explicit without being unnecessarily intrusive or personal.

This policy reflects the Department for Education's revised statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance, which came into force on 1 September 2026. The DfE states that schools must have regard to the statutory guidance. The policy also reflects current safeguarding expectations in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and good-practice principles promoted by the PSHE Association.

This policy should be read alongside the school's PSHE curriculum, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Equality Policy, SEND Information Report, Science curriculum and Complaints Policy.

2. Legal and statutory framework

The policy is informed by and should be read in conjunction with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Department for Education: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education – statutory guidance, revised 2025 and in force from 1 September 2026.
- Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002, including the statutory framework underpinning relationships, sex and health education.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.
- Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Science National Curriculum requirements relating to human development, puberty and reproduction, where applicable.
- Human Rights Act 1998 and relevant safeguarding and child protection duties.

3. Definition and scope

For the purpose of this policy, RSHE means the planned teaching that enables pupils to understand relationships, consent, boundaries, sexual development, sexual health, reproduction, online and offline safety, and the law relating to sex and relationships. RSHE sits within the wider PSHE curriculum and is not taught as an isolated set of facts.

RSHE is distinct from, but connected to, Relationships Education and Health Education. At secondary level, RSHE and Health Education are statutory elements of the curriculum. Science lessons also include statutory content from which parents/carers cannot withdraw their child.

The school will publish this policy and make information about the RSHE curriculum accessible to parents/carers. The school will consult parents/carers when developing or making significant changes to the policy and curriculum, in line with statutory expectations.

4. Aims of RSHE

The aims of RSHE at Brunel School are to enable pupils to:

- develop respectful, safe and healthy relationships with others, both offline and online;
- understand consent, personal boundaries, bodily autonomy, privacy and the distinction between public and private behaviour;
- recognise healthy, unhealthy, abusive, coercive and controlling behaviours and know how to seek help;
- understand puberty, physical and emotional changes, reproduction and sexual health in an accurate and age-appropriate way;
- understand contraception, sexually transmitted infections and routes to sexual health support, at the appropriate stage;
- understand relevant aspects of the law relating to sex, relationships, sexual harassment, sexual violence, exploitation and sexual images;

- develop skills in communication, assertiveness, negotiation, decision-making and help-seeking;
- understand online relationships, pornography, image sharing, misinformation, disinformation, algorithms, influencers and emerging digital harms;
- recognise and challenge prejudice, stereotypes, misogyny and harmful attitudes that can contribute to abuse or violence;
- understand violence against women and girls (VAWG), including the importance of respect, equality and positive relationships;
- understand that relationships and families take different forms and that people should be treated with dignity and respect;
- develop confidence to ask questions and identify trusted adults and appropriate sources of support;
- develop resilience, self-respect and the ability to make informed decisions which support their wellbeing and safety.

5. Principles underpinning our RSHE provision

Age, stage and developmentally appropriate: content is matched to pupils' maturity, prior learning, SEND and individual needs.

Inclusive and accessible: all pupils should be able to participate through reasonable adjustments, adapted teaching strategies and appropriate communication support.

Factual and accurate: pupils receive clear information about bodies, relationships, health and the law, using appropriate terminology.

Safeguarding-led: RSHE contributes to prevention, early identification and help-seeking and is integrated with the school's safeguarding systems.

Respectful: pupils are taught to respect themselves and others, including difference in family circumstances, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

Non-judgemental and professional: staff do not impose personal beliefs and do not use lessons to promote personal or contested viewpoints.

Positive: teaching focuses on what healthy relationships and safe choices look like, as well as identifying risks and harms.

Skills as well as knowledge: pupils have opportunities to practise communication, boundary-setting, decision-making and help-seeking.

Trauma-informed: teaching avoids unnecessary personal disclosure, recognises that pupils may have experienced trauma or abuse, and provides clear routes to support.

Pupil voice: pupils' views and learning needs inform curriculum planning and review, within appropriate safeguarding boundaries.

6. Curriculum content and sequencing

The school provides a planned and progressive RSHE curriculum. Content is revisited and built over time rather than delivered as isolated one-off lessons. The detailed curriculum map sits alongside this policy and is reviewed annually.

The following provides the policy-level overview. Exact sequencing may be adapted in response to pupil need, safeguarding concerns, emerging risks, cohort characteristics and curriculum review.

Area	Key learning	Adaptative teaching strategies
Relationships and families	Families and caring relationships; friendships; respectful behaviour; healthy and unhealthy relationships; conflict; repair; boundaries; privacy; support networks.	Explicit modelling, scenarios, social stories, visual supports and repeated practice.
Consent and boundaries	Consent, choice, bodily autonomy, personal space, saying no, recognising pressure, coercion and controlling behaviour; seeking help.	Concrete language, scripts, role play, visual prompts and repeated rehearsal.
Puberty and bodies	Puberty, menstruation, hygiene, body changes, emotions and correct anatomical terminology.	Accessible resources, overlearning, sensory considerations and individualised explanations.
Sexual health and reproduction	Reproduction, pregnancy, contraception, STIs, sexual health services and safer choices, taught at an appropriate developmental stage.	Small-group/individual teaching where required; clear, factual language and additional processing time.
Online safety and relationships	Online communication, image sharing, pornography, online pressure, misinformation/disinformation, influencers, algorithms, AI-generated sexual images/deepfakes, privacy and reporting.	Realistic but carefully selected scenarios; explicit reporting pathways and practical scripts.
Abuse, exploitation and violence	Sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, grooming, exploitation, domestic abuse, coercive control and VAWG.	Safeguarding-sensitive teaching; no personal disclosures required; immediate access to trusted adults.

Equality, diversity and respect	Family diversity; prejudice and stereotyping; sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment; respectful discussion and the law.	Clear factual teaching, accessible vocabulary and careful management of contested views.
Mental wellbeing and help-seeking	Emotions, self-esteem, relationship wellbeing, grief/loss, support networks and safe help-seeking; suicide prevention at secondary level.	Trauma-informed delivery, staff preparation, clear escalation and signposting.

7. Specific curriculum expectations from the 2025 revised guidance.

From 1 September 2026, the revised statutory guidance strengthens or adds expectations in several areas. Brunel School will ensure that its curriculum addresses these in an age- and developmentally appropriate way.

- Violence against women and girls: pupils learn about respect, equality, harmful attitudes and behaviours, and how these can contribute to violence and abuse.
- Misogyny and harmful online cultures: pupils are taught to recognise and critically consider misogynistic content, including harmful online influences and communities, where developmentally appropriate.
- Pornography: teaching addresses the potential harms and unrealistic or harmful messages associated with pornography, including its relationship with consent, respect, body image, and expectations.
- Online sexual harms: pupils learn about image sharing, pressure, sexual harassment, exploitation, manipulated or AI-generated sexual images and other emerging digital risks.
- Consent and coercion: pupils develop an understanding that consent must be freely given, and that pressure, manipulation or coercion undermine genuine consent.
- Domestic abuse and controlling behaviour: pupils learn to recognise unhealthy, controlling and abusive relationship behaviours and how to seek help.
- Suicide prevention: the school maintains a safe and planned approach to suicide prevention teaching, with appropriately trained staff, careful language and clear safeguarding/signposting arrangements.
- Sex, gender and equality law: where these matters are taught, the school teaches relevant facts and law accurately and respectfully and does not endorse a particular contested view.
- Mental wellbeing: teaching supports pupils to recognise emotions, seek help and understand factors that can support healthy relationships and wellbeing.

8. Inclusion, SEND and reasonable adjustments

Brunel School recognises that pupils with SEND, SEMH needs or other vulnerabilities may require additional or different approaches to RSHE. The school will make reasonable

adjustments and adapt teaching so that pupils can access the curriculum safely and meaningfully.

- Use of simplified language, symbols, visuals, social stories, modelling, repetition and overlearning where appropriate.
- Use of AAC or other communication systems and additional processing time where required.
- Teaching of clear safeguarding vocabulary and correct anatomical terminology so pupils can communicate concerns.
- Individual or small-group teaching where this better meets a pupil's needs.
- Consideration of EHCP outcomes, communication needs, sensory needs, cognitive development and known safeguarding vulnerabilities.
- Careful differentiation so that pupils who are not developmentally ready for particular content are taught the essential safety, autonomy and help-seeking concepts at an appropriate level.
- Liaison with parents/carers and relevant professionals where this is necessary to support safe and effective provision, subject to safeguarding and confidentiality requirements.

No pupil will be excluded from RSHE solely because of disability, learning difficulty or communication need. Adaptation will not remove the pupil's entitlement to appropriate safeguarding and relationship education.

9. Equality, diversity, religion and belief.

RSHE is delivered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. The school promotes dignity, respect and equality and does not tolerate discriminatory, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist, racist or disability-related language or behaviour.

Teaching recognises that pupils have different family structures, cultures, beliefs and lived experiences. The religious background of pupils is taken into account when planning and delivering RSHE. Staff will respect pupils' and families' beliefs while ensuring that statutory content is taught accurately.

Where teaching involves sex, gender or gender reassignment, the school will teach relevant facts and law accurately and respectfully. Where views are contested, staff will not present a particular contested viewpoint as the school's position. Safeguarding and equality duties remain central to all teaching.

Family diversity is represented positively, including families with same-sex parents where relevant to the curriculum.

10. Safeguarding and child protection

RSHE is a core component of the school's preventative safeguarding approach. Staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and KCSIE 2026.

- Any disclosure or safeguarding concern arising from an RSHE lesson must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy without delay.

- Staff must not promise confidentiality to a pupil where a safeguarding concern may exist.
- Staff should use professional, agreed language and avoid asking investigative questions. They should listen, reassure, record, and report in line with school procedures.
- Lessons should not require pupils to disclose personal experiences. Distancing techniques, scenarios, and fictional examples should be used where appropriate.
- The curriculum will be responsive to emerging safeguarding concerns, including child-on-child sexual violence and harassment, sexual exploitation, grooming, online sexual abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and domestic abuse.
- Staff should understand that RSHE discussions may surface safeguarding concerns and must know the school's reporting arrangements.
- Online safety teaching is coordinated with the school's filtering and monitoring, online safety, and safeguarding arrangements.

11. Safe teaching and learning

RSHE will be delivered in a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment. Teachers will establish clear ground rules and use teaching methods appropriate to the subject and the needs of the cohort.

- Ground rules are agreed and revisited.
- Mutual respect is explicitly reinforced.
- No pupil is expected to share personal experiences publicly.
- Distancing techniques, scenarios and fictional examples are used to explore sensitive issues.
- Question boxes or anonymous question methods may be used where appropriate.
- Staff use agreed scripts and seek advice where questions are unexpected, highly personal or potentially safeguarding-related.
- Language is factual, inclusive and age/stage appropriate.
- Resources are checked for accuracy, accessibility and suitability before use.
- Lessons are reviewed and adapted where pupil responses indicate that content has been misunderstood or is causing distress.

12. External visitors and resources

External visitors may contribute to RSHE where they add appropriate expertise or value to the planned curriculum. Visitors do not replace the school's responsibility for curriculum content or safeguarding.

- Visitors are appropriately vetted and briefed.
- The school checks the content and resources in advance.
- A member of school staff remains responsible for the session.
- Visitors understand the school's safeguarding, confidentiality and reporting expectations.
- Any external resource is reviewed for accuracy, age appropriateness, accessibility and alignment with the school's values and statutory duties.

13. Parents and carers: information, consultation and transparency

The school recognises parents and carers as important partners in pupils' education. This policy is published and available to parents/carers. The school will provide clear information about what pupils are taught and how RSHE is delivered.

- Parents/carers are consulted when the RSHE policy is developed and when significant changes are proposed.
- The school provides information about the curriculum, including broad content and sequencing.
- Parents/carers may ask questions about curriculum content and resources.
- The school will provide appropriate opportunities for parents/carers to understand how sensitive topics are taught.
- The school will communicate significant changes to provision in a timely manner.

14. Right to withdraw from sex education

- Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of statutory RSHE. This right does not extend to Relationships Education or Health Education, nor to statutory science curriculum content.
- Before deciding a request, the Headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer and, where appropriate, the pupil, to understand the reasons for the request and explain the nature and purpose of the curriculum, including the potential educational and social/emotional implications of withdrawal.
- In secondary schools, a withdrawal request should normally be granted except in exceptional circumstances, for example where the Headteacher considers that withdrawal would not be in the pupil's best interests or could create a safeguarding concern. Any decision will be documented.
- From three school terms before the pupil turns 16, the pupil may choose to receive sex education even where their parent/carer has previously requested withdrawal. The school will ensure pupils understand this right and will make appropriate arrangements.
- Where a pupil is withdrawn, the school will provide appropriate, purposeful education for the pupil during the period of withdrawal.

15. Teaching about questions, disclosures and confidentiality

Pupils are encouraged to ask questions. Staff will answer questions in a way that is factual, age/stage appropriate and consistent with this policy. Staff are not expected to answer questions beyond their professional role and should seek advice where necessary.

The school cannot guarantee confidentiality where a pupil shares information that indicates a safeguarding concern. Pupils are reminded of this boundary in an age-appropriate way.

Where a question or disclosure indicates a safeguarding concern, the staff member will follow the school's safeguarding procedure and report to the DSL/deputy without delay.

16. Assessment, pupil voice and impact

Assessment in RSHE focuses on what pupils know, understand and can do. It is not used to require pupils to disclose personal beliefs, experiences or sexual behaviour.

- Baseline and end-point checks of knowledge and understanding.
- Observation of communication, decision-making, boundary-setting and help-seeking skills.
- Accessible self-reflection and pupil voice.
- Work scrutiny and curriculum review.
- Evidence of pupils' ability to identify trusted adults and appropriate sources of support.
- Review of whether teaching is accessible and appropriately differentiated for pupils with SEND/SEMH needs.

Pupil voice will contribute to curriculum development and review while maintaining appropriate safeguarding boundaries.

17. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Governing Body / Proprietor	Approve the policy; ensure statutory duties are met; monitor implementation and impact.
Headteacher	Ensure effective implementation, appropriate staffing, staff training, parental engagement and safeguarding arrangements.
PSHE/RSHE Lead	Plan and sequence the curriculum; maintain resources; support staff; coordinate consultation; monitor coverage and evaluate impact.
DSL / Deputies	Provide safeguarding oversight; advise staff on disclosures and emerging risks; ensure concerns are managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures.
Teachers and support staff	Deliver agreed curriculum content safely; model respectful relationships; use appropriate language; report safeguarding concerns without delay.
Parents/carers	Engage with information and consultation; discuss learning with pupils where appropriate; raise questions or concerns with the school.
Pupils	Participate respectfully, follow agreed ground rules, ask questions and seek help when needed.

18. Staff training and professional development

Staff delivering RSHE will receive appropriate support and professional development. This will include safeguarding expectations, handling disclosures, safe teaching of sensitive topics, inclusive practice, SEND/SEMH adaptation and emerging online harms.

The school will draw on reputable professional guidance, including the PSHE Association, to support curriculum development and staff confidence. Staff will be expected to keep their practice aligned with current statutory guidance and school procedures.

19. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The PSHE/RSHE Lead, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body will monitor the effectiveness of RSHE through a combination of curriculum review, lesson visits where appropriate, pupil voice, staff feedback, work scrutiny, resource review and safeguarding information.

- Annual audit against the current DfE statutory RSHE guidance.
- Review of curriculum sequencing and coverage.
- Review of accessibility and reasonable adjustments for SEND/SEMH pupils.
- Review of pupil knowledge, skills and confidence.
- Review of emerging safeguarding issues and whether curriculum content needs to respond.
- Review of parental feedback and consultation.
- Annual policy review, or earlier where statutory guidance or significant school circumstances change.

20. Linked school policies and documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Information Report / SEND Policy
- PSHE Curriculum / Programme of Study
- Science Curriculum
- Mental Health and Wellbeing provision
- Complaints Policy
- Acceptable Use / ICT / Filtering and Monitoring arrangements
- Attendance Policy, where wellbeing or safeguarding concerns affect attendance

21. Key external guidance and resources

The following sources underpin this policy and should be checked when the policy is reviewed:

- Department for Education – Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education: statutory guidance (revised 2025; in force 1

September 2026): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-RSHE-and-health-education>

- Department for Education – Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Department for Education – Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- PSHE Association – Statutory RSHE: <https://pshe-association.org.uk/guidance/ks1-4/statutory-rshe>
- PSHE Association – Writing your RSHE policy: <https://pshe-association.org.uk/guidance/ks1-4/writing-your-RSHE-policy>
- PSHE Association – Programme of Study for PSHE education: <https://pshe-association.org.uk/guidance/ks1-5/programme-of-study>