

Weston Secondary School's Relationships Education, Relationships Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy 2025-2026

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Introduction and statutory guidance

This Policy is written in line with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance (draft May 2024). The policy has been produced in partnership with Hamwic Education Trust.

The statutory guidance used to inform this policy is listed below

- As a secondary academy school we must provide relationships education to all pupils as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).
- We do not have to follow the National Curriculum but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is of similar breadth and depth to the National Curriculum. This includes the requirement to teach the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum. At Weston Secondary School we follow the national curriculum for science.
- In teaching Relationships and Health Education, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).
- Weston Secondary School will provide a balanced broadly-based curriculum which:
 - Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society;
 - Prepares students at the school for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life;
 - Promotes the wellbeing of students at the school;
 - Deliver Relationships and Sex Education (Secondary).

Definitions and key areas of teaching

Relationship Education – Secondary

Relationships and sex education (RSE) is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

Relationship Education will focus on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with reference to relationships, sexual health and wellbeing, mental and emotional well-being, the law regarding sex and consent and online safety and media influence.

All teaching will reflect the Equality Act 2010 ensuring there is no discrimination for any pupil or family with protected characteristics.

Children will be taught in an age-appropriate way about the characteristics and values of healthy relationships, including area such as differences, boundaries, respect, trust and kindness. Teaching will focus on both face-to-face and online relationships recognising the significance of the digital world we now embrace. Teachers will also take all opportunities to discuss positive emotional and mental well-being with children. The characteristics that will be taught are also reflected in the school values of

- Aspire
- Believe
- Achieve

Learning will be planned to meet the objectives set out in the Relationships Education, Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance 2021 (see appendix 1), under the broad headings of

- Relationships
- Healthy Living
- Online

Body changes and life cycles

The curriculum is designed around active engagement in learning, rather than passively receiving information. Students will be given opportunities to consider and clarify their values and beliefs and to rehearse and develop enquiry and interpersonal skills. Lessons develop a safe understanding of debate and encourage students to positively challenge opinions which may differ from their own. Every half term, students are provided with a booklet to encourage them to formulate detailed, well-structured answers.

At KS3 & KS4 the students will be taught the PSHE & RSE program through six core themes:

1. Healthy Living
2. Aspirations
3. Relationships
4. Online
5. Safety
6. Character

We recognise that during such lessons, children may have questions because of their learning. We are mindful that unanswered questions often lead to misconceptions and will aim to avoid this where possible.

When questions arise, they will be dealt with as follows.

- Questions will be answered factually for the class or individual.
- Questions of a personal nature directly linked to the teaching may need to be dealt with by talking directly to the child with an additional adult also present. If deemed necessary, teachers will inform parents of the questions asked.
- Where a question relates to sex education beyond the scientific teaching, children will be advised to ask their parents or carers.

Parents have the right to withdraw children from Sex Education aspects that are not part of the science curriculum. In the first instance, parents should contact the Headteacher who will advise parents on how to withdraw.

Health and wellbeing

Health and wellbeing education will focus on the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. It will include aspects such as the importance of exercise, good nutrition and the normal range of emotions we experience. Pupils will be taught about moderation, including online and the positive two-way relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing.

Learning will be planned at an age-appropriate level to meet the objectives set out in the Relationships Education, Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance 2021 (see appendix 2), under the broad headings of

- General wellbeing
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Health protection and prevention
- Personal safety
- Basic first aid
- Developing bodies

Relationships and health curriculum delivery

Relationships and Health Education (RHE) is taught through weekly lessons linked to the Weston Secondary School personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and links with the whole school assembly programme.

An overview of the broad topics covered, and the linked Relationship and Health objectives can be found in appendix 3.

Biological aspects of sex education are taught within the science curriculum in line with the age expectations set out in the National curriculum. A number of aspects of the RHE link closely to science, computing, PE and DT. Where this is the case, messages will be reinforced within these subjects.

The areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

We are mindful that some children with SEND may need additional support to understand the themes and learning within the relationships and health education curriculum. Teachers will draw on their knowledge of the child to ensure learning is differentiated appropriately.

We will keep abreast of local contextual issues and support these through our curriculum where possible.

In Southampton, we are aware that the locality is towards the end of the 2017-2025 Health and well-being plan and that the pandemic has slowed progress. The locality also now has a 2022 – 2027 Education Strategy plan with the vision of: *we want all children and young people in Southampton to get a good start in life, live safely, be healthy and happy and go on to have successful opportunities in adulthood.* A rise in domestic abuse and violence against women and girls has led the city council to produce a targeted 2023-2027 plan.

Roles and responsibilities

The local governing committee

The local governing committee will consult parents, suggest amendments to the headteacher and approve the RHE policy. They will hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from any non-scientific components of sex education (in line with the science national curriculum).

The Headteacher will determine whether any aspects of the curriculum will be delivered by professionals outside of the school (e.g., the school nurse may deliver information about menstruation).

Staff

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Delivering Relationships and Health Education in a sensitive way and in accordance with their year group expectations
- Modelling positive attitudes to Relationships and Health Education
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from non-statutory components of RSE and Health Education

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher. The leader for RSE at Weston Secondary School is Mr T Patten.

Pupils

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

Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. Staff have access to the RHE Policy and revisit this when changes occur.

The headteacher and subject leader will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

Monitoring of RSE

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Senior Leaders and the RSE leader through:

- Planning scrutiny
- Lesson observation
- Analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils
- Monitoring of SEN plans and IEPs where appropriate
- Sampling of pupils' end of year reports

Pupils' development in RHE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. This policy will be reviewed annually and will require approval by the local governing committee.

APPENDIX 1 – Expectations for Relationships Education

Families and people who care for me	Pupils should know 1. that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability. 2. the characteristics of healthy family life, 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 others' families, 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, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up. 5. that marriage represents 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	Pupils should know 1. how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. 2. that through no fault of their own, not every child will have the friends they would like, that most people feel lonely at some point and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it. 3. the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties. 4. that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. 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, and that resorting to violence is never right. 6. how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.
Respectful relationships	Pupils should know 1. the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs. 2. practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. 3. the conventions of courtesy and manners. 4. the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.

	5. that they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show respect to others, including those in positions of authority. 5. about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help. 6. what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. 7. the importance of respecting boundaries, including understanding permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.
Online relationships	Pupils should know 1. that people sometimes behave differently online, and that this can lead to dangerous situations. For example, someone pretending to be someone they are not, or an adult presenting as a child, to get another person to do something for them that they don't want to do or shouldn't do. 2. that children should be respectful in online interactions, and the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including when we are anonymous. 3. the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. 4. how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. 5. how information and data is shared and used online, including the risks of sending images and information (without discussing details of sexual imagery). 6. about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be circulated online 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. 7. that there is a minimum age for joining social media sites (normally age 13) in part to protect children from inappropriate content or unsafe contact with older social media users, who may be strangers, including other children and adults. 8. the importance of avoiding putting pressure on others to share information and images online, and strategies for resisting peer pressure. This should be covered without discussing details of sexual imagery. 9. who to go to for advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online. Pupils should understand what they should do if they see something online that makes them feel worried. Pornography should not be referenced in primary education.
Being safe	Pupils should know 1. what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). This can include learning about

	boundaries in play and in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources and so on. 2. about 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 and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. 6. how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. 7. how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. 8. where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.
Consent & Healthy Relationships	Pupils should know 1. Characteristics of healthy vs. unhealthy relationships (trust, respect, support vs. control, pressure, fear) 2. Consent: what it means, why it must be freely given, informed, enthusiastic, and ongoing 3. How power dynamics can affect consent (age, authority, social pressure) 4. Recognising manipulation, coercion, and gaslighting in relationships 5. Conflict resolution: managing disagreements in a healthy way 6. Setting and respecting personal boundaries in romantic and platonic relationships 7. Recognising and addressing emotional abuse (e.g., controlling behaviour, guilt-tripping) 8. The impact of relationship breakups and healthy ways to cope 9. Supporting friends experiencing unhealthy or abusive relationships
Sexual Health, Contraception & Reproductive Wellbeing	Pupils should know 1. Types of contraception (e.g., condoms, birth control, IUDs, implants) and their effectiveness 2. STIs: types, symptoms, prevention, testing, and treatment 3. Myths vs. facts about pregnancy prevention 4. Emergency contraception and abortion laws 5. Menstrual health: common conditions (e.g., PCOS, endometriosis), pain management, and tracking cycles 6. Fertility & reproductive health: lifestyle factors, infertility, choices around having children 7. Where to access confidential sexual health advice and support

Online Safety, Sexting & Digital Boundaries	Pupils should know 1. Sexting and image-based abuse: legal risks and emotional impact 2. How to say no to pressure to share images or engage in online sexual activity 3. What to do if an intimate image is shared without consent (reporting, support, removal) 4. Understanding online predators and grooming (recognising red flags, how to report concerns) 5. Catfishing and fake identities: how to verify who someone really is 6. Managing online relationships: risks of meeting people online, balancing online and offline interactions 7. Protecting digital footprints: how past online behaviour can affect future opportunities 8. How to critically assess online sources and media messages about relationships and sex
LGBTQ+ Awareness, Inclusivity & Identity	Pupils should know 1. Myths and misconceptions about LGBTQ+ people and communities 2. Challenging different forms of LGBTQ+ phobias in school and society 3. How to be a good ally to LGBTQ+ peers 4. Coming out: personal choice, challenges, and where to seek support 5. Same-sex relationships will be included within lessons on relationships, rather than as a standalone topic. 6. Legal rights of LGBTQ+ individuals in the UK
Media Influence, Pornography & Body Image	Pupils should know 1. Unrealistic portrayals of relationships and sex in media and pornography – TV, films, and porn often present exaggerated, idealised versions of relationships that create false expectations. 2. How pornography distorts expectations of sex, bodies, and consent – Porn often misrepresents bodies, intimacy, and consent, leading to unrealistic ideas about real-life relationships. 3. Recognising the impact of social media on body image and self-esteem – Edited and filtered images promote unattainable beauty standards, making people more likely to feel insecure. 4. Toxic masculinity and beauty standards: how societal expectations affect confidence – Pressure on men to be strong and women to meet beauty ideals can damage self-worth and mental health. 5. How advertising, influencers, and filters contribute to body dissatisfaction – Airbrushed ads and influencer culture create unrealistic beauty ideals that make self-acceptance harder. 6. Strategies to build a positive body image and self-confidence – Limiting exposure to harmful media and embracing self-acceptance can help build confidence.

Recognising Abuse, Harassment & Seeking Support	Pupils should know 1. Understanding different types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, financial) 2. Recognising signs of sexual harassment and abuse (e.g., inappropriate comments, coercion, groping) 3. What to do if you or someone you know is experiencing abuse (seeking help, reporting options) 4. Revenge porn and image-based abuse: legal consequences and support services 5. Bystander intervention: how to safely challenge or report harassment 6. Where to access confidential support (school, helplines, counselling services)

APPENDIX 2 – PSHE/RSE curriculum overview

The PSHE curriculum at Weston Secondary School is structured around key themes such as Healthy Living, Aspirations, Relationships, Online Safety, and Character Development. Each theme includes specific topics like puberty, drugs, friendships, social media, extremism, and human rights, ensuring a well-rounded approach to PSHE and RSE. The curriculum is designed to be progressive, with topics revisited and expanded upon across year groups to deepen students' understanding and engagement.

Additionally, the curriculum is mapped across academic terms, ensuring a balanced distribution of topics throughout the school year. Each year group follows a structured learning sequence, beginning with foundational knowledge in Year 7 and advancing toward more complex and real-world applications by Year 11. For example, younger students focus on friendships and cyberbullying, while older students explore sexting, extremism, and relationships in greater depth. This approach ensures that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for personal well-being, responsible citizenship, and future aspirations.

The purpose of PSHE at Weston Secondary School is to equip students with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, and responsible lives. It helps young people make informed decisions about their wellbeing, relationships, and future, both in and out of school. Through PSHE, students explore a range of real-life issues - from managing emotions and staying safe, to understanding money, diversity, and the impact of media - enabling them to become more self-aware, respectful of others, and prepared for the challenges of modern life.

PSHE at Weston Secondary School is a discussion-based subject designed to maximise student participation and engagement. Each lesson begins with three Knowledge Recall Starter (KRS) questions, allowing students to reflect on prior knowledge or introduce new concepts. These are shared and modelled before the lesson objectives and key definitions are explored. All students are given a booklet that includes both KRS and KRE questions, as well as the opportunity to write down their answers they shared in class, to consolidate their learning. By focusing on open discussion, PSHE at WSS supports the development of students' confidence, speaking skills, and critical thinking, all within a respectful and inclusive environment where a range of perspectives are welcomed.

Throughout the lesson, students are encouraged to think independently and participate in structured discussions, whether through debate-style questions or opinion-based prompts that invite agreement or disagreement.

There is no formal assessment at the end of each PSHE unit at Weston Secondary School. Instead, feedback is primarily verbal, reflecting the discussion-based nature of the subject. Both teacher and peer feedback play a key role, with a strong emphasis on helping students express their viewpoints more clearly and critically. Students are encouraged to respond to each other's ideas, providing respectful and constructive feedback.