RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION, SEX EDUCATION AND HEALTH EDUCATION (RSHE) POLICY

Reviewed by:	J Taylor
Reviewed on:	October 2024
Ratified by:	Education Committee
Ratified on:	October 2024
Next review:	October 2027 (pending revision due to statutory changes)

Policy context and rationale

This Relationships, Sex and Health Education policy covers Heathfield Community College's approach to teaching Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). The core policy was provided by East Sussex County Council as an adopted model policy. This policy has been consulted with the whole-school community including pupils, parents/carers, staff and school governors. Pupil consultation has ensured that the needs of all pupils can be met through the delivery of an 'age and stage' appropriate RSHE curriculum that addresses relevant issues, informed by analysis of public health data and pupil priorities. Consultation methods have included Quality Assurance surveys in Y11 about the whole of KS3 and 4 PSHEe curriculum concentrating on the RSHE strand, a Y7 focus group examining students' perceived needs following primary education and a Y10 survey to quality assure the main Sex Education curriculum input in Y9 in addition to anonymised data from the www.myhealthmyschoolsurvey.org.uk .

Key needs identified were: to focus on the consequences on Mental Health, encourage discussion about sexuality and gender identity and make sure that all students have access to basic First Aid training. Pupil consultation has been used to inform the creation of the school's RSHE curriculum and this policy where appropriate**.**

Policy availability

Stakeholders can be informed about the policy through consultation events promoted on the school's website, advertised through Heathfield Headlines or parent mail or accessing a copy from the school website. Should a hard-copy of the document be required, the school will be happy to provide this upon request and will also work with any stakeholders that require the policy in an alternative format to meet their individual needs, ensuring equitable accessibility for all. The policy can be obtained in an alternative format by contacting office@heathfieldcc.co.uk.

Policy values, aims and objectives

Heathfield's overarching Values particularly pertinent for RSHE are: Pride. Ambition. Community, by which we mean:
Our well-being is enhanced through a balanced life that includes meaningful experiences undertaken whole-heartedly and with integrity.
Students are happy and enjoy College life, equipped to thrive in life, making a positive difference in and beyond the College.
Positive relationships are underpinned by mutual respect, consideration and compassion. Our words and actions have impact.

RSHE is underpinned by a clear set of embedded values and principles that complement the school ethos and permeate through the teaching practice, resources and classroom management of RSHE lessons. Our school values are: **Pride. Ambition. Community.** RSHE is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health in an 'age and stage' appropriate manner. RSHE equips children and young people with accurate information, positive values and the skills to enjoy healthy, safe and positive relationships, to celebrate their sexuality and to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing both now and in the future. We recognise the importance of RSHE in preparing children and young people to live safe, fulfilled and healthy lives. The overarching objective of RSHE is to support children and young people through a journey of physical, emotional and moral development via the teaching of essential knowledge, skills and values within the framework of the law and provisions of the Equality Act, 2010. Our school's vision for RSHE is for our students to have pride in both themselves and in their relationships; as well as to be both safe and empowered. They will understand their role and place within a community and how this provides a support for students as well as their responsibility to others within that community.

Effective RSHE can make a significant contribution to the development of personal skills needed by pupils to establish and maintain relationships. RSHE will ensure children and young people are encouraged to understand the importance of stable, loving relationships, respect, love, and care. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

RSHE will be approached through evidence-based, best practice principles to ensure the highest impact on improving pupil health, wellbeing, safeguarding and lifelong outcomes. The following principles are based on research evidence, supported by a wide range of leading organisations including the NSPCC, Barnardo's, The Children's Society and education unions. They are also supported by a number of MPs and Lords:

Principles of effective RSHE

RSHE provision at Heathfield Community College:

- Is an identifiable part of our school curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all the key stages.
- Is taught by staff regularly trained in RSHE (with expert visitors invited in to enhance and supplement the programme, where appropriate).
- Works in partnership with parents and carers, informing them about what their children will be learning via the College website.
- Delivers lessons where pupils feel safe and encourages participation by using a variety of teaching approaches with opportunities to develop critical thinking and relationship skills.
- Is based on reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights, and distinguishes between fact and opinion.
- Promotes safe, equal, caring and enjoyable relationships and discusses real-life issues appropriate to the 'age and stage' of pupils, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and safe relationships online.
- Gives a positive view of human sexuality with honest and medically accurate information so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health in ways that are appropriate to their age and maturity.
- Gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their values and influences (such as from peers, media, faith and culture) that may shape their attitudes to relationships and sex and nurture respect for different views.
- Includes learning about how to get help and treatment from sources such as the School Health Service and other health and advice services including reliable information online.
- Fosters gender equality and LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans) equality and challenges all forms of discrimination in RSHE lessons and in everyday school life.
- Meets the needs of all pupils with their diverse experiences including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Seeks pupils' views about RSHE so that teaching can be made relevant to their real lives and assessed and adapted as their needs change.

Entitlement and equality of opportunity

All children are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum delivered in an 'age and stage' appropriate manner. Teachers will include a range of teaching styles and groupings to allow all children to make progress. Every child will be given opportunity to develop their skills independently and in groups, enhancing their own confidence and self–esteem.

We actively celebrate the diversity of our pupils, their families and the wider whole-school community. RSHE will always be taught in a non-judgemental, non-biased and fully inclusive manner through clear, impartial, scientific information as well as covering the law to ensure all pupils have equal access to our RSHE curriculum. We do not use RSHE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation over another.

Thorough consultation, continual assessment and regular reviews of the curriculum we ensure that we continually recognise and respect pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity, personal circumstances (including gender identity, faith or culture and that of their family, friends and the wider whole-school community) in accordance with the school's inclusion policy.

Teaching and learning

The RSHE programme will be led by the Curriculum Leader for PSHEe. It is taught by the Curriculum Leader for PSHEe, Heads of Year and experienced and appropriately trained teachers. It is supported by external agencies such as a school nurses and Theatre In Education performances as appropriate. Some aspects of RSHE are delivered in Science, PE, Food Tech, Computing and the College's well-being programme which underpins the tutor programme, assemblies and Wider Curriculum Days. All staff involved in the delivery of RSHE have received specialist training to ensure that pupils receive clear and consistent approaches to RSHE throughout their time at Heathfield Community College. Whole staff and individual training needs are identified through the school's self-evaluation process and staff appraisal.

On occasion external visitors, experts and agencies may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSHE to enhance delivery of these subjects, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with children and young people. When this happens, our school will:

- Check the visitor or visiting organisation's credentials.
- Ensure the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with our planned programme and our published policy.
- Discuss the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils.
- Ask to see in advance the materials visitors will use as well as a lesson plan so that collectively we can ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs (e.g. special educational needs).
- Agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with our school's policy.
- Arrange for the visitor to be supervised/supported by a member of school staff at all times.
- Ensure the visitor has all the appropriate checks in places such as DBS and insurance.
- Monitor and evaluate the visitor input to inform future planning.

Curriculum

The majority of elements of the RSHE curriculum are a statutory requirement to teach to meet the Department for Education's 2020 statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) and The Equalities Act, 2010.
RSHE will be taught through a 'spiral curriculum'. This approach means that pupils will gain knowledge, develop values and acquire skills gradually by re-visiting core themes to

build on prior learning. RSHE will support the Heathfield Community College's commitment to safeguard pupils through an age-appropriate curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world.

Our intended RSHE curriculum is detailed below but may vary in response to emerging issues and to reflect the rapidly changing world in which our pupils are living and learning. If this is the case, parent/carers will be provided with appropriate notice before the amended programme is delivered. Where possible the curriculum will be complemented by themed assemblies, collapsed curriculum days, our tutor programme and in cross curricular links.

Relationships Education	*Families:* ***PSHEe***
	Respectful relationships including friendships: ***PSHEe & tutor programme***
	Online and media: ***PSHEe and Computing***
	Being safe: ***PSHEe & tutor programme***
Sex Education	*Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health:* ***PSHEe and Science***
Health Education	*Mental wellbeing:* ***PSHEe and Tutor programme***
	Internet safety and harms: ***PSHEe, tutor programme & Computing***
	Physical health and fitness: ***PSHEe & PE***
	Healthy eating ***PSHEe, PE & Food Technology***
	Drugs, alcohol and tobacco ***PSHEe, PE & Science***
	*Health and prevention****: PSHEe, Science and PE***
	Basic first aid: PE
	*Changing adolescent body****: PSHEe & Science***

Assessment

Pupils' learning is assessed at the end of every topic to ensure that pupils are making sufficient progress to build on prior teaching and learning and that teaching strategies and resources remain relevant and effective. Assessment activities will be implicit, forming part of a normal teaching activity to ensure that pupils do not feel under pressure and will include self-assessment tasks that will confirm pupils understanding of the topics. The evaluation of teaching and learning assessments will be shared with pupils as appropriate.

The quality of RSHE teaching and learning will be monitored through PSHE learning walks, team teaching, and Dept training conducted by subject leads and/or members of the senior leadership team. The observations and findings of which will be used to identify and inform future staff training needs.

Responding to pupils' questions

There will always be sensitive and controversial issues within the subjects of RSHE. These may be a matter of 'age and stage' appropriateness or contrasting personal beliefs including those originating from faith perspectives and culture. We believe that children are best educated and protected from harm when they are provided with a safe and supportive space to discuss issues openly within the framework of a class working agreement. At the end of every lesson, pupils will be provided with an opportunity to ask questions in an open setting. Teachers will answer questions as fully as they feel 'age and stage' appropriate based on the level of knowledge demonstrated by pupils during the lesson. Teachers may delay answering a pupil's question if they need time to consult with a colleague or the school leadership team to construct an appropriate answer.
Teachers can refuse to answer a question that they feel is inappropriate and will never answer personal questions about their own body, personal circumstances or lifestyle choices. If a teacher does not answer a question, the pupil will have the reasons clearly explained and the teacher will work with the pupil to identify suitable sources of information where they can obtain an answer to their question. This may include encouraging the pupil to ask a parent/carer or trusted adult at home.

Confidentiality, signposting and handling disclosures

Heathfield Community College's responsibility to safeguard pupils through a curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world will remain central to our curriculum content, teaching methodologies and supporting resources.

At the beginning of RSHE teaching the class will discuss and create a 'working agreement', known as the 'Ground Rules'. Confidentiality will be included within this agreement so pupils are clear of the limits of confidentiality that can be guaranteed by a teacher.

Distancing techniques such as the use of characters within RSHE avoids pupils feeling under pressure to participate or disclose information beyond that which is appropriate or feels comfortable. This strategy makes RSHE more accessible to all pupils including those who may have experienced unhealthy relationships and/or abuse.

Teachers will signpost pupils to information relevant to the topic being taught to ensure safe sources of information, advice and guidance are provided. Teachers will also work closely with the school's pastoral system to advise on topic coverage so that the school can be responsive to pupil's pastoral needs and safeguarding arrangements can be actioned efficiently if required.

Teachers will conduct RSHE lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved) in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the reference seriously, and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. They will immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. The referral will then be dealt with in line with Heathfield Community College's safeguarding policy.

Involving parents and carers

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children in RSHE and that RSHE is most effective when it is collaboration between school and home. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with parents and carers of children and young people at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation.

Heathfield Community College also operates an open-door policy enabling parents to discuss RSHE at relevant times throughout the school year with the Curriculum Leader for PSHEe, SEND Dept and Pastoral Team.

The vast majority of RSHE is compulsory. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents and carers are only able to request that their child is excused from Sex Education, taught outside of the national curriculum for science. If a parent wishes their child to be excused from some or all of the non-statutory Sex Education, they should discuss this with the Headteacher, making clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The Head Teacher will outline to parents/carers the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents/carers propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead). Once a decision has been made, parents/carers must inform the school in writing stating their reasons as to why they would like their child withdrawn.

Once these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, our school will respect a parent/carer's request to have their child excused from non-statutory Sex Education up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education, rather than be withdrawn, the HCC should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. Heathfield Community College will document this process.

This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Head Teacher and SENDCO may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision**.**
If a pupil is excused from Sex Education, Heathfield Community College will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Links to other school policies and curriculum

This policy complements the following policies:

- Behaviour for Learning (including anti-bullying)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunities Information & Objectives Statement
- SEND Information Report and Policy
- The Heathfield Curriculum 2024-25

Review date

The school's governing body monitors the impact of RSHE on an annual basis, we have a link Governor for RSHE who has attended training on the 2020 Statutory Duty**.** The governors give serious consideration to any comments, consultation and evidence of impact.

Consultation with pupils will be conducted on a regular basis to support with reviewing the curriculum to ensure it remains responsive to emerging needs and the policy updated accordingly.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if the RSHE curriculum is amended, for example in response to emerging themes, changing pupil needs or introduction of new legislation and guidance. The next review date of this policy should be ***October 2026***