

Bedford High School
A Specialist Business and Enterprise College

Work Hard – Be Respectful – Take Responsibility



Relationships & Sex Education Policy

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Document control

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1. Statement of intent

At Bedford High School, we understand the importance of educating students about sex, relationships and their health, for them to make responsible and well-informed decisions in their lives. The teaching of RSHE and health education can help to prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. It allows us to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of students at school and in the wider society. We have an obligation to provide students with high quality, evidence and age -appropriate teaching of these subjects. This policy outlines how the school's RSHE and health education curriculum will be organised and delivered, to ensure it meets the needs of all students.

Our intent is to nurture happy, healthy young people who have the knowledge, academic achievement and strength of character to lead safe and successful lives in modern Britain, preparing them for their next steps in education or employment with a thirst for lifelong learning. We ensure that every member of our school community knows that we are committed to supporting their physical health, safety, and emotional wellbeing throughout their journey with us.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2025
- DfE 'National curriculum in England: science programmes of study' 2015
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2026
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education Act 1996

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with stakeholders. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – Assistant Headteacher pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.
2. Staff consultation – school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.

3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a consultation about the policy.
4. Student consultation – we investigated what exactly students want from their RSHE through consultation through evaluations, questionnaires and group sessions.
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified.

4. Definition

RSHE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSHE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values and signposting to support. RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring all students make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- Ensuring the RSHE and health education curriculum is well-led, effectively managed and well-planned.
- Evaluating the quality of provision through regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Ensuring that teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all students with SEND.
- Providing clear information to parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.
- Ensuring RSHE and health education is resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

5.2 The headteacher is responsible for, and may delegate through Assistant Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher.

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring all staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects.
- Ensuring parents are fully informed of this policy.

- Reviewing all requests to withdraw students from non-statutory elements of the RSHE and health education curriculum.
- Discussing withdrawal requests with parents, and the child if appropriate, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, including the benefits of receiving the education.
- Ensuring withdrawn students receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- Encouraging parents to be involved in consultations regarding the school's RSHE and health education curriculum.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Reporting to the governing board on the effectiveness of this policy and the curriculum.

5.3 The PDE Co-Ordinator is responsible for:

- Planning the delivery of RSHE and health education within the PDE curriculum.
- Working closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the RSHE and health education curriculum compliments, and does not duplicate, the content covered in national curriculum subjects.
- Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate and of high-quality.
- Reviewing changes to the RSHE and health education curriculum and advising on their implementation.
- Monitoring the learning and teaching of RSHE and health education, providing support to staff where necessary.
- Ensuring the continuity and progression between each year group.
- Helping to develop colleagues' expertise in the subject.
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the curriculum.
- Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to RSHE and health education.
- Leading staff meetings and ensuring all members of staff involved in the curriculum have received the appropriate training.
- Organising, providing and monitoring CPD opportunities in the subject.
- Ensuring the correct standards are met for recording and assessing pupil performance.

- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subjects and providing reports to the headteacher.

5.4 Curriculum and pastoral staff are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with, and promoting, this policy
- Delivering RSHE and health education in a sensitive way and that is of a high-quality and appropriate for each year group.
- Ensuring they do not express personal views or beliefs when delivering the curriculum.
- Planning lessons effectively, ensuring a range of appropriate teaching methods and resources are used to cover the content.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE and health education.
- Liaising with the SENCO about identifying and responding to the individual needs of students with SEND.
- Liaising with the RSHE and health education Co-Ordinator about key topics, resources and support for individual pupils.
- Monitoring student progress in RSHE and health education.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the teaching of RSHE or health education to the RSHE and health education subject leader or another member of the SLT.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that students may make as a result of the subject content to the DSL.
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents have requested to withdraw them from the non-statutory components of RSHE, by providing them with alternative education opportunities.

5.5. The SENCO is responsible for:

- Advising teaching staff how best to identify and support pupils' individual needs.
- Advising staff on the use of TAs in order to meet pupils' individual needs.

5.6 Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSHE are encouraged to discuss this with their line manager or the Assistant Headteacher.

5.7 Staff Structure

Role	Responsibility
Deputy Headteacher	Pastoral & Wellbeing

Assistant Headteacher	Personal Development
PDE Co-Ordinator	Leadership and Management of PDE Curriculum
PDE Teachers	Teaching of PDE curriculum
Form Tutors	Delivering PSHE focus

6. RSHE Subject Overview

RSHE will continue to develop students' knowledge on the topics taught at a primary level, in addition to the content outlined in this section.

Families

Curriculum content:

1. That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
2. How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children.
3. Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony.
4. That 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.
5. That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.⁸
6. How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.
7. The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development.
8. How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

Respectful relationships

Curriculum content:

1. The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.
2. How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal.
3. The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others.

This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others.

4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs.

5. The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict.

6. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.

7. Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration.

8. The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok.

9. How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice.

10. How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others.

11. How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others.

12. Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called "involuntary celibates" (incels) or online influencers.

Online safety and awareness

Curriculum content:

1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.

2. Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues.

3. The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online.

4. Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has

happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images.

5. That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime.

6. What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online.⁹

7. About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them.

8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong.

9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.

10. How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns.

11. That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it.

12. How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

13. That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising).

14. That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion.

15. That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk.

Being Safe

Curriculum content:

1. How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent.
2. That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others.
3. How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
4. How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions.
5. What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it.
6. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting.
7. The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault.
8. The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language.
9. The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.¹⁰
10. That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed.
11. The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation.
12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.
13. The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible.
14. That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death.

15. That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful.

16. How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Curriculum content:

1. That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive.
2. The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex.
3. Sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent.
4. That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
6. The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision-making.
7. That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help.
8. How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma
9. The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
10. How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour.
11. How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms.
12. How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Secondary health and wellbeing

Mental wellbeing

Curriculum content:

1. How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
2. The benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness.
3. That happiness is linked to being connected to others. Pupils should be supported to understand what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel unhappy, while recognising that loneliness can be for most people an inevitable part of life at times and is not something of which to be ashamed.
4. That worrying and feeling down are normal, can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal.
5. Characteristics of common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression), including carefully-presented factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental health conditions. This should not be discussed in a way that encourages normal feelings to be labelled as mental health conditions.
6. How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall wellbeing.
7. Understanding how to overcome anxiety or other barriers to participating in fun, enjoyable or rewarding activities – that it's possible to overcome those barriers using coping strategies, and that finding the courage to participate in activities which initially feel challenging may decrease anxiety over time rather than increasing it.
8. That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others.
9. That the co-occurrence of alcohol/drug use and poor mental health is common and that the relationship is bi-directional: mental health problems can increase the risk of alcohol/drug use, and alcohol/drug use can trigger mental health problems or exacerbate existing ones. That stopping smoking can improve people's mental health and decrease anxiety.

Wellbeing online

Curriculum content:

1. About the benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing.
2. The similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image); how people may curate a specific image of their life online; the impact that an over-reliance on online relationships, including relationships formed through social media, can have.
3. How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.
4. The risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt.
5. How advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online, understanding the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation online, including conspiracy theories.

6. The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online.
7. The serious risks of viewing online content that promotes self-harm, suicide or violence, including how to safely report this material and how to access support after viewing it.

Physical health and fitness

Curriculum content:

1. The characteristics of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill-health, including cardiovascular ill-health.
2. Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions.
3. That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress.
4. The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

Healthy eating

Curriculum content:

1. How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease.
2. The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
3. The impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain.

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping

Curriculum content:

1. The facts about which drugs are illegal, the risks of taking illegal drugs, including the increased risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the potential health harms, including the link to poor mental health.
2. The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
3. The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption. What constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England. Understanding how to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol.
4. The physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency.
5. The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines.
6. The facts about the multiple serious harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.
7. The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit.

Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system

Curriculum content:

1. Personal hygiene, germs and how they are spread, including bacteria and viruses, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.

2. Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth, reducing consumption of sugar-containing food and drinks, and regular check-ups at the dentist.
3. How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals.
4. The importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
5. The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination, immunisation and antimicrobial resistance. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils.
6. The importance of sufficient good-quality sleep for good health, the importance of screen-free time before bed and removing phones from the bedroom, and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.
7. The importance of healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy, including the importance of pre-conception health, including taking folic acid. The importance of pelvic floor health. Information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and how to access care and support.
8. How to navigate their local healthcare system: what a GP is; when to use A&E / minor injuries; accessing sexual health and family planning clinics; the role of local pharmacies; and how to seek help via local third sector partners which may have specialist services.
9. The concept of Gillick competence. That the legal age of medical consent is 16. That before this, a child's parents will have responsibility for consenting to medical treatment on their behalf unless they are Gillick competent to take this decision for themselves. Pupils should understand the circumstances in which someone over 16 may not be deemed to have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment.

Personal safety

Curriculum content:

1. How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around roads, railways – including level crossings - and water (including the water safety code), and in unfamiliar social or work settings (for example the first time a young person goes on holiday without their parents).
2. How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media.
3. How to develop key social and emotional skills that will increase pupils' safety from involvement in conflict and violence. These include skills to support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making, as well as skills to recognise and manage peer pressure.
4. Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about violence and/or knife crime.
5. The law as it relates to knives and violence. Content and examples should relate to the local context and avoid using fear as an educational tool. Children should be taught that carrying weapons is uncommon, and should not be scared into the perception that many young people are carrying knives (which can lead to the misconception that they need to carry a knife too).
6. The risks and signs that they may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help where there is a concern.

Basic first aid

Curriculum content:

1. Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments.
2. Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.¹¹
3. The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.

Developing bodies

Curriculum content:

1. The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.
2. The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development.
3. About menstrual and gynaecological health, including: what is an average period; period problems such as premenstrual syndrome; heavy menstrual bleeding; endometriosis; and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). When to seek help from healthcare professionals.
4. The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.

8. Delivery of the curriculum

Our Personal Development curriculum is built upon:

- Student Voice
- Safeguarding team feedback
- Pastoral team feedback
- Teacher voice
- Parent voice
- Responsive interaction
- Local community issues
- Research/news/subject updates.

9.1 RSHE and health education curriculum will be delivered through the PDE curriculum and form tutor time.

9.2 Through effective organisation and delivery of the subject, we will ensure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of a manageable size.
- The required content is communicated to students clearly, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned scheme of work.
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for students to embed new knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations.

9.3 RSHE and health education complement several national curriculum subjects. Where appropriate, the school will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching.

9.4 The RSHE and health education curriculum will be delivered by appropriately trained members of staff.

9.5 The curriculum will proactively address issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on pupil's physical, emotional and sexual development.

9.6 RSHE and health education will be delivered in a non-judgemental, age-appropriate, factual and inclusive way that allows students to ask questions in a safe environment.

9.7 Teaching of the curriculum reflects requirements set out in law, particularly in the Equality Act 2010, so that students understand what the law does and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of the decisions they make.

9.8 The school will integrate LGBTQ+ content into the RSHE curriculum – this content will be taught as part of the overall curriculum, rather than a standalone topic or lesson. LGBTQ+ content will be approached in a sensitive, age-appropriate and factual way that allows students to explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships.

9.9 All teaching and resources are assessed by the RSHE and health education Co-Ordinator to ensure they are appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils, are sensitive to their religious backgrounds and meet the needs of any SEND, if applicable.

- 9.10 Classes may be taught in gender-segregated groups dependent on the nature of the topic being delivered at the time, and the cultural background of students where it is only appropriate to discuss the body in single gender groups.
- 9.11 Throughout every year group, appropriate diagrams, videos, books, games, discussion and practical activities will be used to assist learning.
- 9.12 Inappropriate images, videos, etc. will not be used, and resources will be selected with sensitivity given to the age and cultural background of pupils.
- 9.13. Teachers will establish what is appropriate for one-to-one and whole-class settings, and alter their teaching of the programmes accordingly.
- 9.14 Teachers will ensure that pupils' views are listened to and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively and honestly.
- 9.15 The curriculum will be designed to focus on boys as much as girls and activities will be planned to ensure both are actively involved, matching their different learning needs.
- 9.16 Teachers will focus heavily on the importance of marriage and healthy relationships when teaching RSHE, though sensitivity will always be given as to not stigmatise students on the basis of their home circumstances.
- 9.17 Teachers will ensure lesson plans focus on challenging perceived views of students based on protected characteristics, through exploration of, and developing mutual respect for, those different to themselves.
- 9.18 In teaching the curriculum, teachers will be aware that students may raise topics such as self-harm and suicide. When talking about these topics in lessons, teachers will be aware of the risks of encouraging these behaviours and will avoid any resources or material that appear as instructive rather than preventative.
- 9.19 At all points of delivery of the curriculum, parents will be consulted, and their views will be valued. What will be taught and how, will be planned in conjunction with parents.
- 9.20 The procedures for assessing pupil progress are outlined in section 16 of this policy.
- 9.21 RSHE is taught within our Personal development and Ethics Curriculum (PDE). We also teach aspects of RSHE through our form time programme, awareness weeks, Enrichment days, Aspiration week and drop-down days.

10. Curriculum links

10.1. The school seeks opportunities to draw links between RSHE and health education and other curriculum subjects wherever possible to enhance pupils' learning.

10.2. RSHE and health education will be linked to the following subjects:

- **Citizenship** – students are provided with the knowledge, skills and understanding to help prepare them to play a full and active part in society, including an understanding of how laws are made and upheld and how to make sensible decisions. This is mapped within the PDE curriculum, through form time activities and during drop down enrichment days.
- **Science** – students are taught about the main external parts of the body and changes to the human body as it grows, including puberty.
- **ICT and computing** – students are taught about how they can keep themselves safe online and the different risks that they may face online as they get older.

- **PE** – students can develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities, are physically active for sustained periods of time, engage in competitive sport and lead healthy, active lives.
- **PDE** – students learn about respect and difference, values and characteristics of individuals.

11. Working with parents

11.1 The school understands that parents' role in the development of their children's understanding about relationships and health is vital.

11.2 The school will work closely with parents when planning and delivering the content of the school's RSHE and health education curriculum.

11.3 When in consultation with parents, the school will provide:

- The curriculum content, including what will be taught and when.
- Examples of the resources the school intends to use to deliver the curriculum.
- Information about parents' right to withdraw their child from non-statutory elements of RSHE and health education.

11.4. Parents will be provided with frequent opportunities to understand and ask questions about the school's approach to RSHE and health education.

11.5. The school understands that the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum may be of concern to parents.

11.6. If parents have concerns regarding RSHE and health education, they may submit these via email to a.duffy@bedford.wigan.sch.uk, or contact Reception to arrange a meeting with Mrs Duffy on 01942 909009.

11.7 Parents will be regularly consulted on the curriculum content, through opportunities to meeting and letters, and the curriculum will be planned in conjunction with parents' views.

Parents consulted in July 2025 and scheduled again in June 2026.

12. Working with External Agencies

12.1 Working with external agencies can enhance our delivery of RSHE and health education, and brings in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging pupils.

12.2 External experts may be invited to assist from time-to-time with the delivery of the RSHE and health education curriculum but will be expected to comply with the provisions of this policy.

12.3 The school will check the visitor/visiting organisation's credentials of all external agencies.

12.4 The school will ensure the teaching delivered by the external experts fits with the planned curriculum and provisions of this policy.

12.5 The school will discuss with the visitor the details of how they intend to deliver their sessions and ensure the content is age-appropriate and accessible for all pupils.

12.6 The school will request copies of the materials and lesson plans the visitor will use, to ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs.

12.7 The school and the visitor will agree on how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports must be dealt with in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

12.8 The school will use visitors to enhance teaching by an appropriate member of teaching staff, not to replace teaching by those staff.

13. Withdrawal from lessons

13.1 Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSHE.

13.2. Parents **do not** have a right to withdraw their child from the relationships or health elements of the programmes.

13.3. Requests to withdraw a child from sex education will be made in writing to the Assistant Headteacher.

13.4 Before granting a withdrawal request, the Assistant Headteacher will discuss the request with the parents and, as appropriate, the child, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

13.5. The Assistant Headteacher will inform parents of the benefits of their child receiving RSHE and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have.

13.6. All discussions with parents will be documented. These records will be kept securely in the subject Co-Ordinator's file in line with the school's Records Management Policy.

13.7 Following discussions with parents, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw their child up to and until three term's before the child turns 16. After this point, arrangements will be to provide the child with RSHE.

13.8 Students who are withdrawn from RSHE will receive appropriate, purposeful education during the full period of withdrawal.

13.9 For requests withdrawn from RSHE of a student with SEND, the Assistant Headteacher may take students' specific needs into account when making their decision.

14. Safeguarding and confidentiality

14.1 All students will be taught about keeping themselves safe, including online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

14.2 Confidentiality within the classroom is an important component of RSHE and health education, and teachers are expected to respect the confidentiality of their students as far as is possible, in compliance with the school's Confidentiality Policy.

14.3 Teachers will, however, understand that some aspects of RSHE may lead to a pupil raising a safeguarding concern, e.g. disclosing that they are being abused, and that if a disclosure is made, the DSL will be alerted immediately.

14.4 Students will be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report, and how their report will be handled – this includes the process for when they have a concern about a peer.

15. Equality and accessibility

15.1 The school will comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure the curriculum does not discriminate against students because of their:

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Disability

- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Sexual orientation

15.2. The school will consider the backgrounds, gender, age range and needs of its students and determine whether it is necessary to put in place additional support for students with the above protected characteristics.

15.3 The school understands that students with SEND are entitled to learn about RSHE and health education, and the curriculum will be designed to be inclusive of all pupils.

15.4 The school is aware that some students are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND – teachers will understand that they may need to liaise with the SENCO and be more explicit and adapt their planning or work to appropriately deliver the curriculum to students with SEND.

15.5 Where there is a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the needs of students at different developmental stages, the school will ensure the teaching remains sensitive, age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and is delivered with reference to the law.

15.6 The school will take steps to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and behaviour between boys and girls, and provide an environment which challenges perceived limits on students based on their gender or any other characteristic.

15.7 The school will be actively aware of everyday issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture within which these are not tolerated. Any occurrences of such issues will be identified and tackled promptly.

15.8 The school will make clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Any reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be handled in accordance within the school's Behaviour Policy.

16. Assessment

16.1 The school has the same high expectations of the quality of students' work in RSHE and health education as for other curriculum areas.

16.2 Lessons are planned to provide suitable challenge to students of all abilities.

16.3 Assessments are used to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention.

16.4 There are no formal examinations for RSHE and health education; however, to assess student outcomes, the school will capture progress in the following ways:

- Ipsative assignments
- Self-evaluations

17. Staff training

17.1 Training will be provided by the RSHE and health education Co-Ordinator to the relevant members of staff on a termly basis to ensure they are up-to-date with the RSHE and health education curriculum.

17.2 Training will also be scheduled around any updated guidance on the curriculum and any new developments, such as “sexting”, which may need to be addressed in relation to the curriculum.

17.3 The school will ensure teachers receive training on the Social Exclusion Report on Teenage Pregnancy, and the role of an effective RSHE curriculum in reducing the number of teenage conceptions.

17.4. Appropriately trained staff will be able to give students information on where and how to obtain confidential advice, counselling and treatment, as well as guidance on emergency contraception and their effectiveness.

17.5 The Assistant Headteacher will ensure appropriate training is given to all staff teaching aspects of RSHE where necessary, and as appropriate to their needs. This may include external staff to deliver CPD.

18. Monitoring and Evaluation

18.1 The PDE Co-Ordinator is responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning for the subject.

18.2 The PDE Co-Ordinator will conduct subject assessments on a termly basis, which will include a mixture of the following:

- Self-evaluations
- Lesson observations
- Topic feedback forms
- Learning walks
- Work scrutiny
- Lesson planning scrutiny
- Student focus groups
- Parental questionnaire
- Analysing assessment data
- Department Reviews
- Vetting of material to be used by school staff and visiting speakers

18.3 The PDE Co-Ordinator will create annual subject reports for the headteacher and governing board to report on the quality of the subjects.

18.4. The PDE Co-Ordinator will work regularly and consistently with the Assistant Headteacher e.g. through regular review meetings, to evaluate the effectiveness of the subjects and implement any changes.

19 Monitoring and review

19.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Assistant Headteacher in conjunction with the PDE Co-Ordinator on an annual basis.

19.2 Any changes needed to the policy, including changes to the programmes, will be implemented by the Assistant Headteacher.

19.3 Any changes to the policy will be clearly communicated to all members of staff and, where necessary, parents and students, involved in the RSHE and health education curriculum.

19.4 The next scheduled review date for this policy is June 2026.

Letter to Parents

RE: RSHE and health education at Bedford High School

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of our PDE curriculum during the year we will be covering a range of Relationships and Sex Education topics which will be delivered by our PDE teachers and Locala Health And Wellbeing (where appropriate/available).

As part of our Year 7 PDE programme, pupils will explore a range of topics designed to support their wellbeing, personal growth, and understanding of the wider world. Lessons will cover healthy lifestyles, physical and mental wellbeing, resilience, self-esteem, puberty, healthy relationships, friendships, anti-bullying, peer pressure, and the diversity of families and communities. Pupils will also learn about online safety and media literacy, equality and protected characteristics, racism, careers education, and making informed decisions about health, including the risks associated with vaping and drugs. Through these topics, students will develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to stay safe, build positive relationships, respect diversity, and become responsible, informed members of society.

During Year 8, pupils will explore a range of topics that support their personal, social, emotional, and financial development. Lessons will cover careers and financial education, including budgeting, debt awareness, ethical spending, fraud prevention, and future aspirations. Pupils will also learn about online safety and media literacy, exploring issues such as digital footprints, online gambling, grooming, misinformation, artificial intelligence, and the importance of positive role models. Relationships education will focus on respect, tolerance, communication skills, consent, and the risks associated with alcohol, while health and wellbeing lessons will address identity, peer influence, social media, eating disorders, personal safety, and knife crime awareness. Through these topics, students will develop the knowledge, confidence, and skills needed to make informed decisions, build healthy relationships, stay safe online and offline, manage risks, and become responsible and respectful members of society.

Year 9 pupils will explore a range of topics that support their personal safety, wellbeing, relationships, and understanding of the wider world. Lessons will cover healthy and respectful relationships, including diversity, consent, sexual harassment, misogyny, conflict resolution, grief, and the influence of social media and the media on relationships. Pupils will also learn about important safeguarding issues such as hate crime, child sexual exploitation (CSE), gender-based violence, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM), developing the knowledge and confidence to recognise risks and seek support when needed. In addition, students will explore environmental and ethical issues, including animal rights, climate change, and animal testing, alongside wider world topics such as online algorithms, anti-social behaviour, volunteering, employability, and future career planning. Through these topics, pupils will develop critical thinking, resilience, empathy, respect for diversity, and the skills needed to make informed, responsible decisions as active members of society.

At KS4, Year 10 pupils will explore a range of topics designed to prepare them for adult life and support their wellbeing, safety, and decision-making. Lessons will cover healthy relationships, including consent, coercive control, reproductive health, pregnancy, and pregnancy-related choices, alongside health and wellbeing topics such as mental health, anxiety, exam stress, substance misuse, cancer awareness, and the impact of online influences on relationships and wellbeing. Pupils will also develop their understanding of crime, justice, exploitation, equality, workplace rights, artificial intelligence, cybercrime, and other contemporary issues affecting society. Through discussions of ethical, philosophical, and global topics, students will strengthen their critical thinking, resilience, empathy, and respect for diverse viewpoints. The programme aims to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to make informed choices, build positive relationships, stay safe, and become responsible and active members of society.

During Year 11, pupils will explore a range of topics designed to support their transition into further education, employment, and adulthood. Lessons will cover careers education, including post-16 pathways, employability skills, CV writing, personal statements, interview preparation, and developing a positive online presence. Pupils will also learn about equality, discrimination, racism, human rights, online privacy, personal safety, and contemporary social and economic issues. Relationships and health education will focus on consent, healthy intimate relationships, parenting, public health, online safety, sexual image sharing, sextortion, honour-based violence, and the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. In addition, students will explore wellbeing topics including neurodiversity, personal safety, misinformation, social media influence, and mental health and suicide awareness. Through these discussions, pupils will develop the knowledge, resilience, critical thinking, and decision-making skills needed to stay safe, make informed choices, respect others, and successfully navigate the opportunities and challenges of adult life.

With regard to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) parents are able to withdraw their child (following discussion with the school) from any or all aspects of Sex Education, other than those which are part of the Science curriculum, up to and until three terms before the age of 16.

From three terms before the pupil turns 16, a pupil can choose to opt back into sex education even if their parent has requested withdrawal. For example, if a pupil turns 16 during the autumn term, the pupil can opt back into sex education at any time after the start of the previous autumn term

Relationships education doesn't involve explaining the detail of different forms of sexual activity, but can cover sensitive topics such as sexual violence in order to keep children safe. Parents can only withdraw from the Sex Education elements of the curriculum.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their pupils from relationships and health education, nor can they be withdrawn from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction.

After that point, the guidance states that 'if the child wishes to receive Sex Education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with Sex Education during one of those terms.' Where pupils are withdrawn from Sex Education, we will 'ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.' Requests for withdrawal should be submitted in writing to myself, Mrs A Duffy, who will discuss this with you and your child's teacher, to determine the appropriate course of action. If you would like to view our RSE policy and RSE mapping documents these can be found under the policies section of our school website.

If you have any concerns or would like any more information about the sessions your child will be participating in please do not hesitate to contact me at school. Also, Spectrum Health have a parents' section on their website that you can visit (www.spectrumhealth.org.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Duffy
Assistant Headteacher