



Senior School Policy

Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Action	Policy to be reviewed annually		
	Committee	Date	Completed
Reviewed	Head of PSHE	September 2026	✓
Reported	Safeguarding Steering	November 2026	
Approved	Board of Governors	December 2026	
Next review	Head of PSHE	September 2027	

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Gresham's

This policy covers our whole school approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). We believe that RSE is vital for the personal, social and emotional development of our pupils. It equips our young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, respectful and enjoyable relationships and empowers them to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

At Gresham's, we believe that all children and young people have a right to holistic, inclusive and needs-led RSE. We believe that through providing high quality RSE, we are upholding the ethos and values of our school and its commitment to equality and celebration of difference.

This policy complies with our statutory obligations to deliver RSE under Sections 34 & 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and has due regard for the DfE's Draft Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance (2024)

[Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance](#)

It is updated annually to ensure that it is in line with current Government guidance and legislation and to ensure that the RSE programme continues to meet the needs of our pupils.

The RSE policy is a working document which provides guidance and information on all aspects of RSE at Gresham's and aims to provide a secure framework within which staff can work. It is aimed at:

- Staff
- Parents/Carers
- Governors
- Visitors to the School

The RSE policy is also linked with:

- Year 12 Well-Being Programme
- PSHE and Wellbeing Rational and Plans 2026 (which includes schemes of work)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Drug Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Alcohol Policy
- Smoking and Vaping Policy

The Governor with responsibility for RSE in the school is Sarah Maxwell.

What is Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)?

We define relationships education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human relationships, including friendships, intimate, sexual and committed relationships and family life.

We define sex education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections and sexual health.

We take the approach that Relationships and Sex Education are best approached in an integrated way, using a gender equity and human rights framework.

Why Should RSE Be Taught?

Effective RSE is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. It helps support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development. It helps young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

The RSE Programme

To cover the curriculum content outlined in the DfE Statutory Guidance, we aim to equip our pupils to build positive and respectful relationships online and offline and provide our young people with:

- Relationships skills which prepare them for the challenges of the teenage years.
- Opportunities to explore their own values and develop their own moral framework.
- Opportunities to understand and accept difference and diversity.
- An understanding of their own bodies.
- Knowledge of where to seek help and advice.
- Positive self-esteem, self-awareness and emotional health.
- An awareness of the right they have over their own body.
- The skills to be assertive.
- Good communication skills.
- The skills to make positive and informed choices.
- The ability to respect the right of others to hold opinions that may differ from their own as long as these views do not impact on the right of others.
- The ability to take responsibility for and accept the consequences of their own actions.

We believe that high quality, comprehensive RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation but in fact builds young people's confidence and self-esteem and helps them understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Evidence shows that effective RSE plays a role in behaviour change, including reducing unprotected or unwanted sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

The Content

Gresham's RSE programme meets the learning objectives and content outlined in the DfE Statutory Guidance. It is embedded in our wider PSHE programme, 'Life Lessons'. All content will be delivered in a timely way and will be age and developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of our pupils, including those pupils with SEND. There is scope for flexibility within the content and where appropriate it may respond to topical issues in the school community or at a wider national level in order that the provision is current and relevant to our pupils.

The programme aims to include the following content:

Respectful relationships, including friendships:

- Identifying positive and negative relationships
- Consent
- Boundaries – saying 'no' and being assertive
- Stereotypes
- Bullying
- Equality and discrimination (particularly the 'protected characteristics' as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- Challenging homophobia

Families:

- Marriage and long term commitment
- Different kinds of families
- Parenting

Online and media:

- Understanding and recognising online risks and staying safe online
- Managing online relationships
- Understanding pornography
- Sharing images
- Body image and self esteem

Being safe:

- Consent
- Sexual exploitation and abuse
- FGM, forced marriage and honour-based violence

Sexual relationships and sexual health:

- Responsibilities, choices and consequences
- Pressure
- Impact of alcohol and drugs
- STIs including HIV, and where to access advice
- Sexuality
- Pregnancy, birth and miscarriage
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Sex and the law

Moral Values and Framework

We teach RSE within the SMSC framework that supports/engenders:

- Self-respect
- Respect and tolerance towards others who may have different backgrounds, cultures, feelings, views and sexuality.
- An awareness of the way others feel.
- Mutual support and cooperation.
- Honesty and openness.
- The right not to be abused or taken advantage of by other people.
- The right to accurate information about sex and relationship issues.

Equality, inclusion and social justice

Gresham's School is committed to the provision of RSE to all of its pupils. Our programme aims to respond to the diversity of pupils' sexuality, cultures, faiths and family backgrounds.

We believe that RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion and social justice. Our RSE is designed to promote gender equality through challenging gender stereotypes and sexism and sexual harassment in schools. We take these issues seriously and ensure that we embed content on gender equality throughout the curriculum.

We are also committed to an RSE that makes every pupil feel valued and included and is relevant to them. This means we are committed to providing an LGBT+ inclusive and SEND inclusive curriculum. An inclusive RSE at Gresham's will seek to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice between pupils and promote understanding and respect as outlined under the Equality Act 2010.

Gresham's is also committed to ensuring that pupils who are not able to access the full curriculum due to mental ill health and/or long-term absence from school will still have access to RSE information and resources online.

Safeguarding

Gresham's acknowledges that RSE is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the school and for meeting our statutory obligations as outlined in the DfE's Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

RSE helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing, or have experienced, abuse. We recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSE covers some pupils could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory training around child protection and will follow the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

We also recognise that some young people may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes in their personal life. For those young people, additional support will be given to prevent them being adversely affected by the planned lesson content.

While Gresham's wants to create a learning space that feels safe for young people to disclose, we also want to protect the individual's privacy. In our RSE lessons we do this by setting ground rules via a working agreement, aimed at establishing a respectful, safe and welcoming environment. The following ground rules are agreed at the start of each lesson:

Everyone has the right to:

- Participate or pass
- Listen and speak
- Privacy
- An opinion
- Learn

Everyone has the responsibility to:

- Allow others to participate or pass
- Listen and allow others to speak
- Maintain privacy
- Respect difference of opinion
- Allow others to learn

Pupil Voice

Pupil voice is central to the culture and ethos of Gresham's RSE. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and express their views on the range of topics and issues that RSE covers and to listen to other opinions and evidence, reflect on their own perspectives and take a broader view. We want to ensure that all pupil voices are heard but that those views that are hurtful, offensive or exclusionary do not dominate and are addressed. We want to ensure a culture where human rights, social justice, inclusion and diversity are promoted.

Answering Questions

RSE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from pupils. We view questions as a positive sign that pupils are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others. As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group.

There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class. Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way.

School staff will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their students that could make either party vulnerable.

We believe that an open approach to answering questions prevents pupils from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and older students. We believe exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSE. Importantly, we believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they are able to discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

Resources

RSE resources are reviewed annually. They are chosen and checked for:

- Being inclusive - including different types of sexuality
- Positive, healthy and unbiased messages
- Age appropriateness
- Promoting positive values
- Accuracy

Organisation

RSE lessons are:

- delivered/supported by a dedicated teaching team
- embedded in the PSHE curriculum in Years 9, 10 and 11 and Year 12 Well-Being programme and Year 13 Enrichment Lecture programme.
- enhanced by extra sessions/special events/outside speakers.
- delivered to mixed classes.

Assessment

Assessment is as central to effective teaching and learning in RSE as it is in any other subject. Effective use of assessment allows pupils and teachers to reflect on the learning that has taken place, increasing motivation for learning and helping to demonstrate impact. It takes the form of:

- Baseline assessments – used to gauge prior knowledge and understanding
- End-point assessments – used to measure progress

Evaluation

Evaluation of our programme is crucial to ensure that we can continue to improve our provision and teaching effectiveness. The evaluation process involves structured and informal evaluation via:

- pupil feedback - via discussion and questionnaire
- teacher evaluation informing future planning
- Parent feedback – via questionnaire and parent consultation

Working with visitors and external agencies

Occasionally, appropriate and suitably qualified/experienced external agencies/speakers may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE. Gresham's has a code of practice for using visitors to support the delivery of PSHE:

- visitors are invited into school because of the particular expertise or contributions they are likely to make.
- visitors are made familiar with and understand the school's RSE Policy and work within it.
- all additional input to RSE lessons are part of a planned programme.
- all visitors are supervised/supported by a member of staff at all times.
- visitors will be made aware of any specific issues relating to child protection.
- the input of visitors is monitored and evaluated by staff and pupils. This evaluation informs future planning.

School Based Sexual Health Services

A sexual health clinic run by a specialist sexual health nurse operates in the school's Health Centre on Mondays 6.30pm - 7.30pm. In addition, school nurses are qualified to:

- counsel young people on sexual health issues.
- register individuals on the C-Card scheme and distribute condoms.

Working with Parents/Carers

We believe that the successful teaching of RSE involves parents/carers and school, working together. Before any year group embarks on its RSE programme, parents/carers are invited to discuss the content of the course and contribute their views.

Parents/carers can play an important role in the RSE of their children through discussions at home exploring themes that have been visited in RSE lessons. We welcome dialogue with parents to support these conversations at home.

Parental right to withdraw

As outlined within the DfE Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSE.

Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from relationships education, health education, or sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum.

All children will have the right to opt into sex education three terms before they turn 16 and the school will make arrangements for this to happen. In practice, this means that when a child turns 15 they have the right to be taught sex education if they wish.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from all or part of sex education lessons, it is our aim to encourage parents to see the value of RSE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice.

Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the headteacher to discuss their concerns. The headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns regarding the curriculum. If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this.

We will remind parents annually that the request to withdraw is still in place.