

 VERULAM SCHOOL	Relationships, Sex and Health Education	
	Last reviewed: November 2023	Next Review: November 2024

RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY FOR VERULAM SCHOOL

INTENT

PSHE At Verulam is centred around helping children and young people develop many of the skills and abilities needed for modern life, such as emotional resilience, staying safe and managing finances. RSHE at Verulam School is intended to help students learn about emotional well-being, the ability to understand and deal with risks, and develop financial literacy. Financial education forms a crucial part of PSHE education and helps pupils to develop vital skills in money management and to prevent them getting into debt when they become young adults. At Verulam, RSHE presents pupils with an equal opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge they need to thrive now and in the future. Further still, under the statutory requirements outlined in 2020, relationships and sex education (RSE) also form an essential part of the RSHE programme of study at Verulam. The curriculum, therefore, includes teaching students about sexual health (including safe sex), and sexuality. All pupils receive teaching on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) relationships. In order to create and promote effective relationships, sex and health education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives.

We aim to present relevant facts in an objective and balanced manner. Lessons are set in the context of the family, friends and wider societal issues and address responsibilities that arise from within these relationships. RSHE at Verulam will help young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. The RSHE curriculum also promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, at school and in society.

All maintained secondary schools must provide relationship and sex education (including education about sexually transmitted disease such as HIV and AIDS and child protection issues such as FGM and child sexual exploitation) and must teach human growth and reproduction as set out in the national curriculum. This is a statutory requirement and has been built into the RSHE curriculum.

Under section 78 of the Education Act 2002 and the Academies Act 2010, a PSHE curriculum:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life

IMPLEMENTATION

The curriculum design is a spiral map which will enable students to revisit themes, build upon prior learning and deepen students’ thinking. In order to ensure all statutory requirements are met, the programme of study followed at Verulam School has been shaped by the PSHE Association with resources used from PSHE Association and other organisations accredited by the PSHE Association.

There are three main themes that run across all Key Stages:

1. Health and Well Being
2. Living in the Wider World
3. Relationships

1. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education

This guidance also sets out both the rights of parents and carers to withdraw pupils from sex education (but not Relationships or Health Education) and the process that the headteacher should follow in considering a request from a parent. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

Our PSHE policy is informed by existing DfE guidance:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#)
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools \(2022\)](#)
- [Equality Act \(2010\)](#)
- [SEND Code of Conduct 0-25 Years](#)
- [Alternative Provision \(2016\)](#)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools \(2018\)](#)
- [Equality and Human Rights](#)
- [SMSC in Schools](#)
- [Supplementary Guidance for SRE \(2014\)](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act \(2017\)](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)
- [Education and Inspections Act \(2006\)](#)
- [Learning and Skills Act \(2000\)](#)
- [Forward by the Secretary of State \(2019\)](#)

2. EQUALITY IN EDUCATION & SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EDUCATION

The PSHE Association states that:

“...What we teach in the classroom will help our pupils foster lifelong aspirations, goals and values...., PSHE education isn’t just another school subject. It’s a chance to give every child and young person an equal opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge they need to thrive now and in the future. This includes helping them to deal with critical issues they face every day such as friendships, emotional wellbeing and change. And giving them a solid foundation for whatever challenging opportunities lie ahead, so they can face a world full of uncertainty with hope. From making informed decisions about alcohol to succeeding in their first job, PSHE education helps pupils prepare for all the opportunities, challenges, life decisions and responsibilities they’ll face. This in turn achieves a 'virtuous circle', whereby pupils with better health and wellbeing can achieve better academically, and enjoy greater success”

The DfE Guidance 2019 (p. 15) states, “Schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010 under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics...”

The delivery of RSHE at Verulam is underpinned by the following moral and value statements:

- The delivery is factual, sensitive, and balanced.
- PRHE within the school promotes meaningful, loving, and healthy relationships.
- Whilst delivering RSHE staff will avoid the imposition of personal opinion. Instead, they will stay focused on the social, moral, spiritual, health and education aspects of the topics.
- Across the faiths, there is obviously some variation in attitudes and outlooks regarding relationships, sex and health. Whilst all do not necessarily share such views, all students are required to respect the teaching of RSHE. Verulam School will ensure that RSHE is respectful of all cultural and religious differences whilst completing its statutory duty.

3. PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE CURRICULUM

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request the headteacher will request a meeting with parents/carers and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The school will document this process to ensure a record is kept.

The headteacher will also discuss with parents 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 the detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead.

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, 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 school will then plan to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the headteacher 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, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. **There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.**

4. THE TEACHING OF RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION

RSHE at Verulam is taught as part of a timetabled lesson. In the Autumn and Spring terms, pupils at KS3 receive one hour of PSHE each week across the two-week timetable. In the summer term, KS3 students will be taught Citizenship and will study a number of different topics including, an introduction to UK politics, human rights and an analysis of the media and mass media in modern society, to name a few.

At KS4, pupils receive two hours of RSHE lessons across the two-week timetable for the whole academic year.

There are eight members of staff who are responsible for teaching PSHE to KS3 and KS4 students and 29 separate PSHE classes.

Provision has been made from September 2023, to ensure that students in Year 12 and Year 13 will also follow an RSHE programme of study.

Safety and Confidentiality

Within the teaching of RSHE, we make it clear to students what our expectations are surrounding respect, safety and confidentiality. Teachers are aware that effective RSHE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. Staff will consult with the DSL, Gemma Perry, or another member of the safeguarding team.

How are resources used with reasons for their selection?

RSHE resources are chosen and checked for:

- Being inclusive – acknowledging the full spectrum of diversity in society
- Positive, healthy and unbiased messages
- Age and understanding appropriateness.

How will Verulam School deal with sexually explicit questions?

The school will:

- Allow individual staff to use their professional judgement as to answering questions in front of the whole class or individually taking into account Safeguarding Policy.
- Encourage learners to ask their parents/carers any question outside the planned programme.
- Set out clear ground rules regarding personal questions, which are agreed by staff beforehand.
- Have designated adults that learners know of, to go to if they wish to talk.

What kind of language will be considered acceptable and appropriate for use in RSHE lessons?

Staff will:

- Use the correct terms for all body parts
- Use clear, unequivocal language in an objective manner
- Discuss what 'slang' words mean and say that some can be seen as offensive.
- Staff will use their judgement in discussion depending on understanding and maturity level of learners.

What Ground Rules specific to PSHE will Verulam School?

- Respect will be shown at all times.
- The creation and agreement of ground rules will be completed as a class at the beginning of RSHE units, facilitated by the teacher.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PSHE

Mike Lewis (Head of PSHE and Citizenship) monitors the delivery of the RSHE programme and ensures that all aspects of PSHE are covered as defined in government guidance. The programme of study followed at Verulam School is provided by both the PSHE Association and a combination of quality assured resources from:

- Barclays Life Skills
- EC Publishing
- CEOP
- SurvivorsUK
- Self-Esteem Dove resources
- Youth and Police Education Hub
- NSPCC
- Child Net – Crossing the Line
- NatWest Money
- The Hertfordshire Grid

The UK government has provided grant funding to the PSHE Association to advise schools in developing their own PSHE curriculums and improve the quality of teaching. The association focuses on signposting schools to resources and in expanding their Chartered Teacher of PSHE programme.

The programme of study is reviewed on an annual basis. Lessons are observed by Mike Lewis, Jack Pettitt and Louise Nicholls and students may be consulted on the delivery and effectiveness of the lessons.

6. RSHE POLICY REVIEW

As part of effective RSHE provision, the RSHE policy should be reviewed at least every 2 years to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of students, staff, and parents and that it is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance.