



Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) Policy

NRC Core values:

- Educating and supporting all pupils to learn
- Providing a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment
- Making sure all pupils have the skills to return to mainstream education or to access their next steps in learning
- Working in partnership with others, especially Islington schools



Approved by:
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1. Aims

PSHE and RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education) education plays a key role in the delivery of our core aims at New River College. Namely, to ensure that we are:

- ✓ Educating and supporting all pupils to learn
- ✓ Providing a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment
- ✓ Making sure all pupils have the skills to return to mainstream education or to access their next steps in learning
- ✓ Working in partnership with others, especially Islington schools

As an Alternative provision, many of our pupils have significant emotional, social, or safeguarding needs. Environmental or experiential factors are often a barrier to wellbeing. Our overall aim is that our pupils go on to live safe and happy lives. We prepare our pupils for a future where they can thrive-socially, emotionally, and economically- despite past or present challenges.

The National Curriculum in England 2014 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-secondary-curriculum> states:

All schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice. Schools are also free to include other subjects or topics of their choice in planning and designing their own programme of education.

The aims of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education in our school are:

- To help and support young people through their physical, emotional, and moral development, equipping them for their next steps.
 - To educate our young people about relevant issues so they can make informed and knowledgeable choices.
 - To equip our pupils with the language, verbal, and emotional articulacy to discuss and debate sensitive topics with others.
- To achieve these aims we will
- Build the understanding and confidence required to make decisions driven by self-awareness, rather than pressure or compliance.
 - Deliver factual up to date content, which is relatable and differentiated to pupil's needs.
 - Create a safe space where pupils feel able to talk about sensitive topics and feelings.

- Ensure a joined-up approach to R/PSHE education i.e. working across curriculum, assemblies, and enrichment activities to meet need; responding flexibly to issues which arise within the college.
- Deliver discrete religious education, as part of Humanities subject content
- Foster empathy and nurture respect for self and others; to recognise and respect difference and protected characteristics
- Provide practical information and support where applicable- such as access to services and external professionals
- Work with relevant external providers and agencies e.g. Brook, CAMHS, St John's Ambulance Service
- Ensure that offsite pupils receive R/PSHE education and statutory requirements are met.
- Design an informative programme of assemblies and whole school events (such as Black History Month and LGBTQ+ awareness), which are inclusive and celebratory of diverse histories.
- Provide trips and visits which enrich pupil understanding and engagement.
- Empower our young people to be able to ask for support and advice if and when it is needed.
- All pupils receive one timetabled PSHE lesson per week.

2. Statutory requirements

PSHE is a non-statutory subject. However, there are aspects of it we are required to teach.

We must teach **relationships and sex education** (RSE) under the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#), in line with the terms set out in [DFE Statutory Guidance on RSHE 2026](#)

We must teach **health education** under the same statutory guidance

Both areas are key in our aim to promote emotional and physical wellbeing for the future.

Research from Headstart has found that children and young people who were excluded from school were more likely to have behavioural difficulties, difficulties with peers and attention difficulties. Those who were excluded also had lower scores for positive wellbeing, emotional strengths and skills and support networks.

Understanding and being able to form healthy relationships- whether with family, peers or in intimate relationships, is key in improving outcomes for our pupils.

The National Curriculum 2014 requires schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and sets out the rights of parents/ carers to withdraw pupils from sex education (but not science, relationships, or health education). Parents are informed of SRE content by letter.

This policy also incorporates the recommendations in the DFE Sex Education document, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-secondary> namely that we:

Give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.

This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

Much of our SRE education is delivered during PSHE lessons by Brook, an outside agency who are established specialists in this area. Their content is tailored to the personal and age-appropriate needs of our pupils. Additional content is sourced from other leaders in the field, such as the PSHE Association.

Some families will be more comfortable with discussion about sex and relationships than others. While some pupils might feel quite confident or knowledgeable talking about sex, others will have had little or no prior discussion or information.

To ensure that statutory and safeguarding requirements are met, all pupils and parent/carers are provided with a survey to complete prior to RSE [PSHE Topic self-assessment.docx](#) [IPSHE, RSE and health education for SIT and medical pupils NEW.docx](#)

This asks questions about pupil understanding and confidence in key areas, which informs content delivery and ensures that work for offsite pupils is effectively differentiated to address gaps and meet need.

Additionally, inset training is provided by Brook, for staff members delivering SRE to offsite pupils. This ensures effective delivery so that statutory requirements are met.

Parental Engagement

Parents are provided with curriculum overviews, invited to consultation opportunities, and offered access to teaching materials on request.

Prior to any school visits by external organisations such as Brook, Rap Foundation, parents are informed by letter. This includes information on the purpose of visits and the content of what is being covered. Parents are reminded of where to find the schools policy, given links to where to get support on the issue and reminded of their right to withdraw. See Appendix – Example letter

Right to withdraw

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. If parents approach the school to withdraw their child from RSE it is helpful that this is put in writing. Parents will then need to arrange a meeting with the Head of Centre.

At the meeting discussions may include;

- the RSE policy and what the National Curriculum and Statutory Health Education content is and what curriculum content their child can be withdrawn from
- How parents might provide sex education for those aspects they will not learn at school.
- What provision will be made for a child when the class is learning the topic.
- How there may be impromptu or incidental discussion of relationships and sex education topics in the classroom / in other subjects at times which the teacher will address individually with pupils at other times when their child is not in class however, they cannot undo the question/topic being raised.

“Good practice is also likely to include the head teacher discussing 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”

3. Content and delivery

3.1 What we teach

As stated above, we are required to cover the content for relationships and sex education, and health education, as set out in the statutory guidance RSHE 2026..

We cover all topics/content listed below, the DFS guidelines for what pupils should know by the end of secondary education:

Mental Health

Pupils should know

- Common mental health issues including anxiety, grief, loss, bereavement and loneliness and strategies to support with these
- Distinguish between mental health and mental illness and how both impact on well-being
- The barriers to talking about mental health and how to overcome these
- Societies attitudes to mental health and what change is still needed
- Strategies to build self-esteem and confidence
- Mental health and masculinity – challenging stereotypes and promoting open conversations

Families

Pupils should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- what marriage is, including their legal status – for example, that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- how to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships), how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Pupils should know:

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships, in all contexts including online, such as:
 - trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent, and the management of conflict
 - reconciliation and ending relationships, this includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, can cause damage (for example, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

Online and media

Pupils should know:

- their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- emerging risks such as AI-generated harms (including deepfakes), online misogyny, incel subcultures, online radicalisation pathways and toxic online influencers, supporting pupils to identify harmful narratives and seek support.
- the impact of viewing harmful content including sexually explicit material, for example pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail
- how information and data is generated, collected, shared, and used online
- Digital well-being (e.g., Screen time, compulsive use, becoming AI literate)

Being safe

Pupils should know:

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), and how these can affect current and future relationships
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn, in all contexts, including online
- Knife crime awareness and conflict resolution
- Safety in public spaces
- Travel safety – roads, public transport and water safety including the Water Safety Code.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Pupils should know:

- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex, and friendship
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual, and reproductive health and wellbeing
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause
- The importance of using the correct terminology for reproductive organs and genitalia
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure, and not pressurising others
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy, and options available
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour

- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

The Law

It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships, and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos, and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people, and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:

- marriage
- consent, including the age of consent
- violence against women and girls
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting,' youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism and radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)

For other aspects of PSHE, including health education, see the curriculum map on the school website

The RSHE curriculum is explicitly sequenced across Key Stages to show progression in knowledge, skills, and understanding. Each topic builds year-on-year, and a full curriculum map demonstrates statutory content coverage. This meets the DfE's strengthened expectations for curriculum mapping from September 2026.

3.2 How we teach it

- All onsite pupils have one discrete lesson of PSHE a week. Offsite pupils follow the programme where possible, so we ensure basic statutory RSE/SRE requirements are met. There is one PSHE lead coordinator who oversees provision across secondary and medical sites.
- Content is adapted to the varying needs of pupils within lessons to ensure accessibility. This takes the form of activities to ensure pupils understand the key language and terminology, scaffolded activities such as writing frames, use of images to decode content, modelling how to approach and answer questions, and structured discussion / thinking time.

Ground rules are set with pupils, which include not asking personal questions. All staff are trained in trauma informed practices and adapt lessons where content may be very difficult for pupils. Use of anonymous questioning enables pupils to ask controversial questions with anonymity. Training ensures teachers do not let their personal beliefs and attitudes influence teaching.

The curriculum resources are shared across the school and support is provided for offsite teachers in planning.

- Pupils are given an end of term report on their progress and achievement in PSHE.

3.3 Curriculum sequencing and progression

- Subject team meetings, training from external organisations, participation in the local authority PSHE network, membership of PSHE association and Life Lessons all enable teachers to have support to develop the curriculum for progression across KS3 – KS4 and coverage of the statutory RSHE content.
- Teachers know their pupils very well; they provide structured support for processing sensitive content and are trained in understanding what is appropriate for different age groups. Issues that particularly affect pupils are revisited where needed.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board will hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The governing board has delegated the approval of this policy to the curriculum committee.

4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that PSHE is taught consistently across the school.

4.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering PSHE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to PSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils

4.4 Pupils

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

5. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of PSHE is monitored by the PSHE coordinator through:

- Curriculum review and planning activities in subject team meetings
- Lesson observations
- Learning walks
- Book monitoring

This policy will be reviewed by the PSHE coordinator. At every review, the policy will be approved by the curriculum committee.

6. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding policy
- Anti-bullying Policy

- Positive relationships and Behaviour Policy
- Equality Policy

Appendix – Example letter to parents for any external facilitators

Subject: Information on Our RSHE Curriculum and Parent Engagement

Dear Parents and Carers,

As part of our commitment to providing a broad and balanced education, we will be delivering **Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)** in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance. These lessons are designed to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to make informed, respectful, and safe choices in their lives.

As part of the RSHE programme the RAP (Raising Awareness and Prevention) Foundation will be delivering a workshop to our students on *[insert date]*.

The workshop will focus on themes such as online harms and violence against women and girls.

We believe that working in partnership with parents and carers is essential. You are warmly invited to:

- **Review our RSHE policy and curriculum overview** – available on our school website and from the school office.
- **Provide feedback** on the curriculum, either in person or via email to *[insert contact email]*.

We recognise that parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education elements of RSHE (other than those which are part of the science curriculum). If you wish to discuss this, please contact *[insert staff contact name]* to arrange a meeting.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us provide a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment for all pupils.

Kind regards,