

Heathland School

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

2026 - 2027

1. Introduction

This policy sets out Heathland School's approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education" (DfE, July 2025), which becomes statutory for all schools from 1 September 2026, and the school's safeguarding duties under Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025. The policy should be read alongside the school's safeguarding and child protection policy, behaviour policy, online safety policy, equality objectives and SEND policy.

This policy is published on the school website and is available to parents, carers and pupils on request.

The school will review its RSE provision regularly to ensure that it remains compliant with current legislation, statutory guidance and emerging safeguarding issues.

2. Guiding Principles

The school's RSE provision will be underpinned by the following principles:

- Engagement with pupils to ensure that learning is relevant, responsive and reflects pupil voice and local context.
- Meaningful engagement and transparency with parents and carers.
- Promotion of positive, respectful and healthy relationships.
- Age-appropriate sequencing of curriculum content, using non-stigmatising language.
- Inclusive and accessible teaching for all pupils.
- Delivery by appropriately trained staff or trusted external providers.
- A whole-school approach that reflects the school's values and safeguarding culture.

3. Aims of RSE

The aims of RSE are to enable pupils to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of healthy relationships.
- Recognise and challenge harmful behaviours and attitudes, including misogyny and violence against women and girls.
- Understand boundaries, consent and mutual respect.
- Evaluate online content critically, including misleading, manipulated or harmful material.
- Understand how to seek advice, support and help when needed.
- Make informed, safe, ethical and responsible decisions about relationships and health.

4. Curriculum Content

The curriculum will include teaching that is appropriate to the age, maturity and developmental stage of pupils. In accordance with the DfE's 2025 statutory guidance, the school will explicitly address:

- Healthy, safe, respectful and committed relationships. Both sexual and non-sexual

- Consent and personal boundaries.
- Sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Misogyny, sexism, harmful gender stereotypes and violence against women and girls.
- Positive masculinity and healthy male role models, including challenging harmful stereotypes and promoting emotional expression and respectful boundaries.
- Online relationships, online harms, online scams, gambling and data protection.
- The impact of pornography and coercive behaviour.
- The risks associated with the sharing of images and digital content.
- AI literacy, including AI chatbots, manipulated images and deepfakes.
- Personal safety, including fire safety, and safety around roads and water.
- Knife crime awareness and conflict resolution.
- Emotional wellbeing, resilience, mental health and suicide prevention.
- Sources of support, including school-based and external services.

Teaching will be evidence-informed and delivered in a manner that is sensitive to pupils' backgrounds, beliefs and experiences.

5. Teaching and Learning

RSE will be taught in a safe, structured and supportive environment. Staff will establish clear ground rules and create opportunities for discussion, reflection and questions. Learning activities will be adapted, where appropriate, to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and those requiring additional support.

The school recognises that pupils may ask questions that are personal or beyond the planned curriculum. Staff will respond professionally and in line with safeguarding procedures and the school's policy guidance.

Methods of Delivery

The core content of our RSE programme is delivered through PSHE lessons. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the Science curriculum. Some aspects are also dealt with in Religious Education, with issues relating to health education also covered in the PE curriculum. These lessons are specifically planned to deliver the content required. Pupils may also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional. It is our policy that, wherever possible, lessons should be taught in mixed-gender groups. Certain parts of the curriculum are, however, taught in single-sex groups where this better meets the needs of pupils or the sensitivity of the topic.

6. Safeguarding and Child Protection

RSE is an important part of the school's safeguarding curriculum. It supports pupils to recognise abuse, coercion, exploitation, unhealthy relationships and inappropriate online behaviour. Pupils will be taught how to report concerns, access support and understand that safeguarding issues will be acted upon in accordance with the school's child protection procedures.

Any disclosures arising during RSE lessons will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL.

Confidentiality and Advice

Policy in this area does not deviate from the school's general practice on all such matters.

- When necessary, pupils will be made aware that confidentiality is not guaranteed.

- If safeguarding concerns arise, staff will immediately inform one of the safeguarding leads in school, who will then take appropriate action in accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Any other personal disclosure will not be encouraged, but if made and of a serious nature, such as pregnancy or the seeking of personal contraception advice, the matter will be referred to the pupil's Head of Year and the Deputy Head (Pupil Support).

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The school will deliver RSE in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and due regard to all protected characteristics. Teaching will promote respect for all individuals and challenge discrimination, including sexism, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, racism and other forms of prejudice. Teaching will include age-appropriate, factual content on LGBTQ+ relationships and identities, integrated sensitively into the wider curriculum rather than treated as a stand-alone topic. The curriculum will be inclusive and accessible while remaining age-appropriate and consistent with statutory requirements.

8. Working with Parents and Carers

The school recognises parents and carers as the primary educators of their children in matters relating to relationships and values. Curriculum information and, where appropriate, teaching resources will be made available to parents and carers. Opportunities for consultation and communication will be provided as part of the school's ongoing engagement with families, and this policy is published on the school website in line with statutory requirements.

The school will ensure that parents are informed of their rights in relation to the withdrawal of pupils from the non-statutory sex education elements of the curriculum, in accordance with Department for Education guidance.

Parents' right to withdraw

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from the non-science components of sex education within RSE, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. These lessons will be highlighted in the curriculum plan. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 of this policy and addressed to the Headteacher.

If the request is made by email, a standard reply will be sent by admin within 5 school days (see Appendix 1 of this policy) to acknowledge receipt of the email request and to inform the parent that they will need to complete a formal request in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 of this policy.

A copy of the withdrawal request will be placed in the pupil's educational record.

The Headteacher and the Head of PSHE will arrange a meeting with parents to discuss the request and take appropriate action.

The pupils will be removed from the tutor group whilst Sex Education lessons are taking place and will be supervised in the library. Alternative PSHE work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

9. Whole-School Approach

RSE will be embedded through the wider life of the school, including safeguarding, behaviour, pastoral care, attendance support, online safety education and the promotion of a respectful school culture. The curriculum will reinforce the school's expectations regarding conduct, equality, dignity and

respect, and will contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and to Ofsted's Personal Development judgement.

10. Monitoring, Evaluation and Ofsted Readiness

The school will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its RSE provision through curriculum review, pupil voice, staff feedback, safeguarding analysis and quality assurance processes. Provision will be reviewed regularly against statutory guidance, safeguarding developments and the needs of the school community. The school will maintain appropriate documentation to demonstrate compliance with statutory requirements and to support inspection processes, including evidence of curriculum planning, staff training, safeguarding intervention and parental engagement.

This policy will next be reviewed in July 2027, or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Governors will approve the RSE policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-science components of RSE.

The Head of PSHE is responsible for the development of the RSE curriculum, which is delivered by tutors. The Head of PSHE is supported by the Deputy Head of Department and the Deputy Heads of Year.

Teaching Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive and effective way.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE.
- Monitoring progress.
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils.

Teaching Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher.

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

CEW July 2026

Appendix 1:
THE HEATHLAND SCHOOL

Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Tutor Group	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	
Signed	

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL

Date	
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