FOUNTAINS HIGH School

KIND HEARTS | WISE MINDS | BRAVE SOULS

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION POLICY

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Review date: April 2027

Reviewed: April 2026 (Caroline Ruscoe – PSHE Lead)

Currently being reviewed to reflect curriulum updates

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CONTEXT

Fountains High School is a generic secondary special school, for students from year 7 up to year 14.

The Department for Education published updated statutory guidance for 'Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)' in July 2025, replacing the 2019 guidance. Schools are required to implement the new guidance from 1 September 2026. The regulations are made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act (2017) and section 80A of the Education Act 2002. This states that all children, including those taught in a special school, must be taught Health and Relationships Education.

When planning RSE for our students we have sensitively worked towards accessible provision of the content set out in the Government guidance, but also considered four interconnected areas of learning:

- Personal care and hygiene
- Relationships and sex education
- Appropriate behaviour, including addressing sexualised behaviour
- Safeguarding

By placing these areas at the heart of our curriculum and reinforcing messages throughout the day, a wide range of educational and social benefits will be derived.

The Relationships and Sex Education scheme of work and resources encompass the variety of special educational needs and age phases. All students are streamed by ability, to ensure all individuals receive appropriate and suitable PSHE education.

For key stage 3 and 4 the schemes of work have been created following guidance from the PSHE Association, which incorporates the DfE's 2025 statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). The updated guidance introduces a stronger focus on misogyny and violence against women and girls, personal safety education, emerging online safeguarding risks (including AI-generated deepfakes and harmful digital subcultures), financial exploitation as a safeguarding issue, and greater emphasis on mental health topics including grief, loss and loneliness.

The schemes are based on the three core themes:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships
- Living in the Wider World

They encompass three skill development areas:

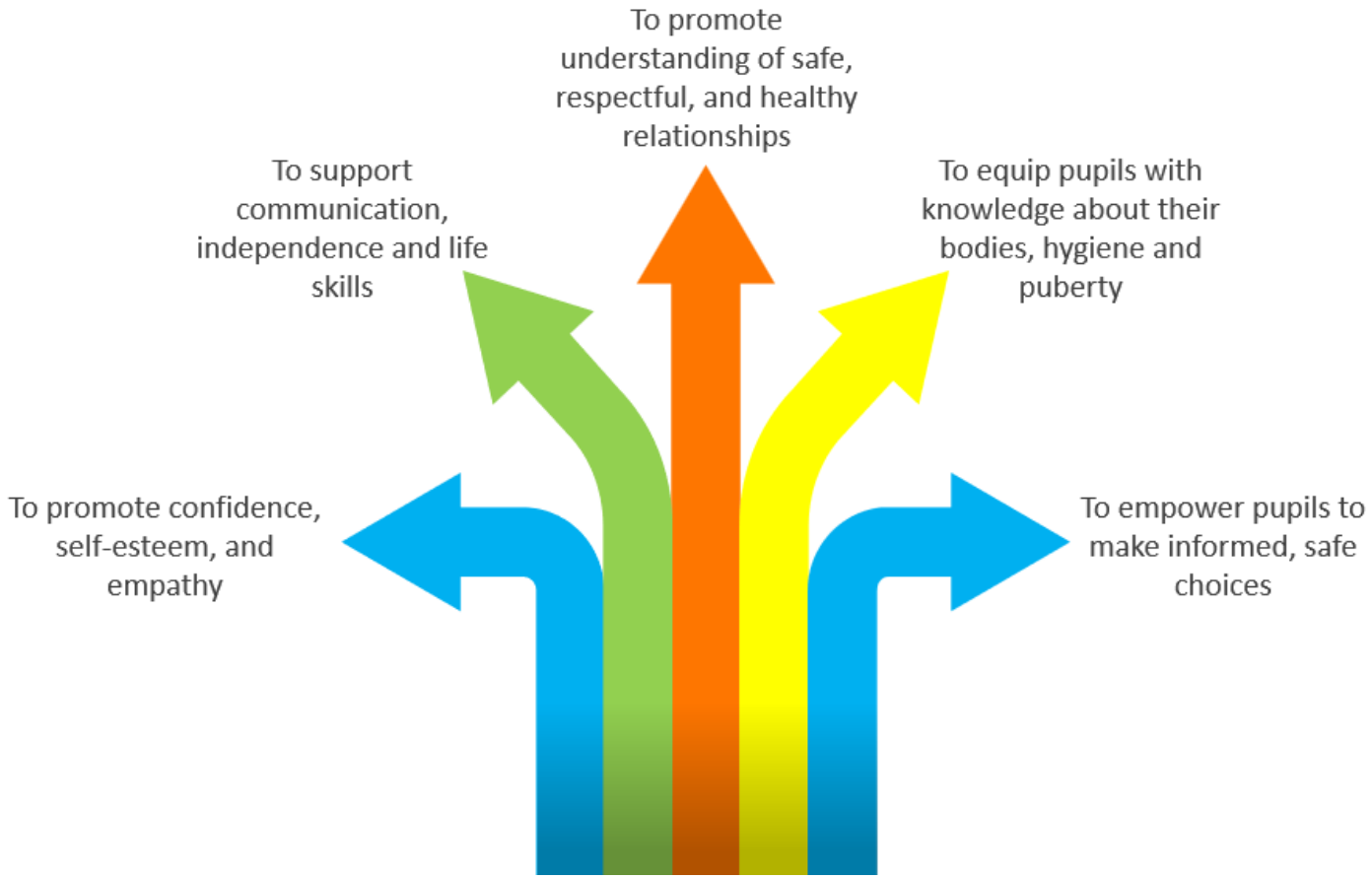
- Independence and Aspirations

- Autonomy and Advocacy
- Choices and Influences

In key stage 5 RSE will be addressed through the Personal and Social development accredited course as well as through more discrete PSHE lessons drawn from the PSHE Association Key Stage 5 Programme Builder. Topics from previous learning will be revisited to ensure that the knowledge and skills are firmly embedded.

AIMS

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:



STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS & POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Statutory requirements:

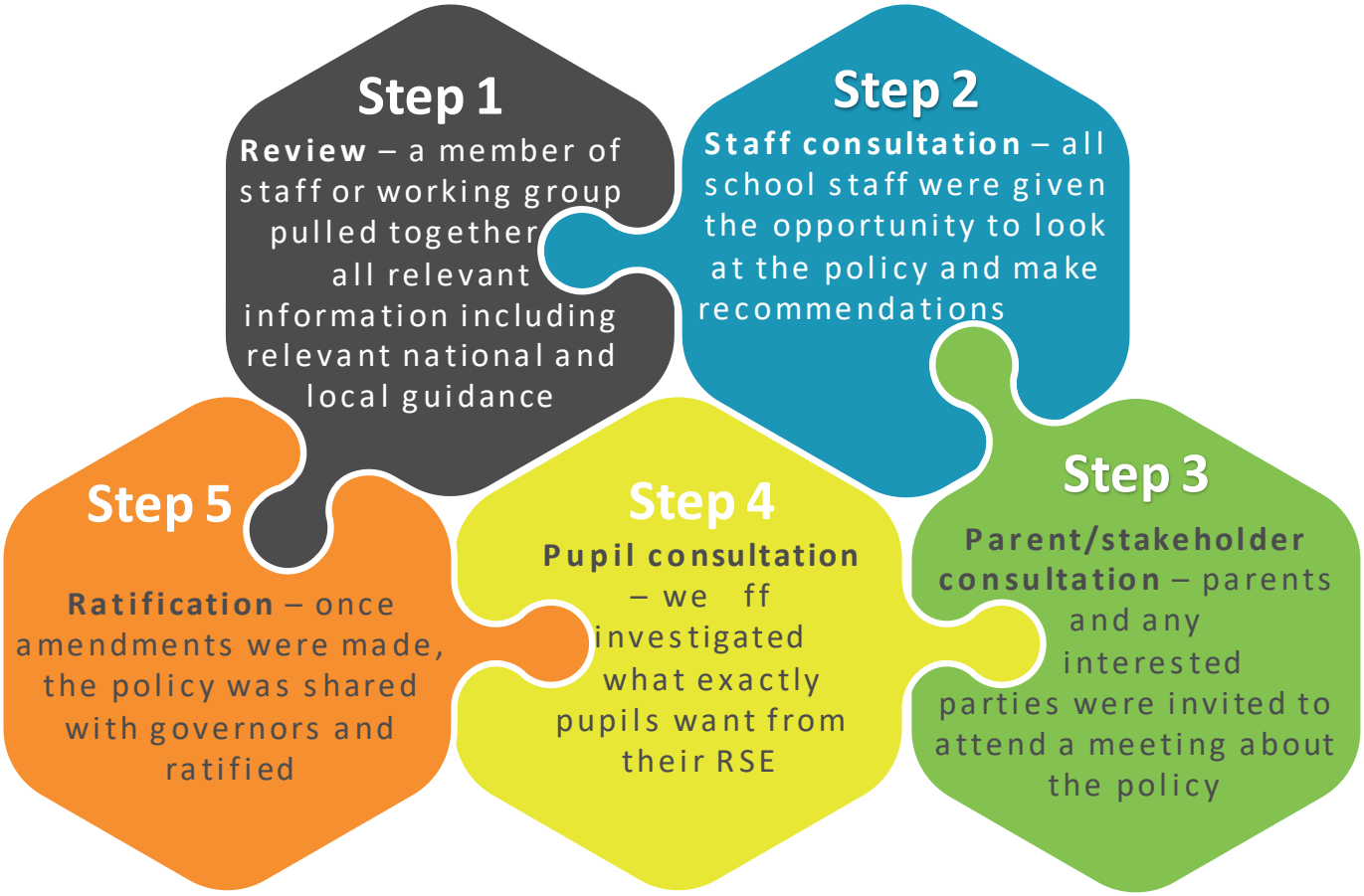
As a secondary academy school, we must provide RSE to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

At Fountains High School we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

Policy Development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:



DEFINITION

Relationships education teaches pupils about healthy relationships, respect, and safety. Sex Education covers reproduction, consent, and sexual health. Health Education promotes physical and mental wellbeing, including fitness, nutrition, puberty, and substance awareness. Together, they prepare pupils for life, relationships, and responsible health choices.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

CURRICULUM

The RSE curriculum is based on the PSHE Association's Programme of Study, updated in line with the DfE's 2025 statutory RSHE guidance, ensuring full coverage of statutory content and an age- and developmentally-appropriate approach. Curriculum sequencing is guided by the Competency-Based Model Programme Builder, The Key Stage 5 Programme Builder and The Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND, depending on the learning pathway each student follows. Content is carefully adapted to meet individual needs, ensuring that all pupils can access and engage with meaningful and appropriate learning. In accordance with the 2025 guidance, the curriculum explicitly addresses: misogyny and violence against women and girls; personal safety in relation to roads, railways, water and public spaces; emerging online risks including AI-generated deepfakes and toxic digital subcultures; and financial exploitation as a safeguarding concern. Greater emphasis is also placed on mental health education, including themes of grief, loss and loneliness.

The RSE curriculum is flexible and responsive, allowing for adaptations to meet the individual needs of pupils and to address relevant issues arising within the school community, the local area, or in response to national and global events. This ensures the curriculum remains meaningful, timely, and supportive.

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

RSE is delivered in a safe and respectful learning environment, where pupils are encouraged to engage in age-appropriate discussions around sensitive topics, with clear ground rules and supportive adult guidance. Staff use skilled delivery approaches in line with best practice set out in the 2025 statutory guidance. Teachers exercise professional judgement in selecting and adapting content to meet the specific needs of their school community.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

For more information about our curriculum, see our curriculum map in Appendix 1.

DELIVERY OF RSE

RSE is mainly taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the KS4 science curriculum and in KS3 where appropriate. Other aspects may be covered as part of the GRIT and MyFutures curriculum and through individualised interventions, as needed.

Pupils also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The governing board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE (see 'Parents' right to withdraw' section).

Staff

- Staff are responsible for:
- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE

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 head teacher.

Pupils

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

PARENTS' RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

The statutory guidance for RSE and Health Education will come into effect in all secondary schools from 2020, including academies, free schools and independent schools.

In secondary education from September 2020:

- Parents **will not be able** to withdraw their child from any aspect of Relationships Education or Health Education.
- Parents will be able to withdraw their child (following discussion with the school) from any or all aspects of Sex Education (see Appendix 2 page 16), other than those which are part of the science curriculum, up to and until three terms before the age of 16.
- 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, schools should document the process and will have to *'ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.'*

Requests for withdrawal should be made through Arbor.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The head teacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

TRAINING

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The head teacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the senior leadership team through subject quality assurance processes.

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

LINKS

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) – DfE Statutory Guidance 2025 (effective September 2026)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6970e7e67e827090d02d42e0/Relationships_education_relationships_and_sex_education__RSE__and_health_education__for_intro_1_September_2026_.pdf

RSE for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs
https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/RSE%20for%20disabled%20pupils%20and%20pupils%20with%20SEN%20-%20SEF.pdf

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Appendix 1 – PSHE and RSE Curriculum Overview

Intent: Our PSHE curriculum, aligned with the PSHE Association's Programme of Study, reflects Fountains High School's values: **Kind Hearts, Wise Minds, and Brave Souls**. It equips students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead safe, healthy, and independent lives. Through inclusive, adaptive lessons, learners build empathy, develop practical and academic skills, and grow in independence—preparing them to thrive in a diverse, changing world with integrity and resilience.

Pathway	Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4	Key Stage 5
KALEIDOSCOPE MOSAIC	Students follow the PSHE Association's Planning Framework for Pupils with SEND, organised into six sections: 1. **Self-Awareness** (personal strengths, skills for learning, prejudice and discrimination, managing pressure) 2. **Self-care, Support and Safety** (feeling unwell, feeling frightened/worried, accidents and risk, keeping safe online, emergency situations, public and private, gambling) 3. **Managing Feelings** (self-esteem and unkind comments, strong feelings, romantic feelings and sexual attraction) 4. **Changing and Growing** (puberty, friendship, healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviour, intimate relationships, consent and contraception, long-term relationships and parenthood) 5. **Healthy Lifestyles** (elements of healthy lifestyles, mental wellbeing, physical activity, healthy eating, body image, medicinal drugs, drugs alcohol and tobacco) 6. **The World I Live In** (diversity, rights and responsibilities, managing online information, taking care of the environment, preparing for adulthood, managing finances) Throughout the curriculum, students will be given information about how they can seek help and support, if they need it.	In Key Stage 5, students access units from the PSHE Association's Key Stage 5 Education Programme Builder. This programme covers three key themes: • Health and Wellbeing • Living in the Wider World • Relationships This aligns with the Preparation for Adulthood focus in Key Stage 5. Throughout the curriculum, students will be given information about how they can seek help and support, if they need it.
NEXUS	Students follow the PSHE Association's competencies-based model for Key Stages 3 and 4. Competencies (including skills and attributes) are grouped under three headings: • Independence and Aspirations • Autonomy and Advocacy • Choices and Influences This ensures full coverage of the PSHE Association's Programme of Study across both Key Stages, addressing three core themes: • Health and Wellbeing • Relationships • Living in the Wider World Throughout the curriculum, students will be given information about how they can seek help and support, if they need it.	In Key Stage 5, students access units from the PSHE Association's Key Stage 5 Education Programme Builder. This programme covers three key themes: • Health and Wellbeing • Living in the Wider World • Relationships This aligns with the Preparation for Adulthood focus in Key Stage 5. Throughout the curriculum, students will be given information about how they can seek help and support, if they need it.

For further information about the sequencing of topics across year groups and key stages, please refer to the full PSHE curriculum maps held by the PSHE Lead.