


Earlscliffe

Senior School | Sixth Form



Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

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1. Policy Statement and Rationale

RSHE is central to our school's mission to promote pupils' personal development, safeguarding, wellbeing, and readiness for adult life. Our curriculum is inclusive, evidence-informed, age-appropriate, and aligned to **DfE statutory guidance (2025 update, mandatory from September 2026)**.

We prepare pupils to develop healthy, safe, respectful relationships; understand consent; manage their physical and mental health; and navigate online and offline risks, including new and emerging issues such as AI and online misogyny.

RSHE sits within our broader **PSHE programme**, contributing to safeguarding, SMSC development, and the promotion of **Fundamental British Values**.

2. Statutory Framework

This policy complies with:

- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE statutory guidance on RSHE (2019, updated 2025) – full implementation required by **Sept 2026**
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025

We also draw on best practice from the **PSHE Association**, the NSPCC, NHS, and local safeguarding partners.

3. Aims and Objectives

Our RSHE curriculum enables pupils to:

- Form healthy, respectful, caring relationships.
- Understand **consent** in depth, including ethical aspects, power dynamics, coercion, and withdrawal of consent.
- Recognise and respond to **sexual harassment, coercion, violence, grooming, stalking, sextortion, FGM**, and other harmful sexual behaviours.
- Navigate online spaces safely, including risks of **AI-generated pornography, deepfakes, image misuse, sextortion, and misogyny**.
- Develop critical awareness of **pornography**, including its impact, ethics, legality, and influence on relationships.
- Promote equality and inclusion, respecting diversity in **sexual orientation, gender identity, family structures, and faith backgrounds**, while ensuring RSHE reflects UK law (e.g. marriage equality).

- Develop resilience, mental wellbeing, and strategies to manage emotions, stress, and peer pressure.
- Understand the importance of physical health, including puberty, menstrual wellbeing, menopause, contraception, sexual health, substance misuse, and first aid.
- Know how and where to seek help.

4. Guiding Principles (DfE 2025)

We commit to the **seven guiding principles**:

1. **Engagement with pupils** (curriculum shaped by pupil voice).
2. **Engagement with parents** (statutory expectation – consultation, transparency, resource sharing).
3. **Positivity** (focusing on healthy and safe relationships, not solely risk).
4. **Curriculum relevance and breadth** (covering contemporary issues such as AI harms, misogyny, porn ethics).
5. **Progressive development** (sequenced, age-appropriate, revisited with maturity).
6. **Safe and inclusive delivery** (ground rules, respect, SEND accessibility, avoiding stigma).
7. **Monitoring and quality assurance** (annual review, governor oversight, pupil voice).

5. Curriculum Content

RSHE is taught in a non-judgemental, factual way and is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. RSE will often take place within PHSE lessons, specific workshops or assemblies. Please refer to the PHSE Policy for further information.

The RSHE curriculum proactively addresses issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on student's physical, emotional and sexual development and has been developed by the pastoral team, with some lessons delivered by specialist visiting speakers, as well as by the head of year and form tutor, dependent on the topic. Lessons or assemblies may also be introduced into the curriculum in response to issues as they arise in the school and wider community.

Any RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some pupils will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson.

When pupils ask questions both publicly and anonymously, the school aims to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. The school will consider what is appropriate and inappropriate for a whole-class setting. Where appropriate, the school will refer to its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy regarding pupils reporting pastoral concerns.

Additional statutory content includes:

- Sexual relationships, contraception, STIs, sexual health
- Consent, power, coercion, sexual harassment, sexual violence
- Online harms: sextortion, AI chatbots, deepfakes, data misuse
- Misogyny, incel culture, gender-based violence
- Pornography: critical thinking, AI-generated porn, ethics, law
- Puberty, menstrual wellbeing, menopause education
- Substance misuse, addiction, risk-taking behaviour
- Mental health, self-harm, suicide prevention strategies
- Respect and inclusion (LGBT+ content integrated, not standalone)
- Rights, responsibilities, UK law

6. Equal Opportunities

The school is committed to supporting the needs and interest of all students regardless of their family background, sexual orientation, gender, culture, ability or aptitude. Lesson content will be tailored to suit the abilities, age, readiness, sexual orientation and cultural backgrounds of the students to ensure that all can access the full RSE programme. The school ensures that all students' needs are met and that students are aware that sexual orientation and gender reassignment are protected characteristics. The school fosters an environment of social learning and expects its students to understand the importance of equality and respect.

7. Teaching and Delivery

- Delivered by trained staff with specialist CPD in sensitive content and safeguarding.
- Inclusive approaches for **SEND pupils**, using differentiated resources and alternative formats.
- Clear **ground rules** and safeguarding protocols in every lesson.
- **External speakers** (e.g. health professionals) are vetted, aligned to school policy, and accompanied by staff.
- Lessons are delivered in a **safe environment** using distancing techniques (e.g. scenarios, case studies).

8. SEND and Inclusion

- Differentiated teaching and adapted resources for pupils with SEND.
- Accessible lesson plans (e.g. large print, visuals, simplified text).
- Inclusive examples reflecting different identities and family structures.
- Reinforce respect for diversity and challenge prejudice-based bullying.

9. Parental Engagement

Information about the subject content is shared with parents and the full scheme of work is available on the website and in hard copy.

- We consult parents, share resources, and explain curriculum sequencing.
- Termly information sessions and access to lesson overviews.
- Parents notified of any deviation from the published RSHE plan.
- Guidance provided to help parents reinforce learning at home.
- Annual parent consultation and update events

10. Right to Withdraw

- Parents may request withdrawal from **sex education** beyond the science curriculum.
- No withdrawal from **Relationships Education** or **Health Education**.
- From **age 15½**, pupils may opt into sex education even if parents request withdrawal.
- Headteachers may refuse withdrawal in exceptional safeguarding cases.
- Requests must be made in writing; school will discuss options with parents and pupils.

11. Safeguarding & Confidentiality

Effective delivery of RSHE allows pupils to discuss potentially sensitive topics, which may in turn lead to increased safeguarding reports. All staff are trained in child protection and, if they receive a disclosure or have concerns about a child in their class, they should follow the school's safeguarding procedures as set out in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality as this may not be in the best interests of the child and they should make this clear to any child in the event of a disclosure.

Where visiting speakers are invited to support delivery of certain aspects of the RSE curriculum, they will be subject to the school's usual vetting procedures. In addition, the member of staff responsible for the talk will speak with them in advance to ensure content of the RSE session is appropriate and compatible with the learning objectives. The presentation will be monitored by responsible staff.

Key topics that are part of Earlscliffe's safeguarding agenda: -

- Abuse, coercion, grooming, sexual harassment, stalking, FGM, harmful sexual behaviours.
- Recognition and response to online abuse, sextortion, image sharing.

12. Monitoring & Evaluation

- Monitoring of the relationship and sex education provision is undertaken by the DSL, through lesson observation, self-evaluations and discussions with pupils.
- The school's designated safeguarding governor has oversight of the relationship and sex education provision at the school.
- The DSL reports termly to the link governor to permit further scrutiny of the teaching programme.
- Pupil voice is used regarding the effectiveness and relevance of sessions is sought through discussion and feedback forms.
- The school values parents' views and welcomes feedback on the content and delivery or the relationship and sex education curriculum. The school actively seeks views/comments on the policy every year from parents, pupils and teaching staff.
- Parents are given the opportunity for discussion and review of the RSHE curriculum and policy.
- The policy is reviewed annually by the pastoral team and approved by the senior management team and governing body. Content may be updated earlier (e.g. due to legislation changes) as required.

13. Staff Training

- Regular CPD covering:
 - Sensitive and inclusive teaching methods.
 - Safeguarding and managing disclosures.
 - New statutory content (porn ethics, AI harms, strangulation law).
- All RSHE staff to access PSHE Association training/resources.

14. Related Policies & Documents

The policy follows the guidance set out in the following documents:

- DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- SEND Policy
- PHSE Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Pupil Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy