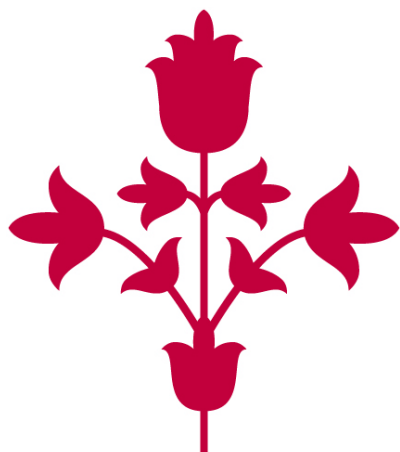




Earlscliffe



STATUTORY SCHOOL POLICY • 2026–27

Relationships Sex and Health Education Policy

Draft for consultation and approval | September 2026

Document control	Details
Policy owner	Leanne Dinsdale
Senior leadership responsibility	Dr Nicola Robinson, Headteacher; Mr Liam Connolly, Deputy Headteacher and DSL
Status	Approved
Date approved	01 Sept 2026
Approved by	Governing Board

Document control	Details
Review cycle	Annual, or earlier if legislation or guidance changes
Next review	September 2027

Implementation note

This policy is intended to be read alongside the published curriculum information and the related Earlscliffe policies listed at the end of this document. It sets out the school's expectations for planning, delivery, safeguarding, inclusion, monitoring and review. The accompanying curriculum map provides the detailed sequence of topics for each year group.

Approval and review record

Version	Date	Summary of change
1.0	September 2026	New Earlscliffe policy drafted from National College exemplar and current school arrangements

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1. Policy statement and rationale

Earlscliffe provides relationships, sex and health education as a planned, factual, inclusive and safeguarding-led part of the wider PSHE curriculum. RSHE supports students to develop healthy relationships, understand consent and boundaries, manage their physical and mental health, recognise harmful behaviour, navigate online spaces safely and prepare for adult life.

The policy reflects the ACE values of Ambition, Connection and Excellence. In an international boarding community, RSHE also supports students to live respectfully with others, manage independence, understand cultural and legal differences, seek help away from home and contribute positively to the safety of boarding houses and the wider school community.

2. Legal and regulatory framework

This policy has regard to:

- Education Act 2002 and Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, revised 2025 and in force from 1 September 2026.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- The SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years.
- Relevant provisions of the Online Safety Act 2023 and other applicable UK law.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Core responsibility
Governing Board	Approves the policy, receives assurance about implementation and ensures the provision meets statutory and independent-school standards.
Headteacher	Ensures that RSHE is planned, resourced, staffed and reviewed, and makes decisions about parental withdrawal in accordance with statutory guidance.
Deputy Headteacher and DSL	Ensures that safeguarding-related content is safe and current, oversees safeguarding responses and reports relevant themes to governors.
PSHE and RSE Lead	Leanne Dinsdale leads sequencing, resources, staff support, assessment, consultation, student voice and quality assurance.

Role	Core responsibility
Teachers and tutors	Deliver learning sensitively, establish ground rules, respond appropriately to questions and report concerns immediately.
SENCo and Inclusion Lead	Advises on accessibility, reasonable adjustments and the needs of students with SEND, EAL or additional vulnerabilities.
House Managers, School Nurse and Mental Health Lead	Reinforce learning in pastoral and boarding settings, signpost support and share welfare concerns through safeguarding procedures.
Students, parents and guardians	Students engage respectfully and seek help; parents and guardians engage with information, consultation and concerns.

4. Aims and guiding principles

RSHE at Earlscliffe is guided by the following principles:

- Safety first: teaching promotes prevention, help-seeking and protection from harm.
- Positive relationships: learning is not solely risk-based and emphasises respect, care, responsibility and dignity.
- Progression: content is sequenced, revisited and adapted to students' age, maturity, prior learning and needs.
- Inclusion: all students are treated with dignity and content reflects protected characteristics, diverse families, faiths and identities.
- Engagement: students' questions and feedback inform delivery and review.
- Partnership: parents and guardians are informed and consulted, while statutory duties remain the school's responsibility.
- Accuracy: teaching is evidence-informed, factually correct and clear about UK law.

5. Curriculum content and sequencing

RSHE is delivered through designated PSHE lessons, tutor time, assemblies, enrichment and pastoral or boarding provision. The detailed curriculum map is maintained by the PSHE and RSE Lead and reviewed annually. Content may be adapted when safeguarding intelligence, student voice, emerging risks or changes in law make this necessary.

5.1 Year 11 and Lower Sixth

- Healthy and respectful relationships, friendship, family and community.
- Consent, boundaries, communication, pressure and the right to change one's mind.
- Puberty, sexual health, contraception, pregnancy and access to medical advice.
- Mental health, emotional wellbeing, self-harm awareness, suicide prevention and safe help-seeking.
- Online safety, image-sharing, sextortion, pornography, deepfakes, AI-generated sexual imagery and digital footprints.
- Substance misuse, vaping, alcohol, drugs, gambling and risk-taking.

- Bullying, discrimination, harassment, abuse, grooming and exploitation.

5.2 Upper Sixth and Year 13

- Consent, sexual ethics, contraception, sexual health, STI prevention and services.
- Power, coercive control, domestic abuse, stalking, sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Healthy adult relationships, break-ups, conflict, personal boundaries and supporting peers safely.
- Independent living, health appointments, medication safety, mental health support and emergency help.
- Financial wellbeing, gambling, employment rights and responsibilities, and preparation for university or work.
- Professional conduct, online reputation, image misuse, cyber security and emerging technologies.
- Rights, responsibilities, equality, diversity, faith, human rights and respectful disagreement.

6. Teaching and delivery

RSHE is taught in a safe, respectful and appropriately supervised environment. Staff use scenarios, case studies, structured discussion, anonymous questions, reflective tasks and reliable resources. Students are not required to disclose personal experiences or identify themselves in relation to a scenario.

- Ground rules are established for each unit and include respectful language, listening, no personal questioning, no naming of peers and no sharing of confidential information.
- Teachers answer questions honestly and sensitively, distinguishing between what can be answered in the group and what requires individual follow-up.
- Where a question is outside the planned curriculum, staff may defer it, seek advice from the PSHE and RSE Lead or DSL, and signpost the student to an appropriate trusted adult or service.
- Staff will avoid material that is graphic, sensational or instructional in relation to self-harm, suicide, sexual violence or other harmful behaviour.
- External agencies and speakers must be vetted, briefed, supervised by a member of staff and aligned with this policy. Their resources and lesson plans must be available to the school in advance.

7. Equality inclusion and SEND

The school will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate in the delivery of RSHE. Students will learn about equality, dignity, respect and the protected characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender reassignment, in an integrated and age-appropriate way.

- Teaching will reflect diverse families, relationships, cultures, faiths and identities without tokenism or stereotyping.
- Students with SEND may be more vulnerable to exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, abuse, bullying and online harm. Their needs will be considered in planning, language, resources, supervision and follow-up.
- Reasonable adjustments may include visual resources, simplified language, pre-teaching, alternative formats, additional processing time, small-group work or individual support.
- The school will work with the SENCo, pastoral team, School Nurse and DSL where a student's needs require additional safeguards.

8. The law and contemporary issues

Students will be taught relevant legal knowledge in a way that supports safe decision-making without turning lessons into legal advice. Depending on age and curriculum sequence, content may include:

- Marriage, civil partnerships, forced marriage and so-called honour-based abuse.
- Consent, age of consent, sexual offences, rape, sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- FGM, virginity testing, hymenoplasty, domestic abuse, stalking, grooming and exploitation.
- Sharing personal information, images and videos, youth-produced sexual imagery, sextortion, deepfakes and AI-generated sexual imagery.
- Pornography, its potential harms, legality, unrealistic portrayals, consent and critical thinking.
- Protected characteristics, hate crime, prejudice, discrimination and respectful language.
- Alcohol, nicotine, vaping, drugs, gambling, knives and weapons, extremism and criminal exploitation.
- Medical consent, confidentiality, Gillick competence and routes to professional support.

LGBTQ+ content is taught as part of an inclusive curriculum that promotes equality, respect and dignity for all. Teaching will remain sensitive to students' religious and cultural backgrounds while being clear about UK law and the school's expectations of respectful conduct.

9. Safeguarding and confidentiality

RSHE is a central part of preventative safeguarding. It helps students recognise unsafe relationships, coercion, abuse, exploitation, harassment, harmful sexual behaviour and online risks, and teaches them how to report concerns and seek support.

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Students will be told that information may need to be shared if a concern about safety or welfare is raised. Earlscliffe's safeguarding expectation is NOTICE, LISTEN, REPORT, RECORD and ESCALATE. Concerns must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL and recorded on CPOMS in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The DSL will contribute to curriculum planning, especially where content concerns self-harm, suicide prevention, sexual abuse, sexual violence, domestic abuse, coercive control, online exploitation or other safeguarding risks. Teaching will be reviewed when patterns of concern indicate that additional or revised provision is necessary.

10. Working with parents and external agencies

Parents and guardians will be given clear information about the content and purpose of RSHE, opportunities to ask questions, and information about the statutory right to request withdrawal from sex education. The school may provide representative resources or lesson overviews and will respond positively to reasonable requests to view materials.

Parents and guardians do not have a veto over statutory curriculum content. Concerns should be directed to Leanne Dinsdale at leannedinsdale@earlscliffe.co.uk or to the Headteacher through the school office. Safeguarding concerns must be reported through the school's safeguarding routes.

External speakers may enhance but will not replace teaching by school staff. The school will check credentials, review plans and resources, brief the speaker, ensure a teacher is present, and make clear the procedures for responding to disclosures.

11. Withdrawal from sex education

Parents or guardians may request in writing that a student is withdrawn from some or all sex education delivered as part of RSHE. There is no right to withdraw from relationships education, health education or content taught as part of the science curriculum.

- Requests should be addressed to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will discuss the request with the parent or guardian and, where appropriate, the student, explaining the content, purpose, benefits and any potential disadvantages of withdrawal.
- The school will respect a request to withdraw up to and until three terms before the student turns 16, in accordance with statutory guidance.
- From three terms before the student turns 16, a student may choose to receive sex education even where a parent or guardian has requested withdrawal.
- A student who is withdrawn will receive appropriate and purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- The specific needs and vulnerability of a student with SEND will be considered when discussing withdrawal and alternative provision.
- A withdrawal request will not prevent the school from responding to a safeguarding concern, providing necessary health information or taking action to protect a student or another person.

12. Assessment training and monitoring

There are no formal examinations in RSHE. Staff use formative assessment, quizzes, written reflection, self-evaluation, discussion, student voice and feedback to assess understanding and identify support needs. Students are not assessed on personal disclosure or private experience.

The PSHE and RSE Lead will monitor planning, resources, lesson delivery, student feedback, accessibility, assessment and curriculum coverage. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will receive periodic reports, and governors will receive appropriate assurance through curriculum and safeguarding oversight. Staff delivering RSHE will receive induction and continuing professional development on sensitive teaching, inclusion, confidentiality, safeguarding, difficult questions, online harms and current statutory guidance.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and PSHE and RSE Lead, with input from the DSL, SENCo, students, parents, staff and governors. It will be updated sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, inspection expectations or safeguarding intelligence require it.

13. Related policies and documents

- PSHE Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy

- Student Code of Conduct
- Boarding Principles and Practice
- SEND and Inclusion Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Visitor Policy
- School Nurse and Mental Health Support arrangements