

## **Denefield School**

### **Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy**

Approved by Standards/Trust Board on	24 Sept 2025 (Pre Consultation) 14 Jan 2026 (Final Approval)
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Policy owner	Headteacher
Location of policy	Website

## **Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy**

### **Definition**

- Relationships, sex and health education (known as RSHE) is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.
- RSHE involves a combination of providing information and exploring issues and values.
- RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity, the promotion of a particular sexual orientation or to sexualise young people.
- RSHE is underpinned by a wider, deliberate cultivation and practice of resilience and character in the individual. These include Denefield's CHARACTER values.

### **Aims**

The aims of RSHE at Denefield are to:

- Enable students 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, and what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Teach about contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure) and making safe, informed and healthy choices
- Enable students to 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
- Teach students about the benefits and risks of the digital world in forming attitudes towards sex and relationships
- Understand the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health, and gender identity in an inclusive way. Know that citizens have rights and responsibilities. Key aspects of the law relating to sex which is taught including the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy, all at an age-appropriate time.

## **Purpose**

RSHE 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 including the rules and principles for keeping safe online
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Denefield is mindful that for students who are or have experienced unhealthy or unsafe relationships at home or socially, the school may have a particularly important role in being a place of consistency and safety where they can speak to trusted adults, report problems and find support.

## **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.

Students are made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including:

- 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)

## **Statutory requirements**

As a secondary academy school Denefield must provide RSHE to all students as per Section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. In teaching RSHE, 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. The statutory guidance can be found here [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/Relationships_and_sex_education_(RSE)_and_health_education_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

A summary can be found in Appendix 1.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **Trust Board**

The trust board will approve the RSHE policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

### **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests for excusing (withdrawing) students from non-statutory components of RSHE.

### **Staff**

Staff teaching RSHE follow the curriculum and remain neutral in their delivery whilst ensuring that students always have access to the learning they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals.

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Teaching students to be accepting of the different beliefs, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities, backgrounds, and values of those around them.
- Providing students with the right tools to enable them to seek information or support, should they need it
- Ensuring that they are up to date with school policy and curriculum requirements regarding RSHE.
- Attending and engaging in professional development training around RSHE provision, including individual and whole staff training/inset, where appropriate
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSHE.

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

## **Students**

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

Every effort is made to enable students to feel comfortable to talk to a member of staff, in confidence, regarding any concerns they have in school related to RSHE or otherwise.

## **Curriculum provision**

The school's current curriculum map can be found in Appendix 2, though it should be noted that alterations and reordering are likely to take place in response to current issues. This curriculum has been developed taking into account the age, needs and feelings of students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate and sensitive manner. Curriculum delivery RSHE is taught within the Success for Life curriculum, which covers personal, social, health and careers education (PSHCE). Biological aspects of RSHE are **also** taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are **also** included in religious education (RE). Students also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

RSHE 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

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. Some children may have a different structure of support around them - for example children who are looked after (CLA) or young carers.

## **Sex, gender identity and sexual orientation**

Schools have a clear duty under the Equality Act (2010) to ensure that our teaching is accessible to all students, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+). Inclusive RSHE fosters good relations between students, tackles all types of prejudice, including homophobia, and promotes understanding and respect,

enabling us to meet the requirements, and live the intended spirit, of the Equality Act (2010). We will deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Students, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that RSHE is relevant to them. Teachers will not assume that all intimate relationships are between opposite sexes. All sexual health information will be inclusive and will include LGBT+ people in case studies, scenarios, and role-plays. We will ensure students can explore topics from differing points of view and a variety of activities including practical tasks, discussions, group activities and competitions. There may be occasional sessions delivered where students are separated by sex due to the nature of the topic.

### **Learning environment and additional non-negotiable ground rules**

Staff are careful to ensure their personal beliefs and attitudes do not influence the teaching of RSHE. To this end, ground rules have been agreed to provide a framework of common values within which to teach. There are clear parameters as to what will be taught in a whole class setting, and what will be dealt with on an individual basis. Clear guidance within sequences of learning are provided to teachers to ensure there is a consistent approach to creating a suitable environment for the delivery of RSHE. In addition to the ground rules used in PSHE, we have developed a set of non-negotiable rules for lessons and discussions related to RSHE. If students are to benefit fully from an RSHE programme, they need to be confident speakers, good listeners, and effective, sensitive communicators.

When the needs of students are analysed, of overriding importance are two key areas: students need to feel safe and be safe. A set of additional, non-negotiable ground rules will help staff to create a safe and relaxed environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious about unexpected questions or comments from the students, these are shared at the beginning of lessons and introductions to topics. They also reduce the possibility of inappropriate behaviour and the disclosure of inappropriate personal information.

Our non-negotiable ground rules are:

- Confidentiality: 'what is said in the room, stays in the room' except if anyone mentions something which could be harmful or put them at risk – then the teacher will have to pass the information on to help keep them safe
- It is not OK to ask personal questions of each other or the teacher, but we can put questions on a post-it note for later.
- Do not name names: if you want to ask about or share a personal story or experience, you can speak in the third person about 'someone I know', 'a friend', 'a situation I've heard about/read about'.
- We will try to only ask questions related to what we are learning in the lesson.
- We will try to use the anatomical terms for the sexual body parts.
- It is ok to say pass / not join in. Students will not be put on the spot or a response demanded from them.

- We will respect different opinions, situations & backgrounds.

### **Answering questions**

We acknowledge that sensitive and potentially difficult issues will arise in RSHE as students will naturally share information and ask questions. When spontaneous discussion arises, it is guided in a way that reflects the stated school aims and curriculum content for RSHE. As a first principle, we answer questions relating to taught, planned curriculum for that age group to the whole class. We answer questions relating to areas beyond the taught, planned curriculum for that age group, in a sensitive and age-appropriate way, only to the student, or students, who have asked the question. If a member of staff is uncertain about the answer to a question, or indeed whether they should answer it, they will seek guidance from the PSHE lead / safeguarding lead. We may use a question box or post-it notes where questions may be asked anonymously.

No student will be forced into asking or answering questions. When answering questions, we ensure that sharing personal information by adults, students about themselves or their families is discouraged. Where a question or comment from a student in the classroom indicates the possibilities of abuse or risk of harm, teachers will pass this information to the designated safeguarding lead in line with school policy and procedures.

Staff training will include sessions on how to deal with difficult questions. Agreed phrases, where appropriate, will be used in response to difficult questions, for example, 'I can only answer questions on the content of this lesson' or, 'That is something that may be covered later on' or, 'I can't answer that question, but I can try to find someone that can and get back to you.'

### **The right to excuse**

Parents and carers have the right to excuse (withdraw) their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSHE up to and until three terms before the student turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this. Requests for requesting the write to excuse should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the Headteacher. A copy of any withdrawal request will be placed in the student's school file. The Headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action in person or via an appropriate delegated colleague. Alternative work will be given to students who are excused from sex education.

RSHE is a vital part of the school curriculum. It supports child development and we strongly advise parents/carers to carefully consider their decision before withdrawing their child from this aspect of school life. However, it is acknowledged that the final decision on the issue is for the parent/carer to take, and the child and family would not be stigmatised for the decision.

Parents/carers who do withdraw their child will be alerted to the possible impact of doing so during the discussion between the school and the parents/carers. If a student is withdrawn from the RSHE sessions, they will no doubt hear about the content of sessions from other students and this may not be in the supportive, controlled, or safe environment that the classroom would be. They may also seek out their own information via the internet, which may result in them finding out incorrect or subjective information and possibly put them in an unsafe situation. Ofsted figures show that approximately four children will be withdrawn in every ten thousand (0.04% of students nationally).

### **The right to request teaching materials**

The DfE has made it clear that parents and carers should be able to view curriculum materials. As a school we adopt a transparent approach and are happy to share schemes of work and other resources. This would normally be facilitated by way of a face-to-face meeting with parents/carers to ensure that context is clearly communicated and that any questions can be asked and responded to. Parents and carers are not able to veto curriculum content, however, the views of all stake holders are considered when developing and updating the curriculum. Any parent or carer who would like further information should contact the school directly.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring of curriculum provision and delivery is conducted by members of the Senior Leadership Team through:

- Monitoring lesson planning
- Lesson drop ins and observations
- Book scrutiny
- Student voice

### **Who/what was consulted**

The Senior Leadership Team including the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the member of staff with responsibility for Success for Life (PSHCE), parents and carers.

### **Linked policies**

Equalities policy  
Curriculum Policy  
Drugs Education Policy  
Teaching and Learning policy

## Appendix 1: What every student should know by the end of secondary school

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships</li> <li>• How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children</li> <li>• What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. 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</li> <li>• Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into</li> <li>• The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships</li> <li>• The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting</li> <li>• 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); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed</li> </ul>
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: 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</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</li> <li>• How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help</li> <li>• That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control</li> <li>• What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Online media and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them</li> <li>• What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online</li> <li>• The impact of viewing harmful content</li> <li>• That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. 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</li> <li>• That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail</li> <li>• How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online</li> </ul>
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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, and how these can affect current and future relationships</li> <li>• 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)</li> </ul>

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing</li> <li>• The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women</li> <li>• That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others</li> <li>• That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex</li> <li>• The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available</li> <li>• The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing</li> <li>• About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment</li> <li>• How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour</li> <li>• How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment</li> </ul>

**Appendix 2:** Denefield RSHE curriculum outline (note that other Success for Life topics are not included in this outline, also note that changes to the order may be made during the year.)

Year Group	Term	Topic
7	Autumn 2	Developing self-confidence and self-worth: Healthy relationships – focus on friendships Managing conflict
7	Spring 2	Developing self-confidence and self-worth: Puberty and managing change Body satisfaction and self-concept LGBT+ inclusivity
7	Summer 1	Developing assertive communication, risk management and support-seeking skills: Rights in the community Relationship boundaries Unwanted contact Forced marriage
8	Autumn 1 and 2	Resisting peer influence Online choices and influences Managing relationship challenges and endings Online safety and laws Grooming and sharing images ‘sexting’
8	Summer 1	Developing assertive communication, clarifying values & strategies to manage influence: Sexism
8	Summer 2	Developing assertive communication, risk management and support-seeking skills: Consent FGM Sexualised behaviour
9	Spring 2	Developing assertive communication, risk management and support-seeking skills: Managing grief and loss
9	Summer 1	Developing assertive communication, clarifying values & strategies to manage influence: Building blocks of healthy relationships Consent Relationships in the media Sustaining relationships Contraception

		Male and female body functions
9	Summer 2	Developing decision making, risk management and support-seeking skills: Fertility and conception STI's and safe sex Sexual response and pleasure Pornography Pregnancy Intimacy Body image Sexual rights
10	Autumn 1	Developing decision making, risk management and support-seeking skills: Gender and sexual identity Sexual harassment Unwanted attention
10	Autumn 2	Developing self-confidence, risk management and strategies to manage influence: Intimate relationships Dating and relationship violence Online presence Risky behaviours
10	Spring 2	Developing decision making, risk management and support-seeking skills: Conception and fertility Pregnancy STI's Condom safety
11	Spring 1	Developing self-awareness and decision-making skills: Pornography - impact and laws Risky behaviour

**Appendix 3:** Parent form for withdrawal from sex education within RSHE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT / CARER			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within RSHE			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

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