



**Bexhill**  
Academy



# Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Policy 2023 -2024

Adopted: November 2023  
Next Review: November 2024

# RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION, SEX EDUCATION AND HEALTH EDUCATION (RSHE) POLICY

## For Bexhill Academy

This policy was adopted on 1 November 2023  
This policy is due for review on 1 November 2024

### Policy context and rationale

This relationships, sex and health education policy covers the *Bexhill Academy* approach to teaching relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). The core policy was provided by East Sussex County Council as an adopted model policy. This policy has been subject to thorough consultation with the whole-school community including pupils, parents/carers, staff and the Trust Board. Pupil consultation has ensured that the needs of all pupils can be met through the delivery of an age and stage appropriate RSHE curriculum that addresses relevant issues, informed by analysis of public health data and pupil priorities. Consultation methods have included student surveys and consultation with a groups of students. Key needs identified were Pupil consultation has been used to inform the creation of the academy's RSHE curriculum and this policy where appropriate.

Bexhill Academy is an 11-16 academy. The school serves the coastal town of Bexhill-on-Sea with most students living locally within the catchment area, travelling to school by foot or public transport. As the main community comprehensive in the town, the town's problems are our problems. The other comprehensive is an 11-16 Roman Catholic College, which has a wider catchment area. Employment and unemployment rates in the area are both below the national average, as the area has an above average proportion of retired residents.

Local data, (including the Health Related Behaviour Survey for the academy conducted in 2021-2022) indicates that 4% of Bexhill Academy Year 10+ students (6% East Sussex average) have had penetrative sex and that 9% have sent nude images. We therefore recognise the need to further lower levels of unacceptable use.

In addition, the R.S.E and PSHE curriculums will focus on relationships and child exploitation to reflect and national and local concerns (highlighted by Sussex Police) with regards to criminal exploitation. This work is supported by Sussex Police.

### Policy availability

Stakeholders can be informed about the policy by accessing a copy from the academy website. Should a hard-copy of the document be required, the academy will be happy to provide this upon request and will also work with any stakeholders that require the policy in an alternative format to meet their individual needs, ensuring equitable accessibility for all. The policy can be obtained in an alternative format by contacting the academy on 01424 430722.

### Policy values, aims and objectives

*Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities but also challenges and*

*risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.*

*These subjects represent a huge opportunity to help our children and young people develop. The knowledge and attributes gained will support their own, and others', wellbeing and attainment and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society.*

-Secretary of State Foreword

Bexhill Academy is a community school that recognises the staff, parents/carers and students play an important part in making it successful. We aim for an environment that enables and encourages all members of the community to have "Collective Responsibility". For our students to be able to gain the most from their education it is vital they feel safe and secure whilst attending our academy. RSHE is underpinned by a clear set of embedded values and principles that complement the academy ethos and permeate through the teaching practice, resources and classroom management of RSHE lessons.

RSHE is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health in an age and stage appropriate manner. RSHE equips children and young people with accurate information, positive values and the skills to enjoy healthy, safe and positive relationships, to celebrate their sexuality and to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing both now and in the future. We recognise the importance of RSHE in preparing children and young people to live safe, fulfilled and healthy lives. The overarching objective of RSHE is to support children and young people through a journey of physical, emotional and moral development via the teaching of essential knowledge, skills and values within the framework of the law and provisions of the Equality Act, 2010. Our academy's vision for RSHE is to educate and support students to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences they already face and for adult life. The RSHE curriculum will provide information about keeping healthy and safe, emotionally and physically, and developing and maintaining healthy and consensual relationships.

Effective RSHE can make a significant contribution to the development of personal skills needed by pupils to establish and maintain relationships. RSHE will ensure children and young people are encouraged to understand the importance of stable, loving relationships, respect, love, and care. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

RSHE will be approached through evidence-based, best practice principles to ensure the highest impact on improving pupil health, wellbeing, safeguarding and lifelong outcomes. The following principles are based on research evidence, supported by a wide range of leading organisations including the NSPCC, Barnardo's, The Children's Society and education unions. They are also supported by a number of MPs and Lords:

### **Principles of effective RHSE**

RSHE provision at Bexhill Academy:

- Is an identifiable part of our academy curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all the Key Stages.
- Is taught by staff regularly trained in RSHE (with expert visitors invited in to enhance and supplement the programme, where appropriate).
- Works in partnership with parents and carers, informing them about what their children will be learning and how they can contribute at home.

- Delivers lessons where pupils feel safe and encourages participation by using a variety of teaching approaches with opportunities to develop critical thinking and relationship skills.
- Is based on reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights, and distinguishes between fact and opinion.
- Promotes safe, equal, caring and enjoyable relationships and discusses real-life issues appropriate to the age and stage of pupils, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and safe relationships online.
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
- Gives a positive view of human sexuality with honest and medically accurate information so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health in ways that are appropriate to their age and maturity.
- Gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their values and influences (such as from peers, media, faith and culture) that may shape their attitudes to relationships and sex and nurture respect for different views.
- Includes learning about how to get help and treatment from sources such as the School Health Service and other health and advice services including reliable information online.
- Fosters gender equality and LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans) equality and challenges all forms of discrimination in RSHE lessons and in everyday school life.
- Meets the needs of all pupils with their diverse experiences including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Seeks pupils' views about RSHE so that teaching can be made relevant to their real lives and assessed and adapted as their needs change.

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).

### **Entitlement and equality of opportunity**

All children are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum delivered in an age and stage appropriate manner. Teachers will include a range of teaching styles and groupings to allow all children to make progress. Every child will be given opportunity to develop their skills independently and in groups, enhancing their own confidence and self-esteem.

We actively celebrate the diversity of our pupils, their families and the wider whole-school community. RSHE will always be taught in a non-judgemental, non-biased and fully inclusive manner through clear, impartial, scientific information as well as covering the law to ensure all pupils have equal access to our RSHE curriculum. We do not use RSHE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation over another.

Thorough consultation, continual assessment and regular reviews of the curriculum we ensure that we continually recognise and respect pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity, personal circumstances (including gender identity, faith or culture and that of their family, friends and the wider whole-school community).

## Teaching and learning

The RSHE programme will be led by Ms A Burdett (Maternity Cover : Mr Joshua Rudd), taught by a team of teaching staff and form tutors and supported by **visitors and outside agencies**. All staff involved in the delivery of RSHE have received training to ensure that pupils receive clear and consistent approaches to RSHE throughout their time at Bexhill Academy. Whole staff and individual training needs will be identified through the academy's self-evaluation process and staff appraisal.

On occasion external visitors, experts and agencies may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSHE to enhance delivery of these subjects, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with children and young people. When this happens, our academy will:

- Check the visitor or visiting organisation's credentials.
- Ensure the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with our planned programme and our published policy.
- Discuss the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils.
- Ask to see in advance the materials visitors will use as well as a lesson plan so that collectively we can ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs (e.g. special educational needs).
- Agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with our academy's policy.
- Arrange for the visitor to be supervised/supported by a member of academy staff at all times.
- Monitor and evaluate the visitor input to inform future planning.

RSHE will be taught through a range of teaching methodologies, including story-telling, drama, discussions, individual private reflection, quizzes and fact finding, value spectrums, debating, independent research and artistic presentations etc. This wide range of teaching strategies promotes engagement by all pupils, irrespective of preferred learning styles.

## Curriculum

The majority of elements of the RSHE curriculum are a statutory requirement to teach to meet the RSE and Health Education Guidance (updated July 2020) and The Equalities Act, 2010. 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](#).

RSHE will be taught through a 'spiral curriculum'. This approach means that pupils will gain knowledge, develop values and acquire skills gradually by re-visiting core themes to build on prior learning. RSHE will support the academy's commitment to safeguard pupils through an age-appropriate curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world.

Our intended RSHE curriculum is detailed below but may vary in response to emerging issues and to reflect the rapidly changing world in which our pupils are living and learning. If this is the case, parent/carers will be provided with appropriate notice before the amended programme is delivered. Where possible the curriculum will be complemented by themed assemblies, topic days and cross curricular links.

**Secondary**

<b>Relationships Education</b>	<b>Families</b>
	That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
	How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
	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.
	Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.
	The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.
	The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
	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.
	<b>Respectful relationships including friendships</b>
	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.
	Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
	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).
	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.
	About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.
	That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
	What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
	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.
	<b>Online and Media</b>

	Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
	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.
	Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them.
	What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
	The impact of viewing harmful content.
	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.
	That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.
	How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
	<b><i>Being Safe</i></b>
	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.
	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).

Sex Education	<b><i>Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health</i></b>
	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.
	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.
	The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.
	That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
	That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex.
	The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available.
	The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.

	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).
	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.
	About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
	How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
	How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

<b>Health Education</b>	<b><i>Mental wellbeing</i></b>
	How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
	That happiness is linked to being connected to others.
	How to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns.
	Common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression).
	How to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health.
	The benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.
	<b><i>Internet safety and harms</i></b>
	The similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image, how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online.
	How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.
	<b><i>Physical Health &amp; Fitness</i></b>
	The positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress.
The characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardiovascular ill-health.	
About the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.	



<b><i>Healthy Eating</i></b>
How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.
<b><i>Drugs, alcohol &amp; tobacco</i></b>
The facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions.
The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood.
The physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency.
Awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.
The facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.
<b><i>Health &amp; Prevention</i></b>
About personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.
About dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist.
The benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
The facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination.
The importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.
<b><i>First Aid</i></b>
Basic treatment for common injuries.
Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.15
The purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.
<b><i>Puberty</i></b>
Key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing.
The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.

## **Assessment**

Pupils' learning will be assessed at the end of every topic to ensure that pupils are making sufficient progress to build on prior teaching and learning and that teaching strategies and resources remain relevant and effective. Assessment activities will be implicit, forming part of a normal teaching activity to ensure that pupils do not feel under pressure and will include self-assessment and verbal tasks that will confirm pupils understanding of the topics.

Students will be asked to state "What has stuck?" so that their learning can be evaluated throughout the topics. This will be in highlighted pens for easy identification in student work books.

The quality of RSHE teaching and learning will be monitored through RSHE learning walks and informal drop-ins conducted by subject leads and/or members of the senior leadership team. The observations and findings of which will be used to identify and inform future staff training needs.

## **Responding to pupils' questions**

There will always be sensitive and controversial issues within the subjects of RSHE. These may be a matter of age and stage appropriateness or contrasting personal beliefs including those originating from faith perspectives and culture. We believe that children are best educated and protected from harm when they are provided with a safe and supportive space to discuss issues openly within the framework of a class working agreement. At the end of every lesson, pupils will be provided with an opportunity to ask questions in an open setting and will also be provided with an opportunity to raise anonymous questions through the use of an anonymous 'ask-it-basket'. Teachers will answer questions as fully as they feel age and stage appropriate based on the level of knowledge demonstrated by pupils during the lesson. Teachers may delay answering a pupil's question if they need time to consult with a colleague or the school leadership team to construct an appropriate answer.

Teachers can refuse to answer a question that they feel is inappropriate and will never answer personal questions about their own body, personal circumstances or lifestyle choices. If a teacher does not answer a question, the pupil will have the reasons clearly explained and the teacher will work with the pupil to identify suitable sources of information where they can obtain an answer to their question. This may include encouraging the pupil to ask a parent/carer or trusted adult at home.

Bexhill Academy is "proudly diverse" and recognises that students will not always wish to ask questions to their class teacher. Students can also be directed to:

Mrs Molyne Mtambara: Diversity Lead

Debbie Holter: DSL

Vicky Ransom: Mental Health Coordinator

Lee Starkey: Careers

Lucy Culshaw: SENCo/CLA Lead Teacher

## **Confidentiality, signposting and handling disclosures**

The academy's responsibility to safeguard pupils through a curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world will remain central to our curriculum content, teaching methodologies and supporting resources.

At the beginning of RSHE teaching the class will discuss and create a 'working agreement'. Confidentiality will be included within this agreement so pupils are clear of the limits of confidentiality that can be guaranteed by a teacher.

Distancing techniques such as the use of characters within RSHE avoids pupils feeling under pressure to participate or disclose information beyond that which is appropriate or feels comfortable. This strategy makes RSHE more accessible to all pupils including those who may have experienced unhealthy relationships and/or abuse.

Teachers will signpost pupils to information relevant to the topic being taught to ensure safe sources of information, advice and guidance are provided. Teachers will also work closely with the academy's pastoral system to advise on topic coverage so that the school can be responsive to pupil's pastoral needs and safeguarding arrangements can be actioned efficiently if required.

Teachers will conduct RSHE lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved) in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the reference seriously, and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. They will immediately inform the named person for child protection issues about their concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will then deal with the matter in line with our academy's safeguarding policy.

### **Involving parents and carers**

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children in RSHE and that RSHE is most effective when it is collaboration between school and home. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with parents and carers of children and young people at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation.

The academy will, usually, provide support to parents and carers through parents evenings, with the Safeguarding Team and PSHE SLT Lead available at every parents evening with resources and materials for parents/carers.

The academy operates an open-door policy enabling parents to discuss RSHE at relevant times throughout the school year.

Parental feedback will be received this year through surveys at Parents Evenings with a PSHE newsletter going out to parents/carers that addresses the issues they have raised, including sign posting materials.

The vast majority of RSHE is compulsory. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents and carers are only able to request that their child is excused from Sex Education, taught outside of the national curriculum for science. If a parent wishes their child to be excused from some or all of the non-statutory Sex Education, a request for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Executive Principal, making clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The Principal will outline to parents/carers the benefits

of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents/carers propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead). Once a decision has been made, parents/carers must inform the school in writing stating their reasons as to why they would like their child withdrawn.

Once these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, our academy will respect a parent/carers' request to have their child excused from non-statutory sex education up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education, rather than be withdrawn, the academy should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

The academy will document this process.

This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Principal may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Links to other school policies and curriculum

This policy complements the following policies:

- Friendship and Anti-bullying
- Online Safety
- Equality
- Inclusion
- PSHE
- Safeguarding
- Teaching and learning

### **Review date**

The local governing body monitors the impact of RSHE on an annual basis. The governors give serious consideration to any comments, consultation and evidence of impact.

Consultation with pupils will be conducted on a regular basis to support with reviewing the curriculum to ensure it remains responsive to emerging needs and the policy updated accordingly. The Student Council will review Safeguarding, including PSHE and RSE, as a standing item on the council meetings agenda. The Safeguarding and WellBeing Student Group will also review the curriculum and associated policies for the academy.

This policy will be reviewed every year or sooner if the RSHE curriculum is amended, for example in response to emerging themes, changing pupil needs or introduction of new legislation and guidance. The next review date of this policy is currently set for **November 2024**.