

RSHE

Policy

Date of last review: 1 September 2026

Document Management Information

Applicable to:	All staff and pupils at The Abbey School, Faversham
Dissemination:	Available to staff through the Academy Policy Centre/shared systems and published electronically by the school.
Training:	RSHE training and guidance are provided as appropriate, including safeguarding, SEND accessibility, online harms and safe teaching of sensitive content.
Review frequency:	Annually, or sooner where statutory guidance or safeguarding requirements change.
Policy Author:	Mrs Alyce Le Brunn-Healey - Assistant Principal for Personal Development
School Policy Owner:	Rowland Speller - Principal / Jackie Lucas - Vice Principal / Sara Spring - Vice Principal
Approval by:	Local Academy Board / Principal
Approval date:	Pending Approval
Next review date:	September 2027

Version History

Document Version	Description of Revision	Date Approved
V1.0	First Version Approved	18 th September 2025
V2.0	Revised for statutory RSHE guidance effective 1 September 2026; strengthened parent transparency, external-provider assurance, withdrawal procedures, safe teaching of sensitive content and updated curriculum expectations.	Pending Approval

Contents Page

1	Introduction	4
2	Aims and Intent	4
3	Definition and scope of RSHE	4
4	Legal and Statutory Framework	4
5	Development, Consultation and Review of Policy	5
6	Curriculum Overview	5
	6.1 Relationships Education / RSE	
	6.2 Sex Education	
	6.3 Health Education	
7	Delivery and Sequencing of RSHE	6
8	Creating a Safe Learning Environment	6
9	Inclusion, Equality SEND and Contested Issues	7
10	Use of External Providers	7
11	Student Voice and Responsiveness	7
12	Parent and Carer Engagement and Transparency	8
13	Right to Withdraw from Sex Education	8
14	Staff Responsibilities and Training	8
15	Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	8
16	Access to Materials and Policy	9
17	Linked Policies	9
18	Appendix A: Year 7-13 RSHE Curriculum Map and 2026 Statutory Coverage	9

1.Introduction

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is compulsory for pupils receiving secondary education, and Health Education is compulsory in state-funded schools. This policy sets out how The Abbey School provides high-quality, age-appropriate and inclusive Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). It has been revised to have regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance effective from 1 September 2026.

The school recognises RSHE as an important part of safeguarding and Personal Development. Teaching is designed to give pupils accurate knowledge, vocabulary, skills and confidence to form respectful relationships, protect themselves and others, seek help and prepare for adult life.

2.Aims and Intent

- Deliver high-quality, age-appropriate, evidence-informed and inclusive RSHE.
- Promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development.
- Equip pupils with knowledge and skills to form healthy, respectful relationships and recognise unhealthy or abusive behaviour.
- Teach consent, boundaries, privacy, dignity, equality and the law clearly and repeatedly.
- Prepare pupils to recognise and respond to coercion, exploitation, harassment, sexual violence, misogyny, abuse and harmful online behaviour.
- Develop critical thinking about online content, pornography, misinformation, artificial intelligence, influencers and digital relationships.
- Give pupils the knowledge and confidence to seek support from trusted adults and appropriate services.
- Ensure sensitive content is taught safely, proportionately and with appropriate safeguarding arrangements.
- Prepare pupils for adult life, including healthy relationships, wellbeing, financial decision-making and responsible citizenship.

3.Definition and Scope of RSHE

RSHE includes learning about:

- families, friendships, respectful relationships and different forms of committed relationships;
- consent, boundaries, privacy, intimacy, sexual health and reproductive health;
- online relationships, digital safety, pornography, image sharing, AI-generated content and online exploitation;

- physical health, mental wellbeing, puberty, menstrual health, sleep, nutrition, drugs, alcohol, vaping and gambling;
- equality, protected characteristics, stereotypes, prejudice, sexism, misogyny and discrimination;
- help-seeking, safeguarding, resilience, loss and bereavement.

Relationships Education/RSE and Sex Education are not interchangeable terms. Relationships content includes healthy and respectful relationships, consent, safety and the law. Sex Education refers to teaching about sexual matters beyond the statutory National Curriculum for Science.

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all Sex Education delivered as part of RSE, other than content required by the National Curriculum for Science. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education, Health Education or statutory Science. The school's full arrangements for requests to withdraw are set out in Section 13 of this policy.

4. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy has regard to current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Department for Education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, revised July 2025 and effective 1 September 2026;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, current statutory guidance;
- Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- National Curriculum in England, including Science and Computing.

The revised RSHE guidance is statutory guidance. The school must have regard to it and will have good reason for any departure from provisions stating what schools should or should not do.

5. Development, Consultation and Review

The policy is led by the Assistant Principal for Personal Development with senior leadership oversight.

The original policy was developed in consultation with pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers.

This revised policy will be considered through the school's governance arrangements. Following approval, parents/carers will be consulted on the September 2026 revisions to the RSHE policy and curriculum. Feedback received through consultation will be reviewed and, where appropriate, reflected in subsequent amendments to the policy or curriculum.

Material future changes to the policy and RSHE curriculum will be subject to appropriate parent/carer consultation. The policy is reviewed annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding intelligence, consultation feedback or pupil need requires it.

6. Curriculum Overview

RSHE is delivered through a planned Personal Development programme across Years 7 to 13. Delivery includes dedicated Personal Development sessions, assemblies, tutor/reflection activity, curriculum links including Science and Computing, and carefully selected external specialists. Content is sequenced so that knowledge and concepts are revisited with increasing depth and maturity.

6.1 Relationships Education / RSE

- Respectful relationships, friendship, empathy, boundaries, privacy and consent;
- Families, marriage, civil partnership, cohabitation and the legal status of relationships, including correcting the myth of 'common-law marriage';
- Relationship change, separation, birth, death, loss and new relationships;
- Stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, protected characteristics and equality;
- Sexism, misogyny, sexual harassment, public sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour and sexual violence;
- Coercive control, stalking, domestic abuse, economic/financial abuse, exploitation and grooming;
- Positive and respectful models of masculinity and femininity and critical consideration of harmful online influencers and subcultures;
- Online relationships, sextortion, scams, fraud, misinformation, disinformation, deepfakes and the escalation of conflict online.

6.2 Sex Education

- Reproduction, fertility, pregnancy choices and contraception;
- Sexually transmitted infections, sexual health and access to reliable health services;
- Consent, sexual offences, coercion, exploitation and the law;
- Pornography, sexualisation and how pornography may distort expectations of sex, bodies, consent and relationships;
- Intimate image sharing, including the legal and safeguarding implications of creating, requesting, possessing or sharing sexual images;
- AI-generated or manipulated intimate/sexual images and deepfakes, including consent, harm, reporting and relevant law;
- Risk, safety, intimacy and healthy sexual relationships.

6.3 Health Education

- Mental health, emotional regulation, stress, anxiety, resilience and help-seeking;
- Sleep, physical activity, nutrition, hygiene, oral health and physical wellbeing;

- Puberty, menstrual health, reproductive wellbeing, fertility and screening;
- Alcohol, drugs, prescription medication misuse, smoking, nicotine and vaping;
- Gambling, gaming, online behaviours and digital wellbeing;
- Self-harm, eating disorders and suicide prevention, taught through safe and evidence-informed approaches;
- Change, loss and bereavement, including recognition that grief is a natural response and that people may experience and express grief differently;
- First aid and appropriate responses to emergencies.

7. Delivery and Sequencing of RSHE

- Teaching is age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and responsive to safeguarding intelligence and pupil need.
- Sensitive content is normally taught in settings that allow discussion, questions and support rather than relying solely on large-group assembly delivery.
- Staff use approved resources and are expected to understand the intended learning, key vocabulary, safeguarding considerations and boundaries of the lesson.
- Teaching may use discussion, scenarios, case studies, videos, anonymous questions and reflection tasks.
- Where grouping pupils by sex is educationally appropriate for a particular topic, this is considered carefully alongside inclusion, safeguarding and individual need.
- Pupils are regularly reminded how to report concerns and where to obtain reliable help.

8. Creating a Safe Learning Environment

- Ground rules are established for respectful discussion, confidentiality, appropriate language and the right not to share personal experiences.
- Teachers do not ask pupils to disclose personal sexual experiences in a classroom setting.
- Pupils may ask questions anonymously. Staff answer questions factually, age-appropriately and within the scope of the curriculum.
- Where a question indicates a safeguarding concern, normal safeguarding procedures apply and the matter is referred to the DSL/deputy DSL as appropriate.
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn from Sex Education, staff may still answer safeguarding, Relationships Education, Health Education and statutory Science questions. Questions that would amount to delivery of withdrawn non-statutory Sex Education are handled sensitively, normally outside the lesson and in line with the agreed withdrawal arrangements.
- All forms of bullying, prejudice-based abuse, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour and child-on-child abuse are treated seriously and managed in accordance with safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

8.1 Safe Teaching of Suicide, Self Harm and Eating Disorders

Teaching about suicide prevention, self-harm and eating disorders requires particular care. The school will use evidence-informed materials, consult appropriate safeguarding/mental-health expertise where needed, and ensure staff delivering direct teaching have suitable knowledge, confidence and training.

- Teaching will focus on recognition, prevention, protective factors, help-seeking and routes to support.
- Content will not provide instructions, methods or unnecessary detail that could increase risk.
- Graphic, sensationalised or inappropriately emotive materials will not be used.
- Staff will consider known vulnerabilities and recent incidents before delivery and will liaise with the DSL/pastoral team where appropriate.
- Clear support and reporting routes will be provided before, during and after teaching.

9. Inclusion, Equality, SEND and Contested Issues

- RSHE is accessible to all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Reasonable adjustments may include visual support, adapted vocabulary, repetition, smaller-group delivery, pre-teaching and additional pastoral support.
- Teaching is respectful of pupils' faiths, cultures, family circumstances and protected characteristics while maintaining the school's statutory duties.
- Pupils are taught the facts and law concerning sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment in an age-appropriate and respectful way.
- Where topics are contested, staff distinguish clearly between verifiable facts, the law and differing views. Staff do not present contested views as established fact or endorse a particular contested position.
- Teaching reflects the Equality Act 2010 and promotes respect for all pupils. Discriminatory or demeaning language and behaviour are challenged.

10. Use of External Providers

External providers may enhance, but do not replace, the school's responsibility for RSHE. The school remains accountable for the quality, suitability and safeguarding of all content delivered on its behalf.

- The provider's suitability, expertise and relevant credentials are checked before engagement.
- Before delivery, the school will review the provider's lesson aims, lesson plans and all resources intended for use, including slides, videos, handouts, websites and other materials. External providers are expected to supply these materials sufficiently in advance to enable appropriate review.
- Content must be age-appropriate, accurate, balanced, inclusive and consistent with this policy, statutory guidance and safeguarding requirements.
- Expectations concerning confidentiality, disclosures, staff presence and reporting to the DSL are agreed before delivery.
- External speakers must not use RSHE sessions to promote commercial interests, partisan campaigning or a particular contested viewpoint.

- Parents/carers are entitled to view the materials that will be or have been used by external providers, in the same way as school-produced RSHE materials, subject to lawful copyright arrangements. Where materials cannot legally be copied or distributed, the school will arrange a reasonable opportunity for parents/carers to view them.
- A member of school staff remains responsible for the session and should normally be present.

11. Student Voice and Responsiveness

- Pupil surveys, reflection activities, student voice groups, House/Pupil Parliament and pastoral feedback inform curriculum review.
- Safeguarding trends and local/contextual risks are considered when adapting delivery.
- Emerging issues such as AI-generated sexual imagery, online abuse, misogynistic content, sextortion and new digital harms are incorporated where age-appropriate.
- Student feedback is used to evaluate whether pupils know how and where to seek help.

12. Parent and Carer Engagement and Transparency

The school works in partnership with parents and carers and is committed to openness about what is taught in RSHE.

- Parents/carers are consulted on significant changes to the RSE policy and curriculum. For the September 2026 revisions, consultation will take place following consideration through the school's governance arrangements, as set out in Section 5.
- Curriculum maps and information about planned RSHE content are made available so parents understand what will be taught and when.
- The school will proactively make available representative examples of RSHE materials and will provide parents/carers with the opportunity to view all curriculum materials on request, including materials supplied by external providers, subject to lawful copyright arrangements.
- Where materials cannot legally be copied or distributed, the school will arrange a reasonable opportunity for parents/carers to view them.
- Parents/carers may raise questions or concerns with the Assistant Principal for Personal Development.
- The school may provide information sessions/workshops, including support for parents/carers of pupils with SEND and on emerging online harms.

13. Right to Withdraw from Sex Education

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all Sex Education delivered as part of RSE, other than content required by the National Curriculum for Science. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education, Health Education or content required by the National Curriculum for Science.

- A request should be made in writing to the Principal and will normally be followed by a discussion with the parent/carer.

- The discussion will explain the nature and purpose of the curriculum, the benefits of participation and any possible detrimental effects of withdrawal, including the possibility of hearing information second-hand from peers.
- Except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parent's/carer's request until three terms before the pupil turns 16.
- From three terms before the pupil's 16th birthday, if the pupil wishes to receive Sex Education, the school will make arrangements for them to do so during one of those terms.
- Requests, discussions and agreed arrangements will be documented.
- A pupil who is withdrawn will receive purposeful, appropriate alternative education and will not be disadvantaged or left without supervision.
- Withdrawal does not apply to statutory Science, Relationships Education, Health Education or safeguarding information.

14. Staff Responsibilities and Training

- The Assistant Principal for Personal Development leads RSHE and oversees curriculum quality, sequencing, resources and evaluation.
- Senior leaders and the DSL support safeguarding oversight and response to disclosures.
- Staff receive appropriate CPD on safeguarding disclosures, SEND accessibility, online harms, sensitive and controversial issues, and trauma-aware practice.
- Staff directly teaching suicide prevention or similarly sensitive mental-health content receive appropriate preparation and support.
- Staff are expected to follow the school's safeguarding procedures and not promise confidentiality to pupils.

15. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The school monitors the effectiveness of RSHE through:

- pupil and parent/carer surveys and consultation;
- lesson/assembly review and quality assurance;
- staff feedback and curriculum review;
- analysis of safeguarding and behaviour themes, while protecting confidentiality;
- review of external-provider quality and materials;
- Trust, governor and external review where appropriate.

Findings are used to refine curriculum sequencing, staff training, resources and pupil support.

16. Access to Materials and Policy

- This policy is published by the school and a paper copy is available on request.
- Curriculum maps and representative materials are made available to parents/carers.

- All RSHE curriculum materials can be viewed by parents/carers on request, subject to lawful copyright restrictions.
- Requests for materials should be directed to the Assistant Principal for Personal Development.

17. Linked Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- SEND/SEN Policy
- Personal Development / PSHE curriculum information
- Online Safety Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing arrangements

Appendix A: Year 7-13 RSHE Curriculum Map and 2026 Statutory Coverage

The school's current Year 7-13 Personal Development/RSHE curriculum map forms part of the supporting documentation for this policy and is available on the school's Personal Development webpage:

[The Abbey School - Personal Development](#)

The curriculum map identifies where the revised statutory RSHE content effective from 1 September 2026 is taught across Years 7-13 and demonstrates the sequencing and progression of this content.

For transparency, the curriculum map identifies content as Relationships Education/RSE, Health Education, statutory National Curriculum Science or Sex Education. This distinction supports parents/carers in understanding the curriculum and, in particular, which elements fall within the parental right to request withdrawal from Sex Education as set out in Section 13.

Required explicit strand	Coverage to secure
Relationships and law	Marriage, civil partnership, cohabitation; myth of common-law marriage; relationship change, separation, loss and bereavement.
Sexual harassment and VAWG	Sexism, misogyny, public sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and routes to report/get help.
Online influence	Harmful online influencers/subcultures, misogynistic content, misinformation/disinformation, scams, fraud and escalation of conflict online.
Image-based abuse and AI	Sextortion, intimate image abuse, AI-generated sexual imagery/deepfakes, consent, harm, reporting and relevant law.

Abuse and exploitation	Coercive control, stalking, domestic abuse, economic/financial abuse, grooming and exploitation.
Sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment	Facts and law taught respectfully; protected characteristics; clear distinction between facts/law and contested views.
Mental health safety	Safe, evidence-informed teaching of suicide prevention, self-harm and eating disorders, with trained staff and clear support routes.
Loss and bereavement	Understanding change and loss, grief as a natural response, individual differences in grieving and help-seeking.

Source note

This revision was prepared with reference to the Department for Education's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance (July 2025), effective from 1 September 2026.