



Relationship Sex Education Policy

2025-2026

Introduction

At Northleigh (the School) we understand the importance of educating students about relationships, sex, and their health, to enable them to make responsible and well-informed decision in their lives

The teaching of relationship, sex and health education can help to prepared students for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life. It allows us to promote spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental, and physical development of students at School and in the wider society.

We have an obligation to provide students with high quality, evidence and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects. This policy outlines how the School's relationship and sex education (RSE) and health education will be organised and delivered to ensure it meets the needs of all students.

Statutory Requirements

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 are made under Sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Relationships and Sex Education is compulsory in all secondary Schools. Health Education is compulsory in all state-funded Schools.

Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social, and cultural development of students and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity, and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to provide a working document with clear guidance to trustees, staff, parents/carers and students on the delivery of relationships and sex education (RSE) at Northleigh House School and to ensure students learn about:

- Different types of relationships, including friendship, family relationships, intimate relationships, dealing with strangers, marriage, or other type of committed relationship.
- How to recognise, understand and build healthy, nurturing relationship, including self-respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, boundaries, and consent, and how to manage conflict, and how to recognise unhealthy relationships.

- How relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health.
- Healthy relationships and online safety.
- Factual knowledge and the law around sex, sexual health and sexual orientation, gender identity, set firmly within the context of relationships.
- Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), honour-based violence and forced marriage.
- Develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements, and behaviour, have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- Understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships.
- Avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex.
- How to communicate effectively.
- To provide students with the appropriate vocabulary needed to take an active part in their learning.
- The encouragement and development of positive decision-making skills.
- An awareness of the right they have over their body.
- The ability of the rights of others to hold opinions that differ from their own as long as these views do not impact on the rights of anyone else.
- The ability to take responsibility for and accept the consequences of their own actions.

Programme

RSE is taught within the secondary School's personal developments groups as part of the curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum.

Science computing and physical education will complement some of the topics covered in relationship education, RSE and health education.

We plan for our students to develop the following:

- Learn the importance of values, individual conscience, and moral choices
- Learn the value of family life, stable and loving relationships, marriage
- Learn about the nurture of children
- Learn the value of respect, love, and care
- Exploring, considering and understand moral dilemmas
- Develop critical thinking as part of decision making
- Learn to manage emotions and relationship confidently and sensitively
- Develop self-response and empathy for others
- Learn to make choices with an absence of prejudice
- Develop and appreciation of the consequences of choices made (both positive and negative)
- Managing conflict
- Learn how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse (both exploited or exploiter)
- Learn and understand physical development at appropriate stages
- Understand human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions, and relationships
- Learn about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception, and support services
- Learn the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

Families

Students should know:

- 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.
- 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.

Respectful Relationships, including Friendships

Students should know:

- 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.

Online and Media

Students should know:

- 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.

Being Safe

Students should know:

- 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).

Intimate and Sexual Relationships, including Sexual Health

Students should know:

- 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 and menopause.
- 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.

Right of Withdrawal of Students from Sex Education

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE (intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health) up until three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if a child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the School should decide to provide the child with sex education in one of the three terms. Parents/carers cannot withdraw their child from relationship or health education.

Students with Special Needs

We will ensure that all young people receive sex and relationship education. There may be exceptional circumstances that would mean we would have to take a student's specific needs into account. In these circumstances, we will offer provision appropriate to the needs of the student and may take specialist advice where necessary.

Equality

The DfE Guidance 2019 states "Schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010 which states that sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics".

Managing Sensitive Issues

Family/Home Life

Much publicity has focused on the need to emphasise the value of family life. While relationship, sex, and health education at Northleigh reflects this, it also acknowledges the range of experiences our students have of 'family life'. What constitutes a happy and caring home life can vary greatly.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBTIQA+)

Relationship, sex, and health education at Northleigh is not about the promotion of any sexual orientation or activity. Our teaching is sensitive and appropriate for our young people in approach and content. When we feel it appropriate, we will teach about LGBTIQA+ in a way that is fully integrated in our curriculum. In line with Government guidance, staff will 'deal honestly with sexual orientation, answer questions and offer support'. Northleigh will take a firm line over any incidents of homophobic bullying.

Advice for Students

Young people need to access a range of resources of support and advice. The School acknowledges the vital role parents play in this process. Teaching staff may offer advice and support to students in line with this policy and relevant Government guidance.

Safeguarding, Reports of Abuse and Confidentiality

The School follows Government guidance closely. This involves:

- Encouraging students to talk to their parents, giving them support to do so;
- Ensuring that students understand that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality;
- Reassuring students that, if confidentiality has been broken, they will be informed first and fully supported;
- Ensuring that students are made aware of confidential sources of help, e.g. GP, advice centre;
- If there is any possibility of abuse, the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed by referring directly to the School's designated safeguarding lead.

Approved by Trustees and to be reviewed in September 2026