DOROTHY STRINGER SCHOOL

EDUCATION FOR LIFE

Relationship and Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

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Key contacts

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Introduction

Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is an integral part of our lives from the moments of our conception to our death. It is therefore a crucial aspect of education. At Dorothy Stringer School, our belief in 'Education for Life' and particularly the values of Respect and Resilience place a particular emphasis on RSHE. It provides an opportunity for meaningful and relevant exploration of what it means to have self-respect and to respect others, regardless of differences in values. It provides an opportunity to consider and practice resilience to engage with sensitive topics and examine the value of resilience in making healthy life choices. Consequently, we focus on all aspects of RSHE promoting positive and safe relationships in all aspects of life. Through RSHE and PSHE we aim to equip our young people with a toolkit to take with them into adult life.

Children and young people grow up in a world that is increasingly complex, both online and offline. This brings exciting opportunities but also challenges and risks. To thrive, they need the knowledge and skills to stay safe, healthy, and make informed decisions about their wellbeing and relationships.
(Foreword, DfE RSHE Statutory Guidance, July 2025)

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is a Statutory Requirement and is compulsory in **secondary schools**. At our school, RSHE is delivered through PSHE education (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic education) as part of our wider curriculum.

Children and young people need knowledge and skills that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health, and relationships. High quality, evidence-based teaching of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) can help prepare students for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life, and can promote their moral, social, mental, and physical development. Effective teaching will support young people to cultivate positive characteristics including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness, and trustworthiness. Effective teaching will support prevention of harms by helping young people understand and identify when things are not right.
(Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, and teachers, July 2025)

At Dorothy Stringer School we work hard to deliver RSHE within the guidance outlined in both national and local documentation, whilst making the curriculum relevant to our young people. Teaching encourages students to have regard to the moral considerations, personal safety and the safety of others and values of family life. Our school reflects the diversity of modern British society. Our school adheres to the Equalities Act 2010 as well as promoting British Values. This includes respect and tolerance of diversity in all its forms.

We aim to provide a safe space where students can explore identity and build a better future. This policy aligns with and is supported by our policies on Behaviour, Inclusion, Equality, Anti-Bullying, and Safeguarding.

Young people learn about relationships and sex from a variety sources: family, friends, media and at school. Learning about RSHE is a lifelong journey for everyone. We aim to build on the work started by our primary colleagues in an inclusive, sensitive and age-appropriate way so that young people have the tools to continue their journey in a positive and confident way with an ability to make informed decisions, by giving young people the opportunity to acquire accurate and up to date information, develop skills and positive beliefs, attitudes and values.

In line with recent statutory guidance (DfE July 2025: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education) we include age-appropriate content on female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, sexting, pornography, abortion and LGBT education.

RSHE has three elements

Attitude and Values:

- to learn the value of respect, love and care
- to learn to value and respect ourselves and others
- to develop an understanding of and value diversity regarding, for example, religion, family life, culture, gender identity and sexual orientation
- to develop positive values and a moral framework that will help guide decisions, judgements and behaviour
- to promote a positive attitude to healthy lifestyles and keeping self-safe
- to be aware of and comfortable with their sexuality.

Personal and social skills:

- to learn how to identify and manage emotions confidently and sensitively
- to develop communication skills with peers, school, family and health professionals
- to develop critical thinking, decision-making, negotiation and assertiveness skills
- to develop an understanding of difference and an absence of prejudice
- to develop an appreciation of the consequences of choices made
- to develop the ability to understand the impact of external factors, such as the media, internet, peer group and remain independent decision-makers
- to learn how to assess risk and to develop strategies for keeping safe
- to develop the ability to give and secure help
- to behave responsibly within sexual and personal relationships
- to learn how to recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse of self.

Knowledge and understanding:

- to learn about and understand the biological facts related to human growth such as puberty, reproduction, conception, pregnancy and birth
- to understand human sexuality, reproduction, genetics, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- to understand how the law applies to sexual relationships
- to learn about contraception, condoms, emergency contraception and abortion
- to learn about the routes of transmission, symptoms and treatment for sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDs
- to be aware of the reasons for and benefits of abstaining from or delaying sexual activity
- to learn about the responsibilities of parenthood
- to understand the possible impact of risk-taking behaviour such as drinking or drug taking on sexual health
- to learn about local and national sources of confidential information, advice and treatment

Teaching RSHE at Dorothy Stringer School

Delivery of RSHE is mainly through PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education). This is taught as a discrete subject in the timetable, led and managed by a specialist team at Dorothy Stringer School and covers a wide range of topics. The PSHE curriculum is delivered through 2 lessons per fortnight in KS3 and 1 lesson a fortnight at KS4. RSHE is also delivered through science and small parts in RS, English and drama. RSHE is taught in mixed gender and ability groups in KS3 and largely in KS4. (English sets in KS4 so mostly mixed ability but includes stretch and nurture groups).

A spiral curriculum is used to ensure that topics are taught in both in an age-appropriate way and revisited as children grow and develop their maturity, understanding, and sphere of experience and influence, allowing them to build on prior learning and apply their knowledge and skills with increasing confidence and independence. To ensure we meet the needs of all students, including our students with special educational needs, we have a range of experienced staff delivering the curriculum which include the school's safeguarding officer and currently all Heads of Year. Staff ensure that lessons are appropriate to the needs of students, ensuring high-quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised to ensure accessibility. Staff have access to student Educational Health Care Plans as well as other documentation to support students' needs which feed into effective lesson planning. A variety of teaching and learning methods are employed to engage all students at an appropriate level. Ground rules are established within PSHE at the start of the year and are referred to throughout any RSHE work. Teaching uses various resources and sources of information to plan a strong, relevant and appropriate programme. Data from sources such as the local Safe and Well at School Survey (SAWSS) is regularly used to identify areas to be developed and for normative messages to promote positive choices. The curriculum has a flexibility which allows it to respond in

a timely manner to emergent issues of concern in society and school when identified and support pastoral care in school by addressing this with students.

The elements of the statutory RSHE requirement will be delivered through PSHE lessons and some form times, and students will be expected to meet certain objectives by the end of the year. With this in mind, it is not permitted for staff to withdraw students from RSHE lessons without permission from the Head of PSHE.

The requirement to ensure that children and young people are able to use the internet and related communications technologies appropriately and safely is addressed as part of the wider duty of care. The school e-safety policy helps to ensure safe and appropriate use. As part of the planned e-safety programme delivered through ICT / PSHE and other lessons we cover both the safe use of ICT and new technologies in school and outside school. Please see the school e-safety policy for more information (available on the school website > information > policies).

At Dorothy Stringer, we recognise the increasing role of artificial intelligence (AI), including generative AI tools, in education. However, the use of AI also presents risks that must be carefully managed. The risks are heightened within RSHE, where students may seek sensitive or personal advice that AI is not designed to provide safely, accurately or in an age-appropriate way.

To ensure safe and responsible use:

- Students will be taught to critically evaluate AI-generated information, verify it using trusted sources, avoid entering personal or sensitive details, uphold academic integrity, and recognise that AI cannot replace conversations with trusted adults, particularly around personal or safeguarding matters.
- Any use of AI within PSHE/RSHE must be age-appropriate, carefully supervised, and aligned with the school's safeguarding, online safety, data protection, and curriculum policies.

A brief overview of RSHE delivered at Dorothy Stringer School can be seen in the appendices at the end of this document. The PSHE curriculum intent statement is available on the school website (Information > Curriculum > Curriculum Intent). The PSHE curriculum maps are available on the school website (Information > Curriculum > Curriculum maps). A more detailed PSHE curriculum can be obtained by request from the Head of PSHE. The new curriculum, as outlined in the statutory guidance provided by Department for Education (DFE) issued under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996, became mandatory from September 2020 and the Guidance was updated in 2025 for mandatory use from September 2026. RSHE at Dorothy Stringer School is compliant with this guidance.

Co-ordination of RSHE

Our PSHE leads, Head of Department and 2i/c, Amy Jons and Mark Schvetz, have developed a bespoke PSHE curriculum, including RSHE, tailored to the specific needs of our school community. This curriculum draws on a range of in-house locally produced and nationally recognised resources to ensure relevance and quality. We work closely with the local PSHE Advisory team as well as PSHE Consortia, and subscription to the PSHE Association, to ensure our materials remain current, contextually appropriate and reflective of local priorities. Responsibilities include:

- Designing and updating the programme of study
- Organising staff training and sharing up-to-date resources
- Monitoring delivery through drop-in observations, learning walks, etc
- Ensuring student and parent voice informs curriculum development
- Attending local and national PSHE network meetings and training.
- Liaising with other subject leads to develop cross curricular learning.

Visitors to the classroom

At times, we have external speakers and visitors come into school to enrich the RSHE curriculum. Where outside speakers are used the Head of PSHE will meet the speaker, review all teaching materials and make the speaker aware of the RSHE policy of the school prior to the visit. The class teacher will remain present in the room at all times during a guest speaker's visit. All speakers will have the appropriate DBS checks as required.

Other services and access to information – PSHE enhancement

All students are entitled to RSHE provision. Some additional RSHE is provided through small group work sessions, with specific and vulnerable students and delivered by trained staff such as our pastoral team, support staff, the PSHE team, and on an individual basis with the school nurse or other outside agencies, such as sexual health nurses. Small group work or individual support is a vital element of meeting the needs of individual students.

Throughout lessons, group work and individual work students will be sign posted to the various local and national services as appropriate.

A health drop-in service will be available onsite for all students to access information, advice and guidance on a range of health-related matters. For students in Year 9 and above, the drop-in service can also provide condoms as part of the citywide C Card Scheme as well as pregnancy testing and Chlamydia screening. The drop-in will be staffed by the School Nurse and a Brighton & Hove CC Young People's Drugs, Alcohol and Sexual Health (DASH) worker who work under the Dorothy Stringer School

Safeguarding Policy. Staff will use the Gillick Test* to judge capacity in children to consent to medical treatment. They will also use the Fraser Guidelines** in regard to children requesting contraceptive or sexual health advice and treatment.

* The **Gillick Test** is used to establish whether a child under 16 has the capacity to provide consent to treatment. It is used to determine if children under 16 have sufficient understanding and intelligence to fully understand what is involved in a proposed treatment, including its purpose, nature, likely effects and risks, chances of success and the availability of other options. If a child does not pass the Gillick test, then the consent of a person with parental responsibility (or sometimes the courts) is needed in order to proceed with treatment.

** The '**Fraser Guidelines**' specifically relate to contraception and sexual health. The House of Lords concluded that advice can be given in this situation as long as:

- They have sufficient maturity and intelligence to understand the nature and implications of the proposed treatment
- They cannot be persuaded to tell their parents or to allow the doctor to tell them
- They are very likely to begin or continue having sexual intercourse with or without contraceptive treatment
- Their physical or mental health is likely to suffer unless they receive the advice or treatment
- The advice or treatment is in the young person's best interests.

Health professionals and staff at Dorothy Stringer School will encourage the young person to inform his or her parent(s) or get permission to do so on their behalf. However, if this permission is not given, staff can still give the child advice and treatment. If the conditions are not all met, however, or there is reason to believe that the child is under pressure to give consent or is being exploited, there would be grounds to break confidentiality.

Working with Parents, Carers and stakeholders.

Parents and carers' support is important to the success of our PSHE programme. Students are encouraged to talk about the RSHE curriculum with parents and carers. Our PSHE curriculum, including RSHE, is available on the SLG (Stringer Learning Gateway) so that parents and carers can see what content is being delivered.

- Our website includes curriculum maps, topic plans, and example resources so families can follow what is taught.
- We share home-learning ideas and signpost support services for family wellbeing.
- Families can contact the PSHE lead, Class Teacher, or Headteacher with questions or concerns.

In line with DFE guidance and changes in the curriculum for September 2026, the school consulted with parents and students regarding the delivery of new RSHE topics with PSHE.

Withdrawal from RSHE programme

RSHE aims to give young people the knowledge and skills to form healthy, respectful relationships of all kinds. Content is integrated across PSHE themes. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE Any parent or carer wishing to withdraw a student should put their request in writing to the Headteacher and the Head of PSHE. A meeting will then be arranged to discuss these concerns.

Assuming there are no exceptional circumstances, once those discussions have taken place, in accordance with DfE guidelines, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the student, up to and until three terms before the student turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education.

Students withdrawn from RSHE will carry out other independent PSHE related work in an appropriate area of the school.

Confidentiality

Dorothy Stringer School is committed to acting in the best interest of all the individuals within the school community. RSHE should take place in a safe and supportive environment that allows for suitable discussion of potentially sensitive topic matters without embarrassment. Students should also be made aware that we all have different experiences, and that mutual respect is essential. Ground rules are established in all PSHE classes, and confidentiality and respect are always included.

However, students are made aware that, **teachers cannot guarantee complete confidentiality and should be reminded of this at intervals during PSHE lessons.** Staff have a duty of care to the students they work with and therefore if a student makes a disclosure that causes a concern for the student's or another student's safety then that member of staff will follow the school's Child Protection Policy (see school website > Information > General > School Policies > Dorothy Stringer Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy). Personal disclosures can happen at any time or place. When this happens, the teacher should prioritise the needs of the student.

During lessons, students are regularly encouraged to talk with their parents, carers or other family members about RSHE lessons and about their personal relationships. This is especially important if students are having or contemplating having sex.

Signposting support

We ensure students know how to access help through strategies such as:

- Worry boxes or bubble time.
- Posters and journals listing support services.
- School website links to local and national services.
- Links on lesson resources.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy is regularly reviewed by the Head of PSHE, the PSHE Line Manager, the PSHE team and other relevant parties to ensure that our students' needs are being met effectively. A variety of monitoring takes place including curriculum learning walks, departmental observations, teacher's reflective practice, departmental CPD meetings and students' consultation.

Evaluation of the outcomes and of the outcomes of the local Safe and Well at School Survey (SAWSS) informs future planning, resources and appropriate training. The evaluation report of the SAWSS report is available on request from the school.

Training of relevant staff is done in a variety of ways, including, not limited to:

- Local training
- National PSHE courses
- School based INSET as required
- Department training
- Our membership at the local PSHE Consortium

Role of Governors

School governors have a statutory responsibility to ensure that RSHE is delivered effectively, appropriately, and in line with government guidance. Governors are responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a compliant RSHE policy and that it is reviewed regularly.
- Overseeing the quality and effectiveness of RSHE and PSHE provision.
- Ensuring the curriculum is inclusive, age-appropriate, and meets the needs of all STUDENTS.
- Supporting parental engagement and transparency, including withdrawal rights.
- Ensuring staff have access to appropriate training and resources.
- Monitoring delivery and evaluating impact through reports from the PSHE lead.

The governing body has appointed a link governor for PSHE/RSHE to support oversight, champion inclusion, and ensure statutory compliance.

Appendix 1: PSHE RSHE Curriculum

Personal, Social and Health Education Curriculum Overview: RSHE				
Year 7	**Year 8**	**Year 9**	**Year 10**	**Year 11**
Establishing an active class agreement for appropriate interaction To be revisited regularly Friendship Bullying Physical and Emotional Puberty Raging Teens Recognising feelings Sexual Harassment Positive self-image Menstruation gynaecological health Female genital mutilation Identity, Stereotypes and LGBT	Establishing an active class agreement for appropriate interaction Understanding different relationships we have. Family Friendship Girlfriend/boyfriend relationships Love Consent Sexual Harassment and violence Understanding and dealing with bereavement Child Sexual Exploitation HIV/Aids – How it is transmitted. Attitudes and prejudice towards HIV/Aids	Establishing an active class agreement for appropriate interaction Understanding different relationships we have. Healthy relationships Risk Sexually transmitted infections Sexual relationships Consent Sexual Harassment and violence Long-Acting Reversible Contraception. Condom skills Sexuality Internet safety	Establishing an active class agreement for appropriate interaction Menopause gynaecological health Pros and cons of different contraceptives Identify national and local sexual health services Talking about sexual matters Sexual and gender identity Coming out Consent Sexual harassment and violence	Establishing an active class agreement for appropriate interaction Know your body – health checks STIs – signs, symptoms, treatments and help STIs transmission and sexual behaviour Decision making and sexual activity Talking about sex Sexuality and LGBT Consent Sexual harassment and violence Exploitative and abusive relationships

Internet safety	Exploring gender and sexuality LGBTQIA+ & homophobia			Honour based violence Forced marriages

Appendix 2: Science RSHE curriculum

YEAR 7: Puberty, male/female reproductive organs, menstruation, growth and development of babies.

YEAR 10/11 Topics: AQA Science Syllabus, including hormones, oral contraception and Genetics.

References

- DfE July 2019 (updated 1 September 2026): Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers. See Gov.uk - RSHE & Health Education
- SRE Guidance DFE
- Sample framework LEA guidance
- Sexuality LEA Guidance
- OFSTED Guidance Learning Outcome
- KS3/4 National Curriculum
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, and E-safety policy
- National Healthy Schools Standards
- Fraser Guidelines for Health Professionals
- Working with Parents and carers LEA Guidance

Links to other Policies - see https://dorothy-stringer.co.uk/policies/