



HODGE HILL GIRLS' SCHOOL

"Educating tomorrow's women today"

RSE Policy

Document Information

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RSE POLICY

Rationale:

At Hodge Hill Girls' School, we want all pupils to grow up happy, safe and able to manage the challenges and opportunities of the modern world, both on and offline. Therefore, all children at our school are taught Relationships, Sex and Health Education in line with current government guidance, through PSHCE lessons. PSHCE lessons are delivered by a designated team of Hodge Hill Girls' School teachers, all of which receive relevant training in line with government guidance regarding policy, practice and PSHCE curriculum delivery.

These subjects are designed to equip children with knowledge so that they can make informed decisions about their well-being, health and relationships as well as preparing them for a successful adult life. The RSE programme helps pupils understand what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like, internet safety, as well as managing physical and mental health.

The RSE element of the PSHCE programme is integral to our Safeguarding Policy in school and contributes to protecting children and young people by addressing national and local health priorities, as well as contributing to the school ethos and values.

The content of the RSE curriculum, which all children are taught in line with government statutory guidance and expectations, brings children's knowledge and understanding into the 21st century. The curriculum is delivered in a way that is sensitive and flexible to age, physical and emotional maturity, and considers the religious backgrounds and needs of individual learners including SEND (Special educational needs and disabilities). RSE does not promote sexual activity and, whilst it encourages equality and respect for all groups, it does not pressure students to adopt beliefs or practices that are inconsistent with their values, which may be linked to their faith, culture, or another aspect of their background.

What is RSE:

RSE is about the emotional, social, and cultural development of pupils and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity, and personal identity.

RSE is a lifelong learning about physical, social, moral, cultural, ethical, emotional, and sexual development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love, and care for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

RSE hopes to provide accurate information about the body, reproduction, sexuality and sexual health. It will also give students essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe in the modern world, both on and offline.

Parents' and carers' rights:

The important lessons parents teach their children about healthy relationships, looking after themselves and staying safe, are respected and valued under the RSE curriculum. Teaching at school will complement and reinforce the lessons parents teach their children as they grow up. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents and carers of young people at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation.

If parents do not want their child to take part in some or all of the Sex Education lessons, they can ask for their child to be withdrawn. Requests will be considered and discussed with parents. This will be granted in all but exceptional circumstances, up until three school terms before the child turns 16. At this stage, a child can independently choose to receive Sex Education if they want to, and the school can arrange for the child to receive this teaching in one of these three terms (unless there are exceptional circumstances).

Parents cannot withdraw their child from Health Education or the Relationships Education element of Relationships and Sex Education. It is important that all children receive this content, covering topics such as friendships and how to stay safe.

Parents cannot withdraw their child from the statutory science curriculum which includes content on human development, including reproduction.

Curriculum content:

Relationship and Sex Education:

Relationships and sex education will build on the teaching at primary school. It aims to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships.

We will cover content on what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like and what makes a good friend, colleague and successful marriage or committed relationship. At the appropriate time, the focus will move to developing intimate relationships, to equip your child with knowledge they need to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life.

By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils will have been taught content on;

- families including different types of committed, stable relationships and their importance for bringing up children. Roles and responsibilities of parents and successful parenting. The legal status of marriage and civil partnerships
- fostering respectful, safe and ethical relationships and friendships of all kinds, on and offline including challenging stereotypes and understanding the inequalities of power
- challenging misogyny and the influence of toxic subcultures
- promoting positive masculinity
- digital risks; understanding online safety, age restrictions, addressing online harms including online media, AI and the influence of deep fakes
- being safe
- intimate and sexual relationships, including; sexual health, consent and sexual ethics. Understanding online risks and dangers including sextortion and illegal online behaviours. Understanding the forms of sexual violence and prevention and the impact of online 'influencers' and the 'Incel' culture. Understanding the impact of pornography on attitudes and relationships.

Health Education:

Health education aims to give your child the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, to recognise issues in themselves and others, and to seek support as early as possible when issues arise.

By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils will have been taught content on;

- mental wellbeing, coping and support strategies
- age appropriate suicide-prevention content
- internet and safety harms including online addictive behaviours
- gambling harms
- physical health and fitness
- healthy eating
- drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- health and prevention including navigating the local healthcare system and understanding the concept of Gillick competence
- basic first aid
- changing adolescent body including menstrual and gynecological health, fertility and reproductive health, understanding of correct anatomical names

Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them.
- Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences.
- During lessons, make sure students feel safe and supported and are able to engage with the key messages.

We will also:

- Make sure students learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example, in a whole class setting or through small groups or targeted sessions.

Use of resources

We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance.
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings.
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils.
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics.
- Fit into our curriculum plan.
- Are from credible sources.
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches.
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress.

Staff

HHGS staff delivering RSE should ensure:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE.
- Monitoring progress.
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils.
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE
- Contact can be made through emailing the lead for PSHE Mrs D Lodge (d.lodge@hodgehgs.bham.sch.uk)

Monitoring and Evaluation:

This is a working document and as such will be updated, when necessary, to make sure that all students are receiving the best possible level of RSE. RSE provision will be periodically reviewed to ensure that it is up to date and of the highest quality. As part of our reflection, we will invite students to provide feedback through 'Pupil Voice Surveys' about our RSE provision to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all students.

The RSE Policy can be found on the school website and further information can also be found by searching 'relationships, sex and health education' on GOV.UK

RSE Policy links:

This policy supports/complements the following policies at Hodge Hill Girls' School.

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural Education Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disability Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Legal Framework:

As a maintained secondary school, we must provide RSE to all pupils under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued but the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We have also based our RSE policy on the following:

- DfE guidance documents relationship education, relationship and sex education (RSE) and Health Education, last updated July 2025
- Relationships Education (secondary) last updated July 2025
- Physical Health and Well-being (Primary and Secondary) last updated July 2025
- PSHE Association and Sex Education Forum.
- Guidance issued by the secretary of state outlined in the Equality Act 2010: A duty not to discriminate against the nine protected characteristics that are set out by the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).
- Keeping children safe in education- Statutory safeguarding guidance (2025)

Appendix A DFE Requirements

Topic	Pupils should know
Mental wellbeing	• How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary. • The benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness. • That happiness is linked to being connected to others. Pupils should be supported to understand what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel unhappy, while recognising that loneliness can be for most people an inevitable part of life at times and is not something of which to be ashamed. • That worrying and feeling down are normal, can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal. • Characteristics of common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression), including carefully-presented factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental health conditions. This should not be discussed in a way that encourages normal feelings to be labelled as mental health conditions. • How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall wellbeing. • Understanding how to overcome anxiety or other barriers to participating in fun, enjoyable or rewarding activities – that it's possible to overcome those barriers using coping strategies, and that finding the courage to participate in activities which initially feel challenging may decrease anxiety over time rather than increasing it. • That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others. • That the co-occurrence of alcohol/drug use and poor mental health is common and that the relationship is bi-directional: mental health problems can increase the risk of alcohol/drug use, and alcohol/drug use can trigger mental health problems or exacerbate existing ones. That stopping smoking can improve people's mental health and decrease anxiety

Wellbeing online	• About the benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing. • 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; the impact that an over-reliance on online relationships, including relationships formed through social media, can have. • 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. • The risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt. • How advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online, understanding the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation online, including conspiracy theories. 6. • The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online. • The serious risks of viewing online content that promotes self-harm, suicide or violence, including how to safely report this material and how to access support after viewing it.
Physical health and fitness	• The characteristics of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill-health, including cardiovascular ill-health. • Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions. • That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress. • The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.
Healthy eating	• How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease. • The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. • The impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain.
Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping	• The facts about which drugs are illegal, the risks of taking illegal drugs, including the increased risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the potential health harms, including the link to poor mental health. • The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances. • The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption. What constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England. Understanding how to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol.

	• The physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency. • The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines. 6. The facts about the multiple serious harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so. • The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit.
Health, protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system	• Personal hygiene, germs and how they are spread, including bacteria and viruses, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics. • Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth, reducing consumption of sugar-containing food and drinks, and regular check-ups at the dentist. • How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals. • The importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening. • The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination, immunisation and antimicrobial resistance. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils. • The importance of sufficient good-quality sleep for good health, the importance of screen-free time before bed and removing phones from the bedroom, and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn. • The importance of healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy, including the importance of pre-conception health, including taking folic acid. The importance of pelvic floor health. Information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and how to access care and support. • How to navigate their local healthcare system: what a GP is; when to use A&E / minor injuries; accessing sexual health and family planning clinics; the role of local pharmacies; and how to seek help via local third sector partners which may have specialist services. • The concept of Gillick competence. That the legal age of medical consent is 16. That before this, a child's parents will have responsibility for consenting to medical treatment on their behalf unless they are Gillick competent to take this decision for themselves. Pupils should understand the circumstances in which someone over 16 may not be deemed to have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment
Personal safety	• How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around roads, railways – including level crossings - and water (including the water safety code), and in unfamiliar social or work settings (for example the first time a young person goes on holiday without their parents). • How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media. • How to develop key social and emotional skills that will increase pupils' safety from involvement in conflict and violence. These include skills to support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making, as well as skills to recognise and manage peer pressure. • Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about

	violence and/or knife crime. • The law as it relates to knives and violence. Content and examples should relate to the local context and avoid using fear as an educational tool. Children should be taught that carrying weapons is uncommon, and should not be scared into the perception that many young people are carrying knives (which can lead to the misconception that they need to carry a knife too). • The risks and signs that they may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help where there is a concern.
Basic first aid	• Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments. • Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR. • The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.
Developing bodies	• The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health. • The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development. • About menstrual and gynecological health, including: what is an average period; period problems such as premenstrual syndrome; heavy menstrual bleeding; endometriosis; and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). When to seek help from healthcare professionals. • The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.