



# Lawrence House School

## Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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Approved Headteacher	Philip Davies
Approved Chair of Governors	Tony Nolan

## 1. Aims

The aims of RSHE at our school are to:

- Provide a safe framework for sensitive discussions about relationships, bodies, feelings, and keeping safe
- Prepare students for puberty and give them age-appropriate understanding of physical and emotional development
- Build resilience and self-worth - helping students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence, and empathy
- Teach students to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships - including understanding consent, boundaries, and respect
- Equip students to keep themselves safe - including recognising risks of exploitation, abuse, and harmful behaviour (online and offline)
- Support students to understand their emotions and develop strategies for managing feelings and seeking help
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves, their bodies, and their experiences
- Create a positive, non-judgemental culture around relationships, sexuality, and health
- Address gaps in knowledge that may have resulted from disrupted education or adverse experiences
- Support students' preparation for adulthood and independent living

Our approach to RSHE recognises that:

- Our students are looked-after children who may have experienced trauma, disruption, and adverse childhood experiences
- Many of our students may be more vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and harmful relationships
- Our students need RSHE that is trauma-informed, builds trust, and equips them with knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe
- RSHE must be carefully sequenced and delivered in ways that do not re-traumatise students
- Our students may have gaps in their knowledge and understanding due to disrupted education

Building positive relationships and understanding healthy boundaries is particularly important for our students

## 2. Statutory Requirements

As a non-maintained independent school, we must provide RSHE to all students under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

We must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State under Section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance "Relationships, Sex and Health Education" (July 2025), which comes into force in September 2026.

We also have regard to our legal duties under:

- The Equality Act 2010 (Part 6, Chapter 1)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory safeguarding guidance)

- The Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- The Care Standards Act 2000

### 3. Definition of RSHE

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

At Lawrence House School, RSHE is delivered in a trauma-informed way that:

- Recognises students' individual experiences and needs
- Builds trust and safety
- Avoids re-traumatisation
- Uses language and approaches appropriate to students' developmental stage (not just chronological age)

### 4. Curriculum Content

Our RSHE curriculum is:

- Trauma-informed - delivered by staff trained in trauma-informed practice
- Individualised - adapted to meet each student's developmental stage, needs, and experiences
- Carefully sequenced - building knowledge and skills progressively, with regular revisiting of key concepts
- Integrated - delivered through PSHCE lessons, science, and embedded across the curriculum and residential life
- Safe and supportive - creating an environment where students feel able to ask questions and seek help

Statutory Content We Cover

By the time students leave Lawrence House School, they will have been taught age-appropriate content covering:

Relationships Education (all students):

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships and respectful relationships
- Online relationships and staying safe online
- Being safe - including recognising abuse, exploitation, and where to get help

Sex Education (secondary-age students):

- Understanding puberty and reproduction
- Sexual consent and the law
- Contraception and sexual health

Health Education (all students):

- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating and dental health
- Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco
- Health and prevention (including basic first aid)

## 5. Delivery of RSHE

RSHE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSHE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

RSHE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

For more information about our RSHE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure 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 and 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).

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

### ***Inclusivity***

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of students will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all students' experiences

- During lessons, makes students feel:
  - Safe and supported
  - Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that students learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:
  - A whole-class setting
  - Small groups or targeted sessions
  - 1-to-1 discussions
  - Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

### *Use of resources*

We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSHE guidance
- Would support students in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our students
- 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 students' experiences and won't provoke distress

### **6. Use of external organisations and materials**

We will make sure that an agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

The school remains responsible for what is said to students. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We will:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSHE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
  - Are age-appropriate
  - Are in line with students' developmental stage
  - Comply with:
    - This policy
    - The Teachers' Standards
    - The Equality Act 2010
    - The Human Rights Act 1998
    - The Education Act 1996

- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on:
  - What they're going to say
  - Their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use
- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers
- Share all external materials with parents and carers
- We won't, under any circumstances:
  - Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
  - Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

## **7. Consulting and Engaging with Parents/Carers and Social Workers**

All schools must have an up-to-date written policy for relationships education or, where they teach sex education, for RSHE. Schools must proactively engage and consult parents when they develop and review their policy. Relationships, Sex and Health Education Statutory Guidance

### Policy Development and Consultation

This policy was developed through consultation with:

- Staff
- Students
- Social workers and local authority virtual school
- Parents/carers (where appropriate and in students' best interests)

We will review this policy annually and consult stakeholders on any significant changes.

### Sharing Information About RSHE

We will:

- Share this policy with social workers, parents/carers (where appropriate), and the local authority
- Provide information about what will be taught each term
- Make all curriculum materials available to view on request
- Hold information sessions for social workers and carers about our RSHE curriculum
- Respond to questions and concerns promptly

### Working with Social Workers and Carers

We recognise that many of our pupils' parents may not be involved in their day-to-day care. We will:

- Share RSHE information with social workers and designated carers
- Work collaboratively to ensure consistent messages about relationships and safety

- Seek input from those who know the child best when planning individualised RSHE
- Be sensitive to each child's unique circumstances and care arrangements

## 8. Parents' Right to Request Withdrawal from Sex Education

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

What Parents Can and Cannot Withdraw From:

- Parents/carers **CAN** request withdrawal from sex education (except content taught in the science curriculum)
- Parents/carers **CANNOT** withdraw students from relationships education or health education

From three terms before the student turns 16, a student can choose to opt back into sex education even if their parent has requested withdrawal.

Process for Requesting Withdrawal

Requests must be made in writing to the headteacher.

The headteacher will arrange a meeting to discuss the request and:

- Understand the reasons for the request
- Clarify what will and won't be taught
- Explain the benefits of sex education and potential impacts of withdrawal
- Discuss the likelihood that the pupil will hear information from peers

In secondary, head teachers can refuse a request in exceptional circumstances, for example because of safeguarding concerns or a pupil's specific vulnerability.

Given the vulnerability of our pupils as looked-after children, the headteacher will:

- Consult with the pupil's social worker
- Consider safeguarding implications carefully
- Make a decision in the child's best interests

If withdrawal is granted, we will provide appropriate alternative education during those lessons.

## 9. Safeguarding

RSHE plays a crucial role in safeguarding our pupils.

Links to Safeguarding

- RSHE helps pupils recognise abuse, exploitation, and inappropriate behaviour
- Pupils learn who to talk to if they're worried
- RSHE may lead to safeguarding disclosures - all staff are trained to respond appropriately
- Our designated safeguarding lead is Philip Davies

Confidentiality and Disclosures

- Staff make clear at the start of RSHE lessons that they cannot promise absolute confidentiality
- If a student discloses information that raises safeguarding concerns, staff will follow our safeguarding policy
- Students are reassured that information will only be shared with people who need to know to keep them safe

- Staff are trained to respond sensitively to disclosures and avoid asking leading questions

### Managing Difficult Questions

Students may ask questions about topics which go beyond any sex education covered by the school or relate to sex education from which they have been withdrawn.

When students ask questions outside the planned curriculum:

- Staff will respond in an age-appropriate, factual way
- Staff may suggest the student speaks to a trusted adult or access support services
- Staff will not ignore questions, as students may turn to inappropriate sources online
- Staff can seek support from the schools' safeguarding lead

## 10. Inclusion and Equality

### Our Commitment to Inclusion

At Lawrence House School, we ensure RSHE:

- Is accessible to all students regardless of their protected characteristics
- Teaches about diversity in families and relationships
- Challenges stereotypes and discrimination
- Uses inclusive language and examples
- Is sensitive to students' individual experiences and identities

### Teaching About LGBTQ+ Content

Students should understand the importance of equality and respect throughout their education. They should learn about all protected characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

We will:

- Include same-sex parents and families when discussing family structures
- Teach about healthy same-sex relationships alongside different-sex relationships
- Teach the facts and law about biological sex and gender reassignment
- Ensure pupils understand that people with protected characteristics should be treated with respect and dignity
- Challenge bullying or disrespectful language

## 11. Roles and responsibilities

### *The governing board*

The governing board will approve the RSHE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### *The headteacher*

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, for sharing resources and materials with parents and carers, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory components of RSHE (see section 9).

### *Staff*

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSHE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSHE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

### ***Students***

Students are expected to engage fully in RSHE and, when discussing issues related to RSHE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

## **12. Parents' right to withdraw**

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSHE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action.

Alternative schoolwork will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

## **13. Training**

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE through our continuing professional development calendar.

The headteacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nuRSHEs or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE.

### Appendix 1: Relationships and sex education curriculum map

Key Stage	Year	Term	Topic or Theme
3	1	Spring 1	Relationships: Diversity
3	1	Summer 1	Relationships: Building relationships
3	2	Spring 1	Relationships: Respectful relationships and Discrimination
3	2	Summer 2	Relationships: Intimate relationships and Identity and relationships
4	1	Spring 1	Relationships: Healthy relationships
4	1	Summer 1	Relationships: Addressing extremism and radicalisation
4	2	Spring 1	Relationships: Communication in relationships
4	2	Summer 2	Relationships: Families
5	1	Spring 1	Relationships: Diversity and inclusion
5	1	Summer 1	Relationships: Respectful relationships
5	2	Spring 1	Relationships: Intimate relationships
5	2	Summer 2	Relationships: Building and maintaining relationships

## Appendix 1: By the end of secondary school students should know

Topic	Students should know
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships</li> <li>• How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into</li> <li>• The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships</li> <li>• The roles and responsibilities of parents/carers with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help</li> <li>• That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control</li> <li>• What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>

Topic	Students should know
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them</li> <li>• What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online</li> <li>• The impact of viewing harmful content</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail</li> <li>• How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online</li> </ul>
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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)</li> </ul>

Topic	Students should know
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women</li> <li>• That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others</li> <li>• That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex</li> <li>• The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available</li> <li>• The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment</li> <li>• How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour</li> <li>• How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment</li> </ul>

### Appendix 3: Parent/carer form: withdrawal from sex education within RSHE

To be completed by parents/CARERS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent/carer		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

To be completed by the school	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents/carers	