



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Ratified by Governors July 2026 (subject to ratification by Full Governors)
To be reviewed July 2027 (or earlier if national guidance changes)

Maidstone Grammar School Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Please note that the RSE Curriculum sits, to a great extent, within the PSHCE curriculum.

An overview of the PSHCE spiral curriculum and topics can be found at:

[PSHCE - Maidstone Grammar School](#)

1. Aims

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Deliver a high quality, evidence based and age appropriate RSE program as part of our wider School Personal, Social, Health ,Citizenship & Economic Education (PSHCE) program
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Help pupils understand that everybody is different and the importance of accepting our individual differences
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

2. Statutory Requirements

At Maidstone Grammar School we teach RSE as set out in this policy and according to the Department for Education's *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers*:

[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#)

As a maintained secondary school we must provide RSE to all pupils according to the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

3. Policy Development

The following steps have contributed to the development of this policy:

1. The Head of Department for PSHCE, supported by the Deputy Head Pastoral, regularly review the RSE content of the PSHCE program drawing upon relevant national and local guidance, relevant training, as well as a range of good quality resources to ensure a high quality, relevant and up to date program.

2. Parents/ Carers and any interested parties are able to view the RSE content via the PSHCE Curriculum Map on the School website [PSHCE - Maidstone Grammar School](#)
3. The policy has been shared with members of the MGS Parent Forum. It is also shared with all parents annually in Term 1 together with a summary of topics covered in the safeguarding and key policies bulletin.
4. Pupil consultation – Pupil views are gathered regularly through PSHCE lessons and student voice. Pupil evaluation, assessment and feedback in relation to units covered in the PSHCE program also informs curriculum development.
5. The policy is shared with Governors for ratification

4. Definition

RSE is learning about physical, sexual, moral and emotional development. It is about teaching sex, sexuality and sexual health in a way that gives pupils the confidence to make sound decisions when facing risks and other challenges. It includes teaching about friendship, the importance of caring, stable and mutually supportive relationships with another person, and how to control and understand feelings that come with being in a relationship.

RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation nor does it promote particular types of sexuality or gender identity etc. It teaches children and young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others, to build self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity so that they can develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.

RSE will outline: that there are different types of committed, stable relationships; the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships; the importance of marriage as a relationship choice and why it must be entered into freely; how relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for raising children; roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children; characteristics of successful parenting; how to judge when relationships have become unsafe; how to seek help or advice and report concerns about others.

5. Curriculum

Our PSHCE curriculum is set out in the PSHCE section of the School website at: [PSHCE - Maidstone Grammar School](#)

We may need to adapt this as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum taking into account the age, needs, emotional and physical development of pupils.

Our “spiral” approach means that pupils meet and revisit many of these topics on a number of occasions, exploring them in increasingly greater depth as they move up through the school.

Full details of what the DfE’s statutory RSE Guidance says that secondary schools must cover by the end of Key Stage 4 is given in [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#)

6. Equal Opportunities / Safeguarding

The School has duties under the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that pupils are not discriminated against because of their sex, race, disabilities, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy or maternity. PSHCE lessons (including RSE and Health Education) provide a good background for talking openly and freely about the diversity of personal, social and sexual preferences, supported by an experienced member of staff. Prejudiced views will be challenged and equality promoted. Any bullying or inappropriate behaviour, including in relation to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation, will be dealt with in accordance with the School's behaviour and Anti-bullying Policies which are available on the School website.

We hope to provide a safe and supportive school environment where pupils feel comfortable seeking help and guidance on anything that may be concerning them about life either at school or at home. Safeguarding training is provided to all staff and we teach all pupils how to report concerns.

It may be the case that discussion around what is acceptable and not acceptable in relationships may lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. If this is the case, the School's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures will be followed.

Where pupils raise issues or ask questions which go beyond the scope of the curriculum or are not considered to be age appropriate then staff will respond in a sensitive and age appropriate manner. If they feel equipped to answer the question directly they will do so, recognizing that this can provide a supportive alternative to pupils searching for un-vetted information online. If they do not feel equipped to answer the question directly or have concerns they may put the question to one side and seek advice from the Head of PSHCE or Deputy Head Pastoral (who is also the Safeguarding Lead).

7. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) curriculum at MGS.

Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum as part of the Science national curriculum and GCSE course specifications. These elements are delivered by Science teachers. Other aspects are referred to in Religious Studies (RS) lessons, including as part of the Islamic Practices and Christian Practices units at GCSE, delivered by RS teaching staff.

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

- Families
- Respectful relationships
- Online safety & awareness
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure 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, foster parents/carers amongst others structures and some children may have a different structure of support around them (e.g. Looked After Children or Young Carers).

8. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governors

The Governors approve the RSE policy, and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation. PSHCE is overseen by Committee B.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE (see Section 8).

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress / evaluating impact of the PSHCE curriculum
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE

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

The Teachers of PSHCE are:

Mr M Holmes (Head of Department)

Miss B Mason,

Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity acknowledging and respecting individual differences.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The School works hard to ensure that all aspects of the school curriculum are inclusive and support the needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Staff are expected to differentiate lessons to ensure that all members of the class can access the information fully, and this is no different when it comes to PSHCE, RSE and health education.

9. Parents' Right to Withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE 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 2** of this policy and addressed to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher, Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of PSHCE will communicate with parents in relation to the request and take appropriate action.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

All parents / carers are informed of the right to withdraw annually in the Deputy Head's start of year safeguarding bulletin.

10. Training

The Head of Department is highly trained and experienced in the delivery of RSE.

The Head of Department writes and delivers the content to all Year 7 to 11 classes, with the exception of one Year 8 class which is delivered by Miss Mason.

The Head of Department consults external agencies / groups outside the school where appropriate, such as school nurses, sexual health professionals or our School Liaison Police Officer, to provide support in the delivery of RSE.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Mr M Holmes (Head of PSHCE) and Miss R Johnson (Deputy Head Pastoral) through:

A number of strategies such as regular line management meetings, Performance Appraisal and lesson observations are used to monitor the delivery and contents of lessons and the policy itself. Student voice opportunities and feedback and Departmental Reviews are also used to gather qualitative feedback and support monitoring and quality assurance.

Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers with its bespoke assessment system. Pupils 'Attitude to Learning' is graded three times per year and the topics covered each year are provided in a written report to parents.

This policy will be reviewed by Mr M Holmes and Miss R Johnson regularly. At every review, the policy will be approved by Governors.

12. Complaints

Parents or Carers who have complaints or concerns regarding the RSE curriculum should contact the school and follow the school's complaints policy.

Appendix 1: By the end of secondary school pupils should know:

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	1. That there are different types of committed, stable relationships. 2. How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children. 3. Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony. 4. That ‘common-law marriage’ is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children. 5. That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal. 6. How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships. 7. The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child’s life for brain development. 8. How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships	1. The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. 2. How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal. 3. The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others. 4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs. 5. The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict. 6. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help. 7. Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration. 8. The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok. 9. How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice. 10. How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others. 11. How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others. 12. Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called "involuntary celibates" (incels) or online influencers.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Online safety & awareness	1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online. 2. Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues. 3. The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online. 4. Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images. 5. That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime. 6. What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online. 7. About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them. 8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong. 9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice. 10. How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns. 11. That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Being safe	1. How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent. 2. That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others. 3. How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed. 4. How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions. 5. What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it. 6. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting. 7. The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault. 8. The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language. 9. The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour. 10. That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed. 11. The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation. 12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage. 13. The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible.

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	1. That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive. 2. The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex. 3. Sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent. 4. 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. 5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful. 6. The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision making. 7. That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help. 8. How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma 9. The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment. 10. How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour. 11. How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms. 12. How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Appendix 2: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		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	