Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

Links with other policies This RSHE Policy should be read in conjunction with the following OTP policies:	
OTP Working Positively with Pupils	OTP Equality Information & Objectives
Child Protection Policy DGS Child Protection Policy TFA Child Protection Policy FWS	Teaching and Learning & SEND Policy DGS Teaching and Learning SEND Policy TFA
RE Policy DGS RE Policy TFA RE Policy FWS	OTP Acceptable use Online Safety & Cyber Security Policy

Approved by:	Board of Trustees	**Date:**	07/09/2026
Next review due by:	31/08/2027		

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1. Ethos

The Open Thinking Partnership (OTP) delivers its Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) based on the fundamental principle of equitable well-being and relational safety, asserting that every child or young person must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to form, consent to and navigate healthy relationships across all contexts—digital, social, and personal.

Our overarching commitment is to deliver an aspirational RSHE curriculum within an inclusive and supportive environment. This curriculum will promote **informed choice, resilience, and personal advocacy** for every child or young person, directly safeguarding their physical and emotional health

and preparing them for successful lives.

This core duty is underpinned by **three strategic pillars**:

1. Skilled and Consistent Delivery

We ensure that the RSHE curriculum is high-quality and impactful through delivery that is undertaken by **well-trained teachers and support staff** using a **shared vocabulary** and high-quality resources. We establish a **clear sequence** for content and use a stage approach to learning so that all child or young persons access curriculum content at the right time.

2. Proactive Partnership and Community Engagement

We recognise that effective RSHE requires a secure connection between school, home, specialist partners and the wider community. We treat families and carers as **active partners**, providing them with the necessary education and context to support the learning that is happening in RSHE. This collaborative approach ensures the learning is consistently reinforced and relevant within the pupil's lives.

3. Safety, Advocacy, and Taking learning into life

RSHE is a vital part of our commitment to **keeping your child safe and meeting their unique needs**. We ensure our environments help **everyone belong** and provide **safe, communication-rich spaces** for every learner, whether they are **verbal communicators** or use other methods. We focus on teaching the practical skills most relevant to their ability: **knowing who to trust, identifying safe/unsafe situations/behaviours, using their communication methods** (including spoken language, PECS, Makaton, or AAC) **to signal needs**, and **establishing personal boundaries**. This empowers every pupil to achieve **personal safety and to speak up for themselves**.

In summary, this policy mandates a **responsive, evidence-based, and consistently delivered** Relationships, Sex, and Health Education that ensures **every pupil leaves the OTP equipped to be healthy, stay safe and develop positive relationships** in adulthood.

2. Statutory Requirements

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make relationships education compulsory for all children and young people receiving primary education and relationships and sex education (RSHE) compulsory for all children and young people receiving secondary education. They also make health education compulsory in all schools except independent schools. Parents and carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSHE. Schools will use their engagement reporting to record where a pupil does not access the curriculum and will notify parents to develop a plan that provides opportunities for the pupil to revisit the learning.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, children and young people and parents/carers and is reviewed annually.

- **Review:** A cross-school working group brought together relevant information and evidence to inform the policy.
- **Young people consultation:** Young people were consulted to capture their views and understand what they want from their RSHE curriculum.
- **Staff consultation:** Staff across each school were invited to review the draft policy and provide recommendations.
- **Parent and stakeholder consultation:** Parents, carers, and other interested stakeholders were given the opportunity to share feedback.
- **Ratification:** Following revisions, the final policy was submitted to the Board of Trustees for ratification.

4. Aims of RSHE

The aim of RSHE is to enable all children and young people to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to lead safe, healthy, respectful and fulfilling lives, both now and in the future. Our RSHE curriculum is relevant to children and young people at each stage of their development, maturity and communication that includes real life examples and an emphasis on practical life skills. It is an integral part of each pupil's Personal, Social Development & Health Education programme and is a partnership between home and school.

Through the teaching of RSHE, the school aims to:

Promote wellbeing and development for all our children and young people
Support moral, social, mental, emotional and physical development of children and young people, helping them to build self-worth, resilience, confidence, honesty, integrity, kindness and respect for others.

Prepare children and young people for life in modern Britain
Equip children and young people with the knowledge and understanding they need to make, or be involved to make, informed, ethical and responsible decisions about their health, relationships and wellbeing as they grow into adulthood.

Support the development of positive, healthy relationships
Teach children and young people how to form, maintain and manage a range of relationships based on mutual respect, kindness, trust, care and appropriate boundaries, both online and offline. This includes helping children and young people to understand appropriate touch, privacy and consent, and when trusted adults may need to be involved in providing intimate care.

Safeguard children and young people and support prevention of harm
Enable children and young people to recognise when situations or behaviours are unsafe, abusive or harmful, including online, and to know how and where to seek help and support. children and young people will be supported to communicate concerns and express how they are feeling using a range of strategies, including alternative forms of communication where needed. RSHE plays a key role in helping to prevent abuse, exploitation, harassment and violence.

Promote physical and mental health and wellbeing
Provide children and young people with accurate, age-appropriate information about physical health, mental wellbeing and emotional regulation, reducing stigma around health issues and encouraging children and young people to seek help when needed.

Ensure teaching is inclusive and accessible to each individual pupil
Deliver RSHE in a way that is inclusive, non-discriminatory and respectful of diversity, including different family structures, backgrounds, beliefs, abilities and experiences. Teaching is adapted as necessary to meet the needs of individual children and young people and key content will be revisited to support in developing their understanding over time.

Teach statutory content in a well-sequenced and appropriate way
Ensure all statutory RSHE content is delivered in a carefully planned sequence, matched to age, developmental stage and maturity of children and young people', and designed to equip them with knowledge and skills before risks or issues arise. This ensures that all young people access the right content at the right time.

Support children and young people to develop decision-making skills
Encourage children and young people to think about influences on their lives, including peers, media, online content, artificial intelligence, virtual and immersive environments, and social norms, and to make informed, respectful and responsible choices.

Promote equality, respect and understanding of the law
Foster an understanding of equality, human rights and the law, including children and young peoples' rights and responsibilities, protected characteristics, and the importance of challenging prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.

Work in partnership with parents and carers
Deliver RSHE transparently and in consultation with parents and carers, recognising their important role in supporting children and young peoples' education and wellbeing, and respecting parents' legal rights regarding sex education where applicable.

Embed RSHE within a whole-school approach
Ensure RSHE is delivered as part of a wider whole-school commitment to wellbeing, positive relationships and safeguarding, supported by the school's behaviour, safeguarding and equality policies.

5. Entitlement and Equal Opportunities

A broad and balanced RSHE programme is provided for all children and young people, in the context of the Personal, Social and Health Education programme and the "Equality Act" (2010).

All children and young people, of whatever gender, race, religion or colour, and whatever their additional learning needs have an equal right to take part in this programme and to access those aspects that are relevant to them as individuals. The programme taught to them will be adapted to suit the individual needs of the young person to further their knowledge, understanding and decision making.

6. Definition

The definition of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is a curriculum subject that covers a broad range of topics, including healthy relationships, sexual health, consent, mental wellbeing, physical health, online safety, and the impact of drugs and alcohol. It aims to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to make informed choices, stay safe, and transition successfully into adulthood.

RSHE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. 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.

Relationships education does not involve explaining the detail of different forms of sexual activity, but can cover sensitive topics such as sexual violence in order to keep children safe. Supporting children and young people to understand the language linked to relationship education will be built into the curriculum to ensure understanding of the learning covered.

Within the RSHE statutory guidance, the secondary content relating to Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health forms the school's sex education provision.

The RSHE guidance recommends that primary schools teach sex education in years 5 and/or 6, in line with content about conception and birth in the science curriculum. Primary sex education will focus on preparing children and young people for the changes that adolescence brings and how a baby is conceived and born

7. Curriculum

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 a range of other subjects such as religious education (RE), Citizenship and English.

Our RSHE curriculum is rooted in the fundamental right of every child and young person to have a voice, to be heard, and to exercise meaningful agency over their own lives. For our children and young people, many of whom face distinct communication, learning, or societal barriers, advocacy is not an optional extra; it is the cornerstone of our RSHE provision.

There is a group of curriculum leaders responsible for co-ordinating PSHE and RSHE at each school. Each school has an individual approach to the curriculum based upon the needs of each school and of their cohort. The curriculum is responsive and flexible to meet the evolving and contextual needs of each cohort at the time of delivery.

The programme may be taught by a combination of the below:

- Class teachers as part of the Personal, Social & Health Education programme
- Small-group and/or one-to-one interventions to provide personalised support where required
- Visiting specialists e.g School nurse, PCSO, therapy teams
- Cross-curricular learning, incorporating RSHE themes into subjects such as Science and RE
- Specialist resources such as visual aids, social stories, and sensory tools to support understanding.
- Mixed class groupings/single sex groupings/usual classes

- Inclusion links at mainstream schools
- Trips, visits and community activities
- Personal care routines

The curriculum is taught under the headings below:

Health Education

- General Wellbeing
- Mental Wellbeing
- Wellbeing Online
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs and Medication
- Misuse of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping and understanding the healthcare system
- Health protection and prevention
- Personal safety
- Basic first aid
- Developing bodies

Relationships Education

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful, kind relationships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being Safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health (secondary only)

If children and young people ask questions outside the scope of our curriculum, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner to ensure children and young people are fully informed and do not seek answers online.

The appendices contain each of the school's curriculum maps.

- Appendix 1 - Dorothy Goodman School
- Appendix 2 - Forest Way School
- Appendix 3 - The Fusion Academy

8. Staff Training

To ensure the highest quality of RSHE delivery, all staff receive regular and ongoing professional development. This training equips them with the confidence and skills to deliver RSHE lessons effectively, manage sensitive conversations, and respond to pupil questions appropriately. Some specialist staff receive enhanced training, enabling them to disseminate knowledge and skills to others

and to undertake specific, targeted work with individuals where required. We will also engage with external experts to provide specialised training and resources, ensuring our curriculum and teaching practices are up-to-date and of the highest standard.

9. Working With Families

We recognise that effective RSHE requires a secure connection between school and home. We treat families as active partners, providing them with the necessary education and context to support the learning that is happening in RSHE. This collaborative approach ensures the learning is consistently reinforced and relevant within the pupil's lives.

Families are consulted when developing and reviewing the RSHE policy. Pro-active steps are taken to engage parents and make sure that they are aware of when RSHE is being taught and what topics are being covered. A representative sample of teaching materials are available for parents to see each term so that parents can continue conversations started in class. All curriculum materials used to teach RSHE are available on request.

Parents are invited and encouraged to discuss any concerns and support is provided to help manage conversations with their children about RSHE topics.

7.1 Parents' Right to Withdraw

Parents have a right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children and young people from relationships and health education, nor can they be withdrawn from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction. Parents can ask their school for their child to be withdrawn from some or all of sex education lessons up until three terms before their 16th birthday. After this point, a pupil has the right to decide for themselves.

In some circumstances, the school may work in partnership with a child or young person, their family and relevant professionals to consider what is in the child or young person's best interests. Where there is disagreement, the school will take account of the child or young person's views, maturity and capacity, and will act in accordance with statutory guidance and safeguarding responsibilities. Capacity to make their own decisions will always be reviewed during the Annual Review process at 16 and beyond.

We strongly encourage a discussion with the Head of School before any withdrawal. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child, they must do so in writing to the Head of School. The school will then provide appropriate alternative work for the pupil during these lessons.

10. Monitoring arrangements

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the policy and the programme. This is achieved through a combination of:

- Planning scrutiny
- Learning walks
- Work scrutiny
- Feedback from students
- Staff review and feedback
- Parent and carer feedback and discussion with parent and carer governors
- Annual monitoring by the PSHE curriculum group
- Monitoring the achievement of PSHE annual review outcomes
- Review of school based materials and practice by the local governing committee.
- Review of the policy by the OTP Trustees

The lead practitioner and curriculum group for PSHE and RSHE are responsible for ensuring that the arrangements for monitoring and evaluation take place, and that any necessary changes to the schemes of work are implemented.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

10.1 The Trustees

The Trustees will approve the RSHE policy annually and hold the Heads of School to account for its implementation.

10.2 Heads of School

The Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that the RSHE policy is implemented effectively and that parents, carers and staff are informed of any changes to it. They are also responsible for ensuring that staff have training to ensure that they can deliver the curriculum effectively. Heads of School will manage any requests to withdraw children and young people from the non-statutory components of RSHE.

10.2 Curriculum Leaders

The PSHE/RSHE co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across their school and making sure that resources and materials are shared with parents and carers.

10.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way

- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual children and young people
- Responding appropriately to children and young people whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSHE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE.

10.4 children and young people

Children and young people are expected to engage as much as individually possible in RSHE and, when discussing issues related to RSHE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

12. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

Children and young peoples' safety and wellbeing are at the heart of all of our schools. All staff are trained to handle sensitive discussions with care and will follow safeguarding procedures if any concerns arise. Children and young people with special educational needs are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and can be less able to protect themselves from harm. If staff have any concerns they will report them to a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Appendix 1 - Dorothy Goodman School

RSHE Curriculum Map - Dorothy Goodman School

Appendix 2 - Forest Way School

RSHE Topic Overview

RSHE Learning Journey

Appendix 3 - The Fusion Academy

RSHE Road Maps