



Innovation, Aspiration and Excellence

RSE Policy

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1. School Context

Houlton School is a Free School opened in September 2021 as part of the Transforming Lives Educational Trust (TLET). It is a mixed 11-18 Free School which, when at capacity in 2027, will have 180 pupils in each year group (Years 7-11) and approximately 200 pupils in the Sixth Form (Years 12-13). The school is located to the east of Rugby Borough in the county of Warwickshire. The admissions demographic is varied and pupils will come from a variety of backgrounds both in terms of ethnicity and social/economic factors. The school has no particular religious affiliation, and its demographic identifies as predominantly Christian or no religion.

2. Context of the RSE Curriculum

The aim of Relationship/Sex Education (“RSE”) is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should teach pupils what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships, the importance of consent and safe relationships and the social and emotional changes that will occur at various stages of a pupil’s development. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

As in primary school, secondary RSE can be underpinned by a wider, deliberate cultivation and practice of resilience and character in the individual which will be embedded into the Character and LORIC (Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative, Communication) curriculum at Houlton School. These should include character traits such as belief in achieving goals and persevering with tasks, as well as personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, loyalty and a sense of justice; underpinned by an understanding of the importance of self-respect and self-worth. There are many ways in which the curriculum will support the development of these attributes, for example by providing planned opportunities for young people to undertake social action, active citizenship and voluntary service to others locally or more widely. For full reference to the statutory guidance see **Appendix 1**.

3. Aims and Objectives

- To deal with RSE in an honest, informed, balanced and sensitive manner.
- To work, when felt appropriate, with parents/carers and external agencies.
- To monitor schemes of learning and lesson activities in order to make appropriate changes, such as: additions or deletions of material, alterations of teaching methods, the use of pupil and parent voice and to make the curriculum as relevant, interesting and varied as possible.

- To provide a sensitive, caring and carefully structured approach to RSE, making full use of the skills of staff from a variety of subject disciplines, and of adults other than teachers where appropriate.
- To realise that RSE does not exist as a separate subject, but rather finds its natural place within PHRSE and at relevant stages within other subjects such as Science, ICT and Religious Education.
- To signpost appropriate services and sources of advice and guidance, for those pupils who may need them. This may include sexual health advice resources.¹
- To make the link between unsafe and inappropriate sexual behaviour and alcohol/drug use.
- To make clear to pupils of both genders, the challenges and dangers which social media use and modern technologies may present regarding sexual behaviours.

This policy recognises that effective RSE:

- needs to be open, factual and honest;
- needs to recognise the developing maturity of pupils at differing age groups;
- needs to respond to individual needs and be adaptive of changing societal norms / issues;
- needs to be progressive and build on the work likely to have been done in KS2 – though it needs to be recognised that the amount and quality of RSE delivery in KS2 is likely to be hugely variable within local primaries, and that pupils from Yr7 will have many different starting points regarding their knowledge, understanding and ability to respond maturely to RSE topics;
- needs to respect various religious and cultural attitudes represented in the school community and that FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) is a connected issue of which is expressly explained to pupils;
- needs to operate in accordance to statutory demands and the recommendations of the PHRSE/RSE framework;
- highlights the growing dangers to pupils of technology and social media usage, the dangers of certain types of pornography, and the prevalence in society of increasing sexual exploitation.

¹ Houlton School staff will not be involved in handing out, for example, free contraception (condoms); however, we may sign-post pupils to the appropriate agencies, for example, the School Health Team, or General Practitioners.

4. Statutory Guidance

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 pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. The regulations also make Health Education compulsory in academies.

This policy was developed in response to:

- Statutory guidance on RSE and health education
- Keeping children safe in education: for schools and colleges
- Behaviour and discipline in schools: guidance for head teachers and staff
- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- Alternative provision
- Mental health and behaviour in schools
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- Cyber bullying: advice for head teachers and school staff
- Advice for parents and carers on cyber bullying
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools
- National Citizen Service: guidance for schools and colleges

5. Links with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust/Academy policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Equality Information

6. Moral and Values Framework

Teaching about the physical aspects of sexual behaviour will be set within a clear moral framework which stresses the positive values of stable loving relationships of all types, consent and respect for the individual. Pupils must be supported in understanding the aspects of the law which relate to sexual activity. Controversial sexual matters must be treated in a balanced and factual way by staff, with due consideration to the major ethical and legal issues

involved whilst not avoiding issues that pupils are exposed to amongst their peers or on social media.

Staff, when teaching RSE, must recognise the increased exposure and familiarity that pupils may have with sexual images through all types of the media, especially the internet and social media, and that the viewing of pornography is likely to be a regular activity by a large number of pupils. In addition, new media and its link to cyberbullying should be tackled, and also the use of technology to send sexual images (i.e. 'sexting', 'revenge porn' etc.).

Pupils need to be made aware of the risks involved in any type of digital image or social media conversation, and how issues of privacy, sexual exploitation, child protection and abuse could be connected.

The RSE curriculum recognises the need to warn pupils of the health risks of sexual behaviour, particularly in relation to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, the emotional hurt which premature sexual relationships can cause, and the problems connected with becoming a teenage parent. Sexual relationships should be taught where possible with sensitivity to all genders.

Our aim is to bring young people to assume total responsibility for their own individual bodies and actions in sexual matters and provide the sufficient level of knowledge, reflection and guidance to make this possible. This includes:

- to encourage respect and acceptance of all, regardless of sexual orientation;
- to ensure pupils are aware of the signals / signs of FGM and other cultural or ritualistic practices within the school community.

7. Content of Programme

Pupils are able at an early age to understand and assimilate basic facts about human reproduction and sexual behaviour. The school intends to build on the statutory work done in KS2, to ensure that by the end of KS3 all pupils will have been given a clear and straight forward account of not just human reproduction, but the role that different types of sex may play in adult life, and the inherent risks involved – as well as the nature of building positive relationships and developing emotional and behavioural maturity.

During the period of adolescence it is the aim of the programme to present knowledge and guidance in an objective and balanced manner to enable pupils to comprehend the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society, to know what is and what is not legal, that they are given clear guidance on the law pertaining to consent and to consider their own attitudes in order to make informed, reasoned and responsible decisions about their own behaviour, both while they are at school and in adulthood. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the values of stable and considerate relationships and of the responsibility of

parenthood. Pupils are also taught techniques which resist the negative influence of peer pressure and assumptions regarding sexual behaviours and promiscuity.

RSE at Houlton School will always be inclusive and promote acceptance and respect. It is recognised there are likely to be many pupils who may not be heterosexual and RSE must cater for their needs and questions as well. RSE will explore issues of sexuality, and while it is acknowledged that the majority of pupils will be heterosexual and that programmes of learning will need to reflect this, balanced and responsible teaching must respond to the needs of all pupils, irrespective of sexuality or gender identity.²

There are many opportunities within the curriculum as a whole to consider how sexual relationships can vary from those that give happiness and fulfilment to those that are wholly inappropriate. The curriculum will cover:

Types of relationship

Pupils should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships and will be taught how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children;
- 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;
- that marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into;
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships;
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting;
- 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.

Respectful relationships, including friendships

Pupils should know:

- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries,

² Houlton School is Stonewall School Champion accredited and has qualified staff trained to support the specific needs of pupils who may identify as LGBTQ+.

privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship;

- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships;
- 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);
- 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 acceptance of other people's beliefs;
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help;
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control;
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable;
- 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.

Online and media

Pupils should know:

- their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online;
- 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;
- not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them;
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online;
- the impact of viewing harmful content;
- 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;
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail;

- how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Pupils should know:

- 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;
- 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);
- 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;
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause;
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressuring others;
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex;
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available;
- the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage;
- 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);
- 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;
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment;
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour;
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Pupils will also be taught the law and implications of breaking the law in the following areas:

- marriage;
- consent, including the age of consent;
- violence against others;

- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.);
- pornography;
- abortion;
- sexuality;
- gender identity;
- substance misuse;
- violence and exploitation by gangs;
- extremism/radicalisation;
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations);
- hate crime;
- female genital mutilation (FGM).

8. Structure and delivery

RSE at Houlton School is co-ordinated and planned by the Vice Principal Behaviour and Safety. Delivery is through the Personal, Health, Relationships and Sex Education (PHRSE) team, with support from external agencies where appropriate. Other subjects also play a part (e.g. RE, ICT and Science) to deliver certain elements of well-rounded RSE, e.g. sexual ethics, anatomy/development and online safety. All staff who have been timetabled to deliver RSE can be provided with CPD as appropriate, and all staff must be provided with opportunities to ensure that they not only have the factual knowledge necessary, but also that they are comfortable with the attitudes and teaching methodologies that underpin each aspect of the programme. It is acknowledged that, due to staffing constraints, PHRSE will often be delivered by non-specialists.

A range of delivery methods are encouraged. These include class discussion, pair work, guest speakers, ICT, drama, use of written resources, DVDs, presentations and internet resources. A detailed scheme of learning will be in place to ensure the statutory requirements for RSE are embedded into the PHRSE/LORIC curriculum. Where lessons are embedded through other curriculum areas such as Science, RS or ICT these links will be clearly made across schemes of learning and taught by subject specialists where possible.

Controversial issues will be dealt with by adopting a policy of suitability and appropriateness for the age being taught. Classes will always be mixed as it is important that both genders learn about and can empathise with situations, emotions and physical development which involve each gender, given the emphasis on sexual activity as part of consensual, respectful and loving relationships.

9. Equal Opportunities

All lessons in school must follow the school's Equal Opportunities Policy. Great care must be taken by the class teacher to ensure that the perceptions of male and female pupils are sensitively handled, likewise those from differing cultural and / or religious backgrounds. Members of staff and outside speakers should be aware of the nature of Equal Opportunities and its application to RSE.

All pupils will be taught the RSE curriculum and adjustments will be made for pupils with SEND to ensure that the content is accessible and understood. This may involve, where appropriate, small group or 1:1 interventions with the SEN department or from pastoral leaders on work around healthy relationships, social interaction and/or protective behaviours where it is deemed appropriate.

10. Curriculum Entitlement

The school has the legal duty to ensure all pupils are free from discrimination³ and to ensure that all subjects are taught without bias or judgement of any kind, including political or religious bias. All parents/carers have the legal right to request to withdraw their child from the specific sex education lessons contained in the RSE curriculum which will be authorised only by the Principal or Vice Principal for Behaviour and Safety. Pupils withdrawn from these areas will be given meaningful time to study other curriculum areas either as part of another group or in an individual setting. Parents/carers will need to discuss how the key statutory requirements of RSE will be covered at home if a child is not accessing this provision at school.

The school and Academy Improvement Management (AIM) Board very much hope that the programme here described will be acceptable to all families and there will not be a need for any children to be withdrawn. Indeed, we believe that the very fact of withdrawal can of itself be damaging to a child: it is very much hoped that parents with specific concerns will discuss with the school how these may be met so that the programme may perhaps be modified to accommodate their wishes.

The programme is reviewed regularly and can involve consultation with external agencies, e.g. sexual health professionals, other PHRSE co-ordinators, faculty staff /pastoral leaders / leadership team / SEND staff / parents/carers and pupils. A range of resources are used and it is the aim to keep these as relevant and up to date as possible. All resources should be appropriate to the age and ability of the group using them, and staff are encouraged to use programmes / resources as they see fit.

³ Equality Act 2010

Houlton School will work collaboratively with both secondary and primary schools across the Trust to ensure that cooperative development of RSE resources and methodologies are shared.

11. Working with Parents/Carers

Parents should be informed through school documentation/websites etc. that RSE will play a part in their child's education during their time at Houlton School. Information about RSE given to parents should be evaluated and renewed to ensure it is up to date. The school must be sensitive to the views of parents about the RSE curriculum which their children receive, and should be encouraged to discuss and explain the manner in which sensitive and controversial issues are to be raised. This will be done through various mechanisms (i.e. parent forums, voice etc.) and parents/carers will be contacted at appropriate intervals as RSE teaching changes and develops.

12. Specific Issues

Members of staff are not to give any advice to individual pupils' regards contraception, but are to direct pupils to those suitably qualified health professionals, e.g. service advertised on <http://www.besavvy.org.uk/>, GPs, etc. In the context of a sex education lesson, knowledge about contraception should be given to the group, e.g. methods of operation, suitability, availability.

Staff and pupils need to be aware within lessons of the need to be confidential and not to mention names of pupils or adults within the context of topics within RSE. Pupils should be made aware of the need for child protection and safeguarding and visual reminders of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and safeguarding procedures on site should be present across the school site. Pupils who may make individual disclosures need to know that staff may need to act upon the pupil's information and refer it as appropriate.⁴

Groups or individuals with particular causes or beliefs who may seek to influence the RSE policy will not be allowed to do so. This does not preclude parents/carers individual right to withdraw their children from aspects of the programme.

13. Dissemination

The policy can / will be made available to:

- any present or prospective parent/carer or pupil of the school;
- any visitor with an input to the RSE programme;
- any member of staff involved in the delivery of RSE at the school; and

⁴ Child abuse procedures and bullying procedures are contained in separate policy documents.

- all pastoral staff, Subject Leaders and Leadership Team.

14. Responsibility

The Houlton School RSE policy has been produced in line with the statutory guidance on RSE. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Vice Principal for Behaviour and Safety. Regular consultation with parent/carers, pupils and outside agencies will ensure the policy is fit for purpose.

The Principal will designate a named person on the staff who will coordinate the design and delivery of the programme and arrange / deliver appropriate CPD for staff. See table below.

The AIM Board has reviewed the school's RSE policy to make sure that it complies with the requirements of the law. The Vice Principal Behaviour and Safety has overall responsibility for ensuring the programme to be devised is in accordance with this policy; for presenting it to the AIM Board; and for ensuring it to be reviewed annually.

The policy will be approved by the schools AIM Board and ratified annually.

Accountable for this policy	Vice Principal Behaviour and Safety (Chloe Buckenham)
Responsible for this policy	Vice Principal Behaviour and Safety (Chloe Buckenham)
Designated Coordinator of RSE	Vice Principal Behaviour and Safety (Chloe Buckenham)

15. Appendix 1

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908013/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)