BIRKENHEAD
HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY

GDST
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

Sex & Relationship Education Policy

Approved / reviewed by:	Maryanne Ramsbottom
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Ratified by:	LGB
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Ref: Policies/Approval cover sheet

Birkenhead High School Academy

Sex & Relationship Education Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies including Equal Opportunities for Students and Gender Equality.

1 Background

At Birkenhead High School Academy, our RSHE curriculum aims to give every child the knowledge, skills and values they need for healthy, respectful, and committed relationships, and good physical and mental health. It reflects our school's values and supports each pupil's wider personal development.

2 Principles

Birkenhead High School Academy is committed to help ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of all students and staff assumes the highest priority. This care and commitment is particularly evident in our policy on sex and relationship education. We fully support the Every Child Achieving and Thriving 2026 and in keeping with Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) 2026 legislation which are reflected in this policy and in which we will help to ensure that our students stay safe and healthy in their personal and family lives, as well as in school.

To help ensure that our ethos and teaching is consistent with the formation of healthy pupils we will:

- Adopt a whole-academy approach.
- Involve parents and carers.
- Listen and respond to pupils' views.

3 Aims

Through a carefully developed programme of activities in several curriculum areas, using a variety of approaches, pupils will develop their knowledge, understanding & skills. Our RSHE curriculum aims to:

- Deliver a progressive age-appropriate and inclusive RSHE curriculum.
- Create a safe environment for discussing sensitive topics.
- Develop pupils' confidence, empathy and self-respect.
- Equip pupils to build healthy, respectful relationships online and offline.
- Prepare pupils for puberty and promote healthy lifestyles.
- Teach accurate anatomical vocabulary and have an understanding of human reproduction including the correct scientific names for body parts.
- Have a clear awareness about the need for healthy lifestyle choices.
- Help pupils recognise boundaries, stay safe and seek support and to have the self-confidence and skills to assert their own independence and choice, particularly with regard to peer pressure.
- Promote respect, responsible decision-making and strong partnerships with parents and carers.
- Sensitively relate to a wide range of people and be able to empathise with and support them as necessary.

4 Principles

- Age appropriate teaching about taking responsibility and the consequences of one's actions.
- Give students a clear understanding of the arguments for resisting pressure.
- The programme will be fully inclusive, taking into account such factors as cultural, religious and the neurodivergence of pupils.

5 Practice

This programme will be predominantly delivered within Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons, and through a number of National Curriculum subjects and through a variety of assemblies and external speakers (as outlined in our BHSA Cultural Curriculum, which also makes links to British Values). This policy reflects the Department for Education's statutory guidance on Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education (SRE) and Health Education, for introduction from September 2026. Relationship Education and Health Education are statutory in primary schools.

This policy is published on our school website and a free copy is available on request. Parents and carers are consulted when the policy is developed and reviewed.

Content taught within the National Curriculum for Science remains statutory for all pupils.

Our Curriculum Roadmap (which can be found on our website) demonstrates our spiral curriculum and how topics are re-visited and embedded throughout the academy. Although the topics below are listed specifically, we treat Relationships and Sex Education as part of the wider PSHE curriculum. We support equal opportunities in education, seeing it as enabling and encouraging all our students to build self-esteem through discussion and activities in a safe environment.

Below are the specific topics to be covered within the programme; each are taught at age and key stage appropriate times - see curriculum roadmap for when these are taught.

- Establishing healthy relationships.
- Puberty, menstruation and change.
- Consent and how to communicate this to others.
- Contraception.
- Sexually transmitted infections.
- Understanding our bodies
- Sexting
- Online Safety (including AI)
- Safer sex
- Sexual exploitation
- Sex and pornography
- Personal choices

All curriculum content can be found on our website (Curriculum Roadmap) and through the links to the PSHE Association & myHappymind+.

In Junior School, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is taught through the PSHE Scheme: myHappymind+ and is delivered by staff through specifically timetabled PSHE lessons. This provides a consistent, trusted environment where pupils feel safe to learn, reflect and ask questions. Biological aspects of RSE content are also taught within the statutory science curriculum, such as reproduction. Some aspects are included in religious education and the computing curriculum (such as online safety). RSHE brings together three areas of learning:

1. Relationship Education (statutory): pupils learn to build healthy, relationship and safe relationships with family, friends, carers, trusted adults and people online. This includes respect, kindness,personal boundaries,permission-seeking,privacy,recognising safe and unsafe situations, and knowing how to ask for help. It may include sensitive, age-appropriate safeguarding topics such as personal boundaries, unsafe touch, consent, online safety and harmful behaviours.

2. Health Education (statutory): pupils learn about physical health, mental wellbeing, growing and changing, puberty, healthy lifestyles, emotional wellbeing and how to seek support.

3. Sex Education (non-statutory in primary schools): where Birkenhead High School Academy chooses to teach additional sex education, it is age-appropriate and includes human reproduction, how babies are conceived, ways to prevent a baby being made and born, and preparation for the physical and emotional changes of growing up. Sex education is taught in Year 6 and parents and carers are consulted in advance with clear information.

RSHE: brings these areas together, giving pupils the knowledge, skills and values they need for healthy relationships, physical and mental health, respecting difference, positive identity and safe, informed decisions. It is delivered in an age-appropriate, inclusive and respectful way.

In Senior School, the PSHE curriculum is designed using the PHSE Association's guidance, adapting resources for the Academy. To ensure complete and progressive statutory coverage across Key Stages 3 and 4, (we also deliver a programme to Key Stage 5), all mandatory RSE topics are integrated into our whole-school provision using three primary delivery channels:

- PSHE Lessons: Dedicated, timetabled curriculum time focused on core themes such as healthy relationships, consent, online safety, personal choices, and human development.
- School Assemblies: Whole-school and year-group assemblies addressing key cultural aspects, anti-bullying, respectful relationships, and online ethics.
- Thematic Days: Specialist drop-down days and workshops designed for deep-dive discussions, health awareness, and collaborative reflection with expert guest speakers.

All staff receive safeguarding training. Concerns are managed in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Saccheri.

6 Monitoring & Evaluation

Each year group's objectives from the PSHE Association are mapped to lessons, and staff use these mapped objectives to inform planning and monitoring of progress. In Junior School, the subject leader monitors PSHE lessons through learning walks, pupil book studies and voice and evaluates the impact of the myHappymind+ programme with all stakeholders via the app.

In Senior School, students use booklets to show progression in their knowledge, skills and understanding. These contain reflection questions and ask students to record knowledge gained within lessons. School Council are used to feedback topics to explore further within our Senior School assemblies.

The policy and curriculum will be monitored and reviewed regularly by the Principal or a nominee (PSHE Lead and Head of PSHE). When reviewing this policy, we check that it still reflects the latest DfE RSHE guidance, distinguishes statutory from non-statutory content, explains the right to withdraw, and reflects the Equality Act 2010 and current safeguarding guidance

7 Managing Difficult Questions

If pupils ask questions, all staff respond sensitively and in an age-appropriate way, which may include encouraging the pupil to speak with a parent, carer or another trusted adult, or signposting to appropriate support, rather than seeking answers from unreliable or inappropriate sources, often online. Where a question or response raises a possible safeguarding concern, staff follow the school's safeguarding procedures and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead rather than redirecting the pupil home.

RSHE lessons are taught within agreed class ground rules, so pupils know how discussion will be handled. Teachers use distancing techniques, talking about characters and scenarios rather than pupils' personal experiences, and an anonymous question box allows pupils to raise questions privately. Where a question needs preparation or checking, staff may tell a pupil that they will find out and come back to it, rather than answering it unprepared.

8 Involvement of External Agencies

We use outside speakers to complement our teaching of this content, who are asked to work within the framework of the school's Relationship and Sex Education policy and adhere to the policy for Visiting Speakers & our safeguarding policy. A staff member will be present throughout these lessons. We will endeavour to inform parents in a timely manner, to ensure that parents/carers are aware of such visits. Examples of such agencies include:

- Health professionals: doctors and nurses
- NSPCC Volunteers
- Social workers
- Youth workers
- Peer educators
- Merseyside Police
- RNLI
- Wirral Road Safety Team

9 RSHE and pupils with SEND

RSHE at Birkenhead High School Academy is planned so that pupils with SEND can take part fully, using the graduated approach set out in the SEND Code of Practice. Adaptations include pre-teaching key vocabulary, visual supports, breaking learning into small steps, repetition and revisiting, and small-group teaching where appropriate. These adaptations are planned with our SENDCO.

10 Working with parents/carers/The right to withdraw

Parents/carers are the child's first educators. We will work alongside parents/carers to support them. The school aims to keep parents/carers informed about all aspects of the RSE curriculum and urges parents/carers to review this policy. RSE is a vital part of the school curriculum and supports the whole development of the child.

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from sex education. Any parents/carers considering withdrawing their child from RSE should contact the Head of Junior School, Mrs. Ramsbottom or the Academy Principal Mrs de Boorder, to discuss their concerns. If a request is made, parents/carers will be offered a meeting to discuss any concerns, understand the reasons for the request and explain the purpose and value of the teaching. Where appropriate, the pupil may be involved in this conversation. The request is granted whether or not the parent or carer takes up the offer. According to Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance paragraph 41-43, pupils can opt into sex education from three terms before their 16th birthday.

11 Child Protection

Children cannot learn effectively if they are concerned or frightened about being abused or being the victim of violence. They have the right to expect schools to be safe and secure environments. If a member of staff feels that a child is being abused, then they must report in person or via CPOMS to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a pupil makes a personal disclosure, the teacher should talk to them about it before the end of the school day and pass it on to the DSL or Deputy DSLS who will decide what, if any, action is needed if safeguarding is compromised.

12 Roles and responsibilities

Local Governing Body (LGB):

- The governing body, in consultation with parents, will be able to develop policies which reflect parents' wishes and the community they serve.
- All schools must have an up-to-date policy which is available for inspection and to parents

The Principal:

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that this policy is fully implemented; that staff are appropriately prepared and sufficient resources are available to ensure the effective delivery of all elements of this.

Staff

All staff in their daily engagement with other colleagues and with pupils will promote the personal, moral and social qualities, helping to provide good role models which will enable students to develop their own positive identities and personal qualities. The staff who teach in this important area must ensure that they prepare adequately to ensure all pupils appreciate and understand the messages delivered here.

In Seniors School, Science and PE staff who may teach areas of RSHE (see the Department of Education guidance mandatory from September 2026) will know how they link into the wider framework for delivering relevant, up to date and well planned SRE.

Annex 1: Links to referenced documents

- KCSIE
  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6aba40e0fceb6fb3a650127d/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2026.pdf
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance. DfE 2025
  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6970e7e67e827090d02d42e0/Relationships_education_relationships_and_sex_education__RSE__and_health_education__for_intro_1_September_2026_.pdf
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE 2026
  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69fb1c28d0e316a40f269a5b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026_a_guide_to_multi_agency_working.pdf
- PSHE Association Programme of Study for PSHE education (KS1-5) 2026
  https://pshe-association.org.uk/guidance/ks1-5/programme-of-study?hsCtaTracking=a16b3740-b854-4e06-9611-e8732341d6c0%7C12b02aed-933f-4af5-b625-dd56539aa05f
- myHappymind+
  https://myhappymind.org/
- Every child Achieving and Thriving DfE 2026
  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69ef496808ecdb5c6f34afc2/Every_Child_Achieving_with_Correction_-_PRINT.pdf
- Curriculum coverage (myHappymind+ linked to PSHE Association)
  1 Curriculum Coverage.pdf
- myHappymind+ parent information
  2 parent information.pdf

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