Relationships, Sex and Education (RSE) Policy

We have used the RSE government guidance released in July 2025, to write this policy, which becomes statutory in September 2026. All stakeholders will be consulted regarding the new changes.

Our pupils, families and the local demographic, as well as the context of local and national issues, are always considered and the content of the policy and curriculum are in line with DfE requirements for Primary Relationships Education, which became statutory from September 2020. The new content will be fully in place by September 2026.

The policy is available to read on our school's website and a paper copy is available, on request from the school office.

Hester's Way Primary School already covers the statutory curriculum. There are some small changes to the statutory curriculum, such as the way that the curriculum is delivered for example skills such as decision making and being assertive, as well as placing greater emphasis on some content such as online relationships. These changes, as well as the sex education expectations for Year 5 upwards, will be discussed and decided upon over the course of the year by Senior Leaders, the Subject Lead and Governors, in consultation with pupils and parents. They will be planned for and implemented in September 2026 by the PSHE Lead.

WHAT IS RSE?

"The focus in primary school is on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults.

This starts with pupils being taught about what a relationship is, what friendship is, what family means and who the people are who can support them. From the beginning of primary school, building on early education, pupils should be taught how to take turns, how to treat each other with kindness, consideration and respect, the importance of honesty and truthfulness, permission seeking and giving, and the concept of personal privacy.

Establishing personal space and boundaries, showing respect and understanding the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical and other contact and understanding consent at an appropriate age level e.g. seeking and giving permission and understanding they have a right to change their mind.
Respect for others should be taught in an age-appropriate way, in terms of understanding one's own and others' boundaries in play, in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources and so on.

From the beginning, teachers should talk explicitly about the features of healthy friendships, family relationships and other relationships which young children are likely to encounter. Drawing attention to these in a range of contexts should enable pupils to form a strong early understanding of the features of relationships that are likely to lead to happiness and security. This will also help them to recognise any less positive relationships when they encounter them.

The principles of positive relationships also apply online especially as, by the end of primary school, many children will already be using the internet. When teaching relationships content, teachers should address online safety and appropriate behaviour in a way that is relevant to pupils' lives.

Teachers should include content on how information and data is shared and used in all contexts, including online; for example, sharing pictures, understanding that many websites are businesses and how sites may use information provided by users in ways they might not expect.

Teaching about families requires sensitive and well-judged teaching based on knowledge of pupils and their circumstances. Families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children. (Families can include for example, single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents and carers amongst other structures.) Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances and needs, to reflect sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them; for example, looked after children or young carers.

A growing ability to form strong and positive relationships with others depends on the deliberate cultivation of character traits and positive personal attributes, (sometimes referred to as 'virtues') in the individual. In a school wide context which encourages the development and practice of resilience and other attributes, this includes character traits such as helping pupils to believe they can achieve, persevere with tasks, work towards long-term rewards and continue despite setbacks. Alongside understanding the importance of self-respect and self-worth, pupils should develop personal attributes including honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice. This can be achieved in a variety of ways including by providing planned opportunities for young people to undertake social action, active citizenship and voluntary service to others locally or more widely.

Relationships Education also creates an opportunity to enable pupils to be taught about positive emotional and mental wellbeing, including how friendships can support mental wellbeing.

Through Relationships Education (and RSE), schools should teach pupils the knowledge they need to recognise and to report abuse, including emotional, physical and sexual abuse. In primary schools, this can be delivered by focusing on boundaries and privacy, ensuring young people understand that they have rights over their own bodies. This should also include understanding boundaries in friendships with peers and also in families and with others, in all contexts, including online.

Pupils should know how to report concerns and seek advice when they suspect or know that something is wrong. At all stages it will be important to balance teaching children about making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online) whilst being clear it is never the fault of a child who is abused and why victim blaming is always wrong. These subjects complement Health Education and form part of a comprehensive programme and whole school approach, this knowledge can support safeguarding of children." – DfE Relationships Education Guidance July 2025.

AIMS

RSE aims to equip children and young people with the information (informed decision making), skills (to prevent and protect), values (including resilience) and holistic development (physical and mental well-being) which they will need to lead safe, fulfilling, enjoyable lives and relationships. These principles will help them go on, beyond primary school, to take responsibility for their relationships, health including sexual health, values physical and mental wellbeing and understand prevention and protection of harms. RSE is taught through primary and secondary school and therefore teaching objectives have been spread across the key stages with consideration to age of the children, their needs at the different stages of their life and progression of knowledge.

The overall aim of the school is to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. Research has shown that a comprehensive RSE curriculum can help young people to feel more positive about themselves and to understand what a healthy relationship looks like, as well as to delay the age at

which they become sexually active. Young people who feel good about themselves are more knowledgeable and confident about relationships, more likely to be more discerning in their relationships and sexual behaviours and also more likely to have healthy, safe and fulfilling relationships.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 sets out that all schools and colleges should ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum, and our RSE curriculum at Hester's Way Primary School is key to this provision. This may include covering relevant issues through Relationships Education and through Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE). At the heart of these subjects there is a focus on keeping children safe through informed decision making, and schools can play an important role in preventative and protective education.

The 5 key elements of RSE:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe
- Sex Education (non-statutory but 2025 revision means it is recommended from year 5 upwards).

HWPS approach to RSE

In line with the DfE RSE Guidance, we follow a government approved scheme of work PSHE Association which includes Programme Builders for PSHE education Key stages 1-2. The programme builders incorporate the statutory RSE objectives and programmes of study into the PSHE curriculum. The PSHE Association are auditing their Programme Builders to make sure there is full coverage of the statutory guidance for RSE 2025 and once this is published HWPS will be using this to update their curriculum this year. The Programme Builders are structured around an overarching question for each term or half term. These begin in key stage 1 as 'What? And 'Who?" questions and build throughout Key Stage 2 into 'Why?' and 'How?' questions. The three core themes from the Programme of Study are fully covered: Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Living in the Wider World. Some half term blocks will draw on more than one core theme.

Teaching builds according to the age and needs of the pupils throughout the primary phase with suggested developmentally appropriate learning objectives given to respond to each key question.

Part of the RSE primary objectives are also part of the National Curriculum Science objectives in year 5 and so are taught in science. These are:

- Pupils should be taught to describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals. (Notes & Guidance-Pupils should find out about different types of reproduction, including sexual and asexual reproduction in plants, and sexual reproduction in animals).
- Pupils should be taught to describe the changes as humans develop to old age. (Notes and guidance - Pupils should draw a timeline to indicate stages in the growth and development of humans. They should learn about the changes experienced in puberty including menstruation cycle).

The National curriculum is statutory and therefore all the above Science objectives must be taught within year 5. These national curriculum objectives are objectives that are suited to the children's age group in particular coverage of puberty that many children will begin to experience themselves in this age range and therefore it is important they understand how their body will grow and

develop. There is further information on the science overview under Science Curriculum on the HWPS website.

As part of personalising our PSHE & RSE curriculum HWPS take part in the GHLL bi- annual KS2 pupil well-being survey. The results are analysed by the PSHE lead and shared with HWPS staff. The areas that score significantly different to Gloucestershire are planned into the yearly curriculum, or immediately addressed if a cause of concern.

Equal Opportunities

The law now states that all pupils should have access to Relationships Education and Health Education that is relevant to their particular needs. To achieve this HWPS approach to RSE will take account of:

Ethnic and cultural diversity
Different ethnic and cultural groups may have different attitudes to RSE. The school will consult pupils and parents/carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for and understanding of their views. Hester's Way Primary School is 40% EAL.

Varying family and home backgrounds
We shall always endeavour to prevent stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances. Some of our pupils will go on to define themselves as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ). Pupils may also have LGBTQ parents/carers, brothers or sisters, other family members and/or friends. Eventually all our pupils will meet and work with LGBTQ people. Our approach to RSE will include sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality and we shall actively tackle homophobic or sexist bullying.

Special educational needs
We shall take account of the fact that some pupils may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities that result in particular RSE needs. Hester's Way Primary school has 40% SEN.

A Whole School Approach

Teaching staff are all involved in the school's RSE provision; as well as delivering the curriculum, they all play an important pastoral role by offering support to pupils. Teachers are consulted about the school's approach to RSE and aided in their work by provision of resources, background information, and access to appropriate training, support and advice from experienced members of staff.

Non-teaching staff may be involved in a supportive role in some RSE lessons and also play an important (formal or informal) pastoral support role with pupils. They have access to information about the RSE policy and curriculum via Sharepoint, CPOMs and our school website.

Governors have responsibilities for school policies. They will be consulted about the RSE provision and policy.

Parents/carers have a legal right to have information about the school's RSE provision. They have access at any point to the Programme Builders for PSHE education, Science curriculum and RSE policy on the HWPS website.

They are also invited to come into school to discuss the content of the lessons and to view the resources used. The class teacher or PSHE subject leaders would be willing to work with them at any

point, however, under statutory guidance, parents cannot withdraw their children from Relationships Education. They may only withdraw their child from sex education beyond the National Curriculum for Science.

The school will, however, seek and take account of parent/carer views and endeavour to adopt a partnership approach with parents/carers; we will take time to address concerns and allay any fears.

Outside agencies and speakers may be involved in contributing to RSE lessons. The school will only work with agencies and speakers who are appropriate to the pupils' needs. Pupils have an entitlement to RSE and pastoral support appropriate to their age and circumstance. They will be consulted about their RSE needs and their views will be central to developing the provision.

Our RSE Programme

We subscribe to Gloucestershire County Council's Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning (GHLL) advice for planning and teaching RSE within the PSHE curriculum using the PSHE Association Programme Builders for Key stage 1 &2. We bespoke and enrich our curriculum with a range of resources such as Public Health England as well as visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Some further elements of RSE are taught through Science. The PSHE Association says although the Programme Builders organise content under different headings from those used in the content grids of the Department for Education's statutory guidance on Relationships Education, RSE and Health education, each Programme Builder covers all of the statutory requirements for their phase, within a comprehensive PSHE/RSE education programme. Although each takes a slightly different approach, they each cover all of the Programme of Study learning opportunities for their phase as well.

Below is the new content for the RSE statutory guidance to be covered by the end of Primary. The changes are to the subheadings for example online relationships has changed to online safety and awareness.

There are small changes to content:
Caring friendships has been added to with a focus on teaching about loneliness. **Respectful Relationships** has an emphasis on self-esteem, setting and respecting boundaries, building resilience and how to find support.
Online safety has enhanced online safety requirements.
Being safe details on developing skills to stay safe and teaching on when and how to seek support.

The DfE RSE 2025 Statutory guidance says by the end of primary:

Families and People Who Care for Me
1. That families are important for children growing up safe and happy because they can provide love, security and stability.
2. The characteristics of safe and happy family life, such as commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
3. That the families of other children, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.
4. That stable, caring relationships are at the heart of safe and happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up.
5. That marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.
6. How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.

Caring Friendships

1. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
2. That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. Pupils should learn skills for developing caring, kind friendships.
3. That not every child will have the friends they would like at all times, that most people feel lonely sometimes, and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it.
4. The characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties.
5. That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened.
6. How to manage conflict, and that resorting to violence is never right.
7. How to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to get support when needed.

Respectful, Kind Relationships

1. How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others, including in families and friendships. Pupils should be encouraged to discuss how we balance the needs and wishes of different people in relationships and why this can be complicated.
2. The importance of setting and respecting healthy boundaries in relationships with friends, family, peers and adults.
3. How to communicate effectively and manage conflict with kindness and respect; how to be assertive and express needs and boundaries; how to manage feelings, including disappointment and frustration.
4. Pupils should have opportunities to discuss the difference between being assertive and being controlling, and conversely the difference between being kind to other people and neglecting your own needs.
5. That they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and the importance of respecting others, including those who are different (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices, or have different preferences or beliefs.
6. Practical steps they can take and skills they can develop in a range of different contexts to improve or support their relationships.
7. The conventions of courtesy and manners.
8. The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. Pupils should have opportunities to think about how they foster their own self-esteem and build a strong sense of their own identity, including through developing skills and interests.
9. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult), and how to get help. 10. What a stereotype is, how stereotypes can be unfair, negative, destructive or lead to bullying and how to challenge a stereotype.
11.How to seek help when needed, including when they are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

Online Safety and Awareness

1. That people should be respectful in online interactions, and that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including where people are anonymous. For example, the importance of avoiding putting pressure on others to share information and images online, and strategies for resisting peer pressure.
2. How to critically evaluate their online relationships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. For example, that people sometimes behave differently online, including pretending to be someone else, or pretending to be a child, and that this can lead to dangerous situations. How to recognise harmful content or harmful contact, and how to report this.

3. That there is a minimum age for joining social media sites (currently 13), which protects children from inappropriate content or unsafe contact with older social media users, who may be strangers, including other children and adults.
4. The importance of exercising caution about sharing any information about themselves online. Understanding the importance of privacy and location settings to protect information online.
5. Online risks, including that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once a picture or words has been circulated there is no way of deleting it everywhere and no control over where it ends up.
6. That the internet contains a lot of content that can be inappropriate and upsetting for children, and where to go for advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online.

Being Safe Curriculum
1. What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including online). This can include learning about boundaries in play and in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources etc.
2. The concept of privacy and its implications for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
3. That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe contact, including physical contact.
4. How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online), including those they do and do not know.
5. How to recognise when a relationship is harmful or dangerous, including skills for recognising who to trust and who not to trust.
6. How to report abuse, concerns about something seen online or experienced in real life, or feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
7. How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

Ground Rules

Teachers are careful to ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes do not influence the teaching of RSE. To this end, ground rules are always agreed upon to provide a common values framework within Relationships and Sex Education Policy which to teach. There are clear parameters as to what will be taught in whole class setting and what will be dealt with on an individual basis. Ground rules will ensure that:
• Pupils are given preparation so that they will know how to minimise any embarrassment they feel.
• No one (teacher nor pupil) should be expected to answer a personal question.
• No one will be forced to take part in a discussion.
• The school's confidentiality/safeguarding policies are adhered to.

Answering difficult questions:
When delivering the RSE objectives, teachers will always consider how children of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to differing types of questions or behaviours. Teaching methods should take account of those developmental differences (including when these are due to specific special educational needs or disabilities) and recognise the potential for discussion on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. HWPS will consider what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting, as teachers may require support and training in answering questions that are better not dealt with in front of a whole class. On occasion, an individual child will ask an explicit or difficult question in the classroom. Questions do not always have to be answered immediately; it may be more appropriate to address them later. At HWPS we believe that individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in these situations and might refer to the PSHE subject leader, if necessary.

Dealing with questions:
• Teachers should establish clear parameters about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting.
• Teachers should set the tone by speaking in a matter-of-fact way and ensure that pupils discuss issues in a way which does not encourage giggling and silliness.
• Pupils should be encouraged to write down questions anonymously and post them in the class 'worry box'. The teacher will then have time to prepare age-appropriate answers to all questions before the next session and will choose not to respond to any questions which are inappropriate.
• Teachers should respond to questions where they can, always bearing in mind that pupils who do not have their questions answered may go online to find answers.
• Teachers should not be drawn into providing more information than is appropriate to the age of the child.
• If a verbal question is too personal, the teacher should remind the pupils of the ground rules.
• If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class or raises safeguarding concerns, the teacher should acknowledge the question and promise to attend to it later, on an individual basis. This gives the teacher time to seek advice from PSHE lead and SLT.
• Pupils must not be given the impression that teenagers inevitably have sex. The view that sex should be between two people who are mature enough to make informed decisions should be emphasised.
• If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse the Safe Guarding Lead (Headteacher) should be informed immediately or if unavailable the Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Head and Assistant Head) should be informed immediately and the usual safeguarding/child protection procedures followed.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The RSE programme and policy are regularly evaluated and reviewed by the PSHE Subject Leader and Senior Leaders. The views of pupils, parents, staff and governors are used to make changes and improvements to the programme. SLT, Chair of Governors and subject lead will consider Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) when developing other policies.

All teachers follow the question-based programme of study written by the PSHE association which also provides quality assured resources. At Hester's Way Primary School, we have enrolled in membership with them because they offer guidance, training and resources.

All PSHE/RSE work is recorded in a class big book which teachers reflect on with their class. Throughout the year the PSHE lead monitors the teaching of PSHE/RSE through pupil conferences and cross referencing the big books with PSHE/RSE planning to ensure coverage.

Staff at HWPS are trained through staff meetings, CPD courses and liaison with the curriculum lead.

The PSHE annual overview which includes the RSE objectives for each year group can be found on the school website under Curriculum, then Personal Development.
Home - Hester's Way Primary School

Consultation with Parents

The policy is sent out to parents before a final draft is published. We invite any comments and will speak to parents where needed. Meetings will be organised for stakeholders to attend a brief summary of changes and answer any queries.

Parents will be advised before pupils are taught any new sex education content based on the RSE and health education guidance 2025.

Links to other Policies and Agencies
PSHE Curriculum
Behaviour Policy
Safe-guarding & Child Protection
Science Curriculum
E-Safety Policy
NSPCC – see website for teaching resources and tools; parent, child and teacher's information.
Think u Know – CEOP tools for teaching children about keeping safe on the internet.
Young minds – see website for parent, child and teacher information about supporting young people's mental health and well – being.
PSHE association https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england

This policy was written by the PSHE/PD Leader in November 2025.
To be reviewed in November 2026.

Ratified by: _____ Date: 19.01.26

A signed copy will be kept in the school office following Governing Board ratification.