Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Hedgeway School

Policy Reference:	A133-HWS
Applies to:	Schools
Associated documents:	Curriculum policy PSHE policy Child protection policy
Approved by:	Head of Service & Quality Assurance
Implementation date:	September 2026
Next review due by:	September 2027
This policy has been reviewed to ensure it promotes safeguarding and does not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups	

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place. Through the curriculum we will help prepare children and young people for puberty, and to understand the importance of health and hygiene and sexual development. We will teach the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies. At Aurora we help our children and young people to develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy and create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships.

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This Policy fulfils the requirements of:

- **The Department for Education's** Statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education. (RSE) 2026
- Section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, children and young people at Aurora Hedgeway

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Site Lead will:

4.1.1 Be 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.

4.2 Staff will:

4.2.1 Deliver RSE in a sensitive way

4.2.2 Model positive attitudes to RSE

4.2.3 Monitor progress

4.2.4 Respond to the needs of individual pupils

4.2.5 Respond appropriately to young people whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE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 should discuss them with the Site Lead.

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Name:	Role:	Responsible for:
Natalie Scott-Sheppard	Head of School	Ensuring the teaching and learning standards are being upheld in relation to RSE as well as support provided where appropriate. Ensure that all resources relating to RSE are up to date.
Beckie Marston	Assistant Head	Ensuring the teaching and learning standards are being upheld in relation to RSE as well as support provided where appropriate. Ensure that all resources relating to RSE are up to date.
Vanesa Verna Estrada	(SENCo)	Ensuring the teaching and learning standards are being upheld in relation to RSE as well as support provided where appropriate.
Becky Cornell	Class teacher (PSHCE lead)	Planning, delivery and assessment of RSE lessons.
Emily Bartlett	Class Teacher	Planning, delivery and assessment of RSE lessons.
Holly Jenkins	Class Teacher	Planning, delivery and assessment of RSE lessons.
Bryony Ashmore	Class Teacher	Planning, delivery and assessment of RSE lessons.
Abi Southwell	Class Teacher	Planning, delivery and assessment of RSE lessons.
Laura Almond	Class Teacher	Planning, delivery and assessment of RSE lessons.
Tracy Houdek	Class Teacher	Planning, delivery and assessment of RSE lessons.
Mark Calcutt	Class Teacher	Planning, delivery and assessment of RSE lessons.
Peter Murphy	Class Teacher	Planning, delivery and assessment of RSE lessons.
Margriet Clarke	Class Teacher	Planning, delivery and assessment of RSE lessons.
Charlotte Webb	Clinical Team (Assistant Phycologist)	Clinical support and advice on coverage and approaches where appropriate.

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4.3 The governing board will:

4.3.1 The governing board will hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

4.3 Children/young people will:

4.3.1 Engage fully in RSE and, treat others with respect and sensitivity, when discussing related issues.

5. Definitions

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

6. Policy development

This policy will be shared with parents as part of the referral process, and it will be discussed with pupils at the beginning of their RSE programme. In year 1 this policy will be reviewed and developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process will involve the following steps:

- Review
- Staff consultation
- Parent consultation
- Pupil consultation
- Ratification

7. Curriculum

At Aurora Hedgeway School our pupils are taught the skills and attitudes required to enable them to become as independent as they can be and to prepare for adulthood. Our overarching aim is that pupils are prepared for life after school. As part of this, we are committed to ensuring each young person receives high quality relationship and sex education.

We are committed to ensuring all pupils have access to an enriched and stimulating curriculum to give them every opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of their gender, race, learning disability or physical disability. We ensure that RSE fosters gender and LGBTIA+ equality. The school is committed to the provision of RSE to all of its pupils and to meeting the differing needs of male and female pupils as well as those who are non-binary and gender fluid.

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Teachers and pupils will agree ground rules at the start of the year which will be adhered to in all sessions, ensuring that pupils have an understanding that what is said in RSE lessons can be quite sensitive. Pupils will be encouraged not to talk about sensitive personal experiences in the groups. This ensures other pupils do not find out sensitive information about a child/young person or situations they may have been through in the past, although staff will always be available to support any responses to difficult topics and will ensure support is offered where needed.

Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection or safeguarding issue. Pupils will be aware that if staff think that there might be a safeguarding issue, a safeguarding officer within the school will be informed.

Pupils will be able to raise questions anonymously by using the 'ask it basket' or other in class forms of anonymous questioning. The teacher can either address the issues raised by a pupil in private if they wish or address the question as part of a lesson. Pupils' questions will always be answered. We believe that providing accurate information is the most effective way to ensure pupils have a sound understanding.

As part of our whole school approach to RSE, parents are encouraged to contact us if they wish to discuss any aspect of what will be delivered. We are happy to arrange a phone conversation, or a face-to-face meeting as required. Parents will be made aware of any sensitive topics being covered in class.

Due to the vulnerabilities and needs of our cohort, we teach consent and appropriate / inappropriate touch / reporting in every year throughout school.

7.1 Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are:

- To help pupils develop feelings of self-worth, self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- To create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships and encourage pupils to form positive and healthy relationships.
- To prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- To ensure pupils know how to keep themselves safe and how to behave respectfully towards others.
- To ensure pupils understand what sexual abuse and sexual harassment are, be aware of different types (including online), and that ALL sexual behaviour must be reported.
- To ensure pupils understand key issues around consent, can identify appropriate and inappropriate touch and behaviours (off and on-line) and know how to raise a concern.
- To teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- To provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.

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7.2 Rationale and Ethos

At Aurora Hedgeway School we define Relationships and Sex Education as learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. The purpose of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Aurora Wilden View is to assist our pupils to prepare for adult life through physical, emotional and moral support.

Significantly this policy places RSE firmly in the context of relationships as a whole and seeks to develop it as such. We will emphasize the understanding of the importance for families of stable, caring, responsible and loving relations between adults.

Relationships and Sex Education is an excellent forum to provide pupils with life-skills that will enable them to make informed decisions and protect themselves against harmful and exploitative situations. Relationships and Sex Education is therefore a tool to safeguard children. We recognise that our pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND.

Relationships and Sex Education contribute to the foundation of PSHE and Citizenship and offers a valuable vehicle for promoting equality between individuals and groups. It involves an exploration of human and social diversity, and a fostering of self-worth whilst recognising, accepting and respecting differences.

Due to the nature of our pupils RSE is taught in a considerate and delicate way, ensuring that pupils feel comfortable and confident to ask questions. We believe that relationship and sex education is particularly important for our pupils because some do not have access to wider friends and networks and therefore rely on the internet to gain information. This can impact on a pupil's views, outlook and expectations around relations and sex.

We ensure that RSE is inclusive and meets the needs of all our pupils, including those with special educational needs and different religious views. Pupils follow different pathways through the RSE curriculum. Many pupils have been out of education for some time before joining us. Others may be less mature or more vulnerable and therefore content and coverage is adapted to meet their needs and address gaps appropriately.

RSE is not delivered in isolation. It is taught in subjects including Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE), Computing and Science. This includes lessons on how to keep themselves safe both in the physical world and in the online world, how to keep their bodies' safe and what to do if they are worried about any changes to their body.

7.3 Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of our continuing professional development calendar in house. We will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as the school nurse or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching.

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7.4 Working with Parents/Carers

Our RSE Policy is available on our school website and is also sent out via email annually to all parents/carers. We carry out an annual parent/carer RSE survey to gather feedback to inform our approach. We also offer a range of parent's workshops across the year attended by key staff including the clinical team, who are able to advise on any specific issues.

7.5 Whole School Coverage

The Aurora Hedgeway View curriculum cover 6 areas throughout the year, focussing on different topics depending on the age of the pupils.

- Being me in the world
- Celebrating differences
- Dreams and Goals
- Healthy Me
- Relationships
- Changing me

8. Delivery of RSE

Relationship and Sex Education will be delivered explicitly through PSHE lessons during the Summer Term for those in Lower school and across term 2-6 in Middle and Upper, each year. We may use external professionals to support this teaching, where necessary. Elements of human reproduction will be taught through compulsory science at varying stages of the curriculum at Aurora Hedgeway, in an age-appropriate manner.

The purpose of RSE is to provide knowledge about the processes of growth and development and human reproduction, different gender identities including challenging stereotypes, as well as the importance of relationships. At the same time, it should lead to the acquisition of skill and attitudes which prepare children to manage their relationships in a responsible and healthy manner. It provides an important forum for pupils to discuss their own issues and ideas, clarifying issues, gaining correct information, and reaching balanced views.

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 other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers)

9. Safeguarding and child protection

At Aurora Hedgeway we are aware that discussion with children and young people during RSE lessons, may lead to a disclosure. If this happens, we will follow the procedures described in our Child Protection Policy. Ensuring that the needs of the child/young person are met sensitively and in a timely manner are paramount to everything that we believe in.

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10. Parents right to withdraw

- Parents are informed of the RSE curriculum and invited to discuss specific topics.
- Parents
  of secondary-age pupils may withdraw their child from non-statutory sex-education el ements until three terms before their sixteenth birthday.
- A withdrawal form (Appendix 2 in the policy) is used for requests, followed by a meeti ng with the Head Teacher.

10. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The headteacher may also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The policy is reviewed annually by the Deputy Headteacher (Education and Pastoral) and ap proved by the Headteacher.

12. Updates in Line with 2026 DfE RSHE Guidance

Online Safety and Digital Literacy
The curriculum will address emerging safeguarding risks associated with the digital world, including artificial intelligence (AI), deepfake images and videos, AI-generated explicit content, harmful online influencers, online misogyny and toxic online subcultures. Pupils will develop critical thinking skills to evaluate online content, recognise misinformation and manipulation, understand the impact of algorithms and social media influence, and know how to seek support if they encounter concerning or harmful material online. The school will ensure that digital safety education reflects current and emerging technologies and online behaviours.

Personal Safety
Pupils will be taught practical personal safety skills to help them recognise, assess and manage risk in a variety of situations. This will include education relating to safety around roads, railways, water, public spaces, independent travel and emergency situations. Teaching will support pupils to make informed decisions, seek help when required and develop confidence in keeping themselves and others safe

Bereavement and Loss
The curriculum will include age-appropriate education on bereavement, change, and loss. Pupils will learn to recognise emotional responses and develop coping strategies to support their wellbeing.

Skills Development
RSE will promote the development of key life skills including assertiveness, expressing needs and boundaries, and managing difficult emotions such as loneliness and frustration.

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Misogyny, Sexual Harassment & Violence
Aurora Hedgeway School is committed to promoting respectful relationships and challenging harmful attitudes, behaviours and stereotypes. In line with the 2026 DfE RSHE guidance, the curriculum will include explicit teaching on misogyny, sexism, violence against women and girls, sexual harassment, coercive and controlling behaviours, and healthy attitudes towards consent, power and relationships. Pupils will be supported to recognise and challenge harmful narratives, both online and offline, and to develop the skills needed to build respectful, equitable relationships. Teaching will be delivered in an age and stage appropriate manner and will promote respect, dignity and equality for all

SEND Inclusion
RSE will be adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This includes differentiated resources, inclusive delivery methods, and personalised support to ensure accessibility and engagement for all learners.

Transparency with Parents
Aurora Hedgeway School will provide representative samples of RSE resources to parents and make all curriculum materials available upon request. This ensures transparency and supports parental engagement in the RSE programme.

Appendix 1:

Relationships and sex education curriculum map

The below is linked with a wider PSHCE curriculum. Students will be taught at their appropriate level, in discussion with parents.

Lower school - Adapted in relation to cohort

Topic 1 Introduction	**Topic 2** Puberty	**Topic 3** Personal Hygiene	**Topic 4** Healthy Relationships	**Topic 5** Introduction to Consent	**Topic 6** Online safety
What we will cover, ground rules, introduce the question box and baseline understanding	How the body changes during puberty including emotionally	how we can look after our body, what we may need to do more of e.g. deodorant and washing	Including different types of relationships and friendships	To learn about what consent is	How to keep yourself safe online.

Year 7

Topic 1 Puberty and emotional changes	**Topic 2** Menstrual wellbeing	**Topic 3** Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships	**Topic 4** Managing Conflict	**Topic 5** Introduction to Consent

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Intent: To learn about how emotions are affected by puberty, how this may affect relationships and how to manage this.	**Intent:** To learn about menstrual (period) wellbeing	**Intent:** To learn about the qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships	**Intent:** To learn skills to manage relationship conflict in families	**Intent:** To learn about what consent means, both legally and ethically, and what it looks like in practice

Year 8

Topic 1 Healthy Relationships	**Topic 2** Stereotypes in the media	**Topic 3** Safer online relationships	**Topic 4** Consent	**Topic 5** Sharing nudes
Intent: To learn about the features of healthy relationships and explore strategies to communicate effectively.	Intent: To learn how media affect people's expectations of themselves, others and relationships.	Intent: To learn about the benefits, challenges and risks involved in the use of social media and about ways to manage risk online.	Intent: To learn about the importance of consent in relationships and how decisions about consent can be communicated.	Intent: To learn about the risks associated with sharing sexual images, and how to manage requests to share these.

Year 9

Topic 1 Consent – Avoiding assumptions	**Topic 2** Freedom and capacity to consent	**Topic 3** Contraception	**Topic 4** Sexual Health	**Topic 5** Managing the ending of relationships
Intent: To learn about beginning and growing positive relationships and assessing readiness for intimacy	**Intent:** To learn about what 'freedom' and 'capacity' to consent mean in different contexts.	**Intent:** To learn about different types of contraception and how they work.	**Intent:** To learn about sexual health, the potential consequences of sex and ways to reduce risk.	**Intent:** To learn about how to manage the end of an intimate relationship.

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Year 10

Topic 1 The role of intimacy and pleasure	**Topic 2** The impact of pornography	**Topic 3** Pressure, persuasion, and coercion	**Topic 4** Managing relationship conflict and breakups	**Topic 5** Addressing relationship abuse
Intent: To learn about the role of intimacy, readiness, and pleasure in consensual relationships.	**Intent:** To learn about pornography and its impact on understanding consent.	**Intent:** To learn about how seeking consent through pressure and coercion is wrong and how to manage pressure to consent and that "consent" obtained in this way is not genuine.	**Intent:** **To** identify and manage appropriate and inappropriate conflict behaviour and how to manage breakups respectfully and safely.	**Intent:** To learn how to end and/or get support for abusive relationships.

Year 11

Topic 1 Healthy and unhealthy relationships	**Topic 2** Power and Control	**Topic 3** Setting boundaries and getting help	**Topic 4** Choices related to sex and contraception	**Topic 5** Sexual health
Intent: To learn about establishing healthy, respectful relationships.	**Intent:** To learn how to recognise and respond to pressure and exploitation in relationships.	**Intent:** To learn about exploitation and how to establish boundaries in healthy relationships.	**Intent:** To learn how to make informed contraceptive choices	**Intent:** To learn how to reduce the risk of STI transmission and access sexual health services.

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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			

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