



Lancaster
High School

Ambition • Kindness • Service

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

2026 - 2027



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Rationale and Ethos

The Department for Education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Statutory Guidance (2025, implementation September 2026), made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. RSHE involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity through a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Relationship, Sex and Health education (RSHE) is an integral part of our whole school Personal, Social, Health Education curriculum at Lancaster High School. Pupils study RSHE throughout their time at LHS, focussing on covering in a manner appropriate to their age and development.

The main aim of RSHE is to equip young people with the information they need to develop healthy, constructive and nurturing relationships of all kinds including, friendships, romantic relationships and professional relationships. RSHE at Lancaster High School will enable pupils to identify the features of a healthy relationship as well as understand the qualities of a good friend, a good colleague and a successful and committed relationship. We aim to ensure that all young people are endowed with the knowledge of what is considered positive, acceptable behaviour within relationships, as well as the ability to identify unhealthy and abusive behaviours and develop the confidence to challenge or walk away from these relationships when they encounter them.

During their time at Lancaster High School, pupils will study healthy relationships, consent, contraception, puberty, reproduction, sexual health, online safety, the impact of pornography, sexual harassment, sexual violence, misogyny, harmful online influences, gender reassignment as protected by law, and the rights and responsibilities associated with respectful relationships. Teaching will be factual, age-appropriate, evidence-informed and inclusive. Pupils will be taught the relevant facts and legal protections relating to sex, relationships, sexual health and protected characteristics, whilst recognising that some broader social and political issues may be subject to differing viewpoints. The school will not promote any particular political or ideological position but will teach pupils to evaluate information critically and respectfully.

RSHE is taught at Lancaster High School through science lessons and our personal development curriculum. Sexual matters are discussed openly, honestly and in an age-appropriate manner with the goal of properly informing pupils of the information needed to navigate the adult world as well as ensuring that they fully understand the consequences of their actions.

We recognise a real need for providing Relationship and Sex Education in a gradual and positive manner. To cater for this need, we will establish a co-ordinated programme, which has specific and regular stages that are established within the curriculum as a whole. The aim of this

programme will be to help pupils to make the right judgements and to take the right actions in the many and varied situations in which they may find themselves.

RSHE is a vital component of the school's safeguarding curriculum. It supports pupils to recognise abuse, exploitation, coercion, harassment and harmful behaviours, both online and offline, and empowers them to seek help when needed.

This policy was produced by the Assistant Headteacher for Personal Development and the Head of Department for RE and Life, through consultation with parents and the governing body.

Individual Needs

SEND: Pupils with special needs will be taught alongside their peers either in mixed ability form groups or in their curriculum groupings. Subject teachers will refer any pupil they feel is having difficulty with the basic understanding or with the social/moral aspects of sex education, to the Head of Department in the first instance who will seek the guidance of our SENDCO and create an appropriate strategy to best help the pupil.

Gender: At Lancaster High School we firmly believe that our pupils should learn about PSHE in a mixed gender setting. This is because it is vital that our pupils understand human sexuality and healthy relationships from the perspective of all genders and believe that mixed gender settings promote a culture of open, honest discussions about RSHE. We also recognise that not all pupils identify as the gender assigned at birth and may be uncomfortable in a single sex setting.

LGBTQ+ Inclusivity: Lancaster High School is committed to creating an inclusive environment where all pupils feel respected, valued and safe. RSHE reflects the diversity of modern society and includes teaching about different types of families, including families with same-sex parents, in accordance with statutory guidance and equality legislation. Pupils will learn about the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and develop understanding, respect and tolerance towards others.

The school teaches the facts and law relating to biological sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. Where topics are subject to public debate or differing viewpoints, staff will present information in a balanced manner and will not promote particular contested views as fact

The intended outcomes of our Relationships and Sex Education Policy programme are to:

- Provide clear progression from what is taught in primary school in Relationships Education, be age appropriate and fully inclusive.

- Enable pupils to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful.
- Teach the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect.
- Teach young people to understand human sexuality, to respect themselves and others and the reasons for delaying sexual activity.
- Be delivered in a non-judgmental, factual way and allow scope for young people to ask questions in a safe environment.
- Teach the facts and the law relating to sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, sexual health and healthy relationships in an age-appropriate, inclusive and evidence-based manner.
- Recognise that whilst there will be a range of opinions regarding RSHE, the starting principles will be the applicable of the law and school values.
- Equip pupils to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives, whilst respecting the right of others.
- Teach the rules and principles for keeping safe online and how and to whom to report issues.
- Ensure pupils understand the different risks associated with various types of sexual activity and understand how to engage in safe sexual activity by exploring a range of contraception.
- Develop pupils' understanding of the risks associated with of pornographic material.
- Develop pupils' understanding of sexual harassment, sexual violence, coercive control and abuse, and how these behaviours can be prevented and reported.
- Develop pupils' awareness of harmful online content, including pornography, deepfakes, misogynistic influencers, online exploitation and image-based abuse.
- Promote positive mental wellbeing, resilience, help-seeking behaviour and understanding of suicide prevention.
- Support pupils to understand healthy behaviours relating to reproductive health, pregnancy, miscarriage, menstrual health and the risks associated with vaping and substance misuse.

Preventing Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

Lancaster High School recognises the important role RSHE plays in preventing sexual harassment, sexual violence and abusive behaviour. Pupils will be taught:

- what constitutes consent;
- recognising coercive and controlling behaviours;
- challenging harmful stereotypes;
- respectful communication;
- reporting concerns safely;
- understanding the impact of harassment and abuse on victims;
- bystander intervention and seeking support.

This learning is delivered as part of a whole-school safeguarding approach and complements the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for this RSHE policy ultimately lies with the governing body. In school, the implementation of this policy is led by Ms J. Lilley (Assistant Headteacher) alongside the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.

Relationship and Sex Education is taught within the framework of Life and science lessons appropriate to the needs and maturity of the pupils in our care; it is delivered by teachers from across all subject areas, supported by clearly sequenced lesson outlines and regular in-house training. It is vital that RSHE is delivered in partnership with parents as the prime educators for children in many of these matters; the RSHE curriculum will support, complement and reinforce this role. RSHE is taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents, whilst always upholding the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law.

The views of parents are to be considered when developing a Relationship and Sex Education policy, and parents are invited to comment on the extent to which this policy reflects their wishes and the culture of the community served by the school.

The RSHE programme is led by the Head of Department for RE and Life and is taught / supported by all teachers in school, in particular the teachers of Life lessons and Science. Teaching staff receive RSHE training on all aspects of RSHE to support pupils with understanding all parts of the RSHE curriculum.

Curriculum Design

Relationship and Sex Education at Lancaster High School is incorporated into the Life curriculum and focusses on physical, moral and emotional development throughout their teen years into their adult life. to our RSHE programme is the promotion of informative, healthy, inclusive and positive discussions surrounding relationships and sex. It is not about the promotion or condemnation of a particular sexual orientation or sexual activities.

It has three main elements:

1. Attitudes and values
 - Respect for the dignity of every human being
 - Learning the importance of values and individual conscience and freedom
 - Understanding the features and value of healthy, positive, stable and loving friendships and romantic relationships.
 - Understanding the nature of sexual diversity and promoting equality and tolerance of others who may be different to ourselves.
2. Personal and Social skills
 - Reflecting on how to manage and regulate emotions successfully.

- Developing self-respect as well as empathy for others.
- Learning to make informed and healthy choices for oneself.
- Understanding the impact and consequences of personal actions and choices on one's own life and others.
- Communicating and resolving conflict in a constructive, respectful and assertive manner.
- Learning how to recognise and avoid unhealthy, exploitative and abusive relationships. Knowing where and how to seek help or advice for a variety of different RSHE issues.

3. Knowledge and Understanding

- Learning and understanding the normal physical and emotional development during the teen to early adult years.
- Understanding the nature of human sexuality including puberty, reproduction, pregnancy, sexual health, emotional aspects of sexual activity and sexual relationships.
- Promoting an awareness of a variety of sexualities including LGBT+ relationships
- Understanding a range of contraceptive methods.
- Knowing how to access a range of local and national health advice, contraception and support services
- Reflecting on the laws and legal implications of underage or non-consensual sex.
- Understanding how to effectively avoid unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.
- Understanding the emotional impact of pregnancy on a young person/couple's lives.
- Understanding sexual harassment, sexual violence and the importance of consent.
- Understanding the risks associated with pornography, image-based abuse, sextortion and manipulated digital media such as deepfakes.
- Understanding healthy online behaviours and strategies for managing risks associated with social media and digital technologies.
- Understanding mental wellbeing, suicide prevention and how to access support services.
- Understanding menstrual and gynaecological health, fertility, pregnancy, miscarriage and reproductive health.
- Understanding the physical, emotional and legal consequences of sharing sexual images.

Our RSHE programme is planned and delivered through science lessons (those aspects which are part of the National Curriculum for Science) and through Life lessons. We ensure RSHE is matched to the needs of our pupils by continually reviewing the curriculum based on pupil voice surveys facilitated by school and the Health Questionnaire facilitated by the school nurse.

We ensure an age-appropriate RSHE programme by following the guidance provided by the DfE. An overview of learning in each key stage / year group can be found on the school website. RSHE is assessed through a variety of appropriate methods including knowledge tests, ipsative assessment and pupil voice questionnaires.

Safe and Effective Practice

We will ensure a safe learning environment by ensuring that the teacher and pupils agree ground rules for conduct during RSHE lessons, beyond the normal behaviour policy, given the sensitive nature of certain aspects of the RSHE curriculum. Distancing techniques will be employed to ensure that topics covered are based on hypothetical scenarios, rather than being specific to pupils' experiences. Pupils will be made aware of mechanisms for asking questions away from the classroom setting, where required. All staff teaching RSHE will be supported by the senior leadership team and pastoral colleagues as appropriate, especially where potentially sensitive or controversial issues arise.

Teachers will ensure that RSHE is delivered in a way that is sensitive, inclusive and responsive to the needs of pupils. Lessons will be planned carefully to avoid unnecessary personal disclosure. Distancing techniques, case studies and scenarios will be used where appropriate.

Where current safeguarding issues emerge, including sexual harassment, online abuse, misogyny or harmful online trends, the school reserves the right to address these matters outside of the planned curriculum where doing so is necessary to safeguard pupils

All staff teaching RSHE are supported by regular training from the Head of Department and access to training and resources from the PSHE Association. All resources used in lessons are prepared by the Head of Department who is the expert RSHE teacher in school.

Stakeholders

Working collaboratively with parents and carers is fundamental to the successful delivery of RSHE. Parents and carers will be consulted on this policy and informed about the curriculum through the school website and other communication channels. In accordance with statutory guidance, parents have the right to understand what is being taught and may request access to teaching materials used in RSHE lessons. The school will provide opportunities for discussion where parents have questions or concerns regarding curriculum content

From September 2020 the Relationships and Sex curriculum became a compulsory subject and as a result this limited the parental right to withdraw their child from relationships and sex lessons. According to the DfE guidance, a child may only be withdrawn from RSHE topics that

are **not** covered on the National Curriculum for Science. This means it is only possible for children to be withdrawn from specific sections of the programme only.

The policy and curriculum are designed with the Governors. Governors will ensure the RSHE meets statutory requirements, is well led, inclusive and that pupils meet expected standards. Parents and carers are informed about the RSHE policy through consultation via the school bulletin, ClassCharts and representatives on the LGB.

The policy is available to parents and carers through the school website, or a paper copy can be requested from the school office.

Right to withdraw from Sex Education

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from sex education for aspects of sex education which are not part of the science curriculum. There is no right to withdrawal from Relationships Education or Health Education.

Parents/carers have the legal right to withdraw their children from all or part of Sex Education up to and until three terms before the child turns 16 (with the exception of the biological aspects included in national science curriculum).

If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw their child from some or all of sex education, they can contact the Head of Department for RE and Life who will arrange to discuss their concerns either by telephone or face to face to discuss the concerns and reassure the parents of the health and educational benefits of RSHE. As part of this discussion teaching resources and plans can be shared. In most cases this resolves any concerns, but should parents still wish to withdraw their child from RSHE then a request should be made in writing to the Headteacher. All relevant staff will be made aware when a child is withdrawn from the specific topics and a record kept on the child's personal file. Full details of the right to withdraw can be found on the DfE website.

This arrangement will be reviewed annually by the Head of Department in liaison with House Tutor and Head of Year if appropriate. When a child is three terms away from turning 16, and has the right to opt back into Sex Education if they wish, the school will discuss this with parents and the child and follow the wishes of the individual child in question.

Safeguarding

The RSHE policy supports our school's approach to safeguarding and links to/is informed by other policies and statutory and non-statutory guidance for schools, including:

- Anti-Bullying policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy

- Online Safety Policy
- SEND Policy

Documents which inform this RSHE policy include:

- Education Act (1996)
- Department for Education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance (2025, implementation September 2026).
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010),
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition)
- Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and relevant safeguarding guidance relating to child-on-child abuse and sexual harassment.
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)

Teachers are aware that effective RSHE can at times lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue and are regularly reminded of the four R's approach to safeguarding pupils. Each RSHE lesson ends with a slide reminding pupils of the variety of places they can access help and support with any safeguarding issues, including those in school and out of school. Teachers will consult with the designated safeguarding lead where appropriate and always follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Any visitors/external agencies involved in the delivery of RSHE will be made aware of, and will be required to comply with the school's protocols for visitors and safeguarding procedures.

Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

The school's RSHE provision is monitored and evaluated by the Head of Department and Senior Leadership Team through the school Quality Assurance process. This includes reviews of the curriculum, informal monitoring of the implementation of that curriculum and book scrutiny. This evaluation is recorded in BlueSky.

The contribution of visitors and external agencies is monitored and evaluated by staff and pupil feedback. Pupil voice is influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities through pupil voice activities at the end of schemes of learning and through the school's Wellbeing Council.

Policy Review

As part of effective RSHE provision, the RSHE policy should be reviewed annually, or sooner where statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements or local circumstances indicate that an earlier review is necessary. The date of publication and review date are specified on the cover page.