RIVERSIDE SCHOOL
Excellence for All
Headteacher: Andrew Roberts B.Sc. (Hons) | Address: Renwick Road, Barking, IG11 0FU | Web: www.riversidecampus.com
Email: riverside@riverside.bardaglea.org.uk | Tel: 020 3946 5888

Secondary PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) Policy Including Statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Date approved:	To be ratified by the governors Nov 2026
Review Frequency:	Every 2 years
Date next review due:	September 2028
Scope of Policy:	This policy applies to all staff, students and volunteers at Riverside School

1. Aims of PSHE Policy

With our children and young people living in an ever changing online and offline world, facing increasing opportunities and more complex challenges, it has never been more important for us to equip our students with a strong foundation of the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to manage their lives as engaged, respectful, healthy, happy, responsible and successful members of society.

We will achieve this through our PSHE **aims** to support our young people to:

- become confident individuals who know and understand how to live safe, happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.
- understand the importance of self-respect and self-worth; Knowing the importance of personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice.
- foster mutual respect, treating others equally through an appreciation for diversity and tolerance of others.
- learn how to build and maintain safe, positive, respectful, kind and healthy relationships including being able to identify risks and harms, within friendships and intimate and non-intimate relationships both in person and online.
- understand the importance of taking responsibility for one's own health and wellbeing, including financial wellbeing, knowing links and differences between mental and physical health, and using self-care strategies for both
- gain accurate knowledge and understanding about the facts and law about a range of issues including, for example sexuality, sexual health including contraception, biological sex and gender

reassignment, online safety, domestic abuse, carrying knives and weapons, in an age-appropriate and inclusive way

- understand about consent in all relationships, including when developing intimate relationships, and resisting pressure and/or not applying pressure to have sex through respect for others' boundaries use critical thinking skills to understand and analyse information and keep themselves safer in digital and physical spaces
- use critical thinking skills to understand and analyse complex information – to keep themselves safer in digital and physical spaces

1. develop confidence in decision making, understanding consequences, acting on informed choices
2. address concerns, including protecting themselves by asking for help and knowing where and how to get confidential advice and support

- develop financial capabilities and money management skills, including managing financial harms and risks, to achieve economic wellbeing
- understand about becoming responsible citizens who have rights and responsibilities that help them make a positive contribution to society, including in their careers and other future opportunities;
- enjoy successes in their own progress, identifying and achieving academic and personal goals that enable them to thrive in all areas of their lives.

2. Purpose of PSHE Policy

This policy has been written to give clear guidance to staff, outside visitors, parent and carers, and students about our PSHE programme including:

- our overall intention and aims for delivering PSHE, including Relationships, Sex and Health Education
- our definitions for Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education
- guidance for staff and outside visitors about the implementation of PSHE, including content, organisation and principles that guide safe and effective delivery
- information for parents/carers about our full PSHE programme, including specific information on Sex Education, our annual parental consultation procedures and parents' right to withdraw their child from sex education
- our commitment to supporting a skilled delivery team through CPD opportunities
- how we monitor, evaluate and assess PSHE including arrangements for policy review

3. PSHE Policy Development

This policy has been developed by school governors, senior leadership team and PSHE Subject Lead, in line with the latest DfE statutory and non-statutory guidance**.** It has been informed by feedback gathered from school and community stakeholders, including students, parents/carers and wider partners *(see sections 7.4 and 8.2).*

4. Legislation and Guidance

From September 2026 it will be mandatory for all schools to follow the updated DfE Statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Guidance (DfE, July 2026), made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Schools can adopt this early from Sept 2026.

This guidance makes RSE compulsory for all secondary students, and Health Education compulsory for all secondary students other than for those in Independent schools where PSHE is already statutory.

Our PSHE policy complies with these requirements and recommendations to deliver statutory RSE and Health Education, as outlined and delivered through our PSHE curriculum.

5. Links to Other Policies

3. PSHE sits within our whole school approach to supporting students' overall personal development, including their relationships, behaviour and overall safety, health and wellbeing. Within this context, it is important to read this PSHE policy with the following related school policies:

4. Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
5. Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy
6. Online Safety Policy
7. SMSC Policy
8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
9. SEND Information Report
10. Managing Drug Related Incidents Statement

6. Definitions for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

'RSE enables the physical, cultural, social and emotional development of students. It provides young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and positive values to have happy, healthy and safe relationships, both intimate and non-intimate, understand the legal aspects of human

relationships, to enjoy their sexuality, to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being, and to develop an understanding of tolerance and diversity, now and in the future.'

Health Education
Health Education is learning about the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing and the equally important role that each of these play in our everyday lives. It explores the important role that physical health has on our mental health and vice versa. Health Education supports our young people to understand about health-related choices and behaviours, both mentally and physically, and take responsibility for their own in order to be happy, healthy and safe, now and in the future'

7. Implementation of PSHE

7.1 Organisation of PSHE

Our dedicated and trained team of staff within the Civics department teach weekly lessons to all year groups, alongside additional form time discussion points, drop down PHSE days, careers workshops, assemblies, 1 week work experience for year 10s. We have special antibullying events, knife crime workshops.

Where appropriate, external professionals and health specialists support the delivery of sessions, including Speak Out, First Give from, Talk about the future/transition, Speak Up, Just Like Us and Talk Consent.

For the majority of PSHE we deliver whole class lessons, within which we may have smaller, targeted groups or occasional 1:1 sessions, in response to identified needs of specific students. We occasionally deliver in same sex groups, for example when exploring specific or sensitive issues such as puberty, gender stereotypes, although this is followed up with whole class learning, to ensure that students have the opportunity to engage with everybody's ideas, experiences and understanding.

We organise our PSHE programme under 5 headings:

- Relationships and Sex Education - including online
- Health and Wellbeing Education
- Citizenship
- Religious education
- Money and finance
- Careers

See our website for our PSHE Education Curriculum Overviews – click this *link*

7.2 Content of PSHE

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) (KS 3 & 4: Age 11-16 years)

- Families
- Respectful Relationships
- Online Safety and Awareness
- Being Safe
- Intimate and Sexual Relationships, including Sexual Health

Science Curriculum contributing to Sex Education alongside RSE

Key Stage 3 (age 11-14 years)

Students should be taught about:

- Reproduction
    - reproduction in humans (as an example of a mammal), including the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycle (without details of hormones), gametes, fertilisation, gestation and birth, to include the effect of maternal lifestyle on the foetus through the placenta

Key Stage 4 (age 14-16 years)

Students should be taught about:

- Health, disease and the development of medicines;
    - the relationship between health and disease
    - communicable diseases including sexually transmitted infections in humans (including HIV/AIDs); non-communicable diseases; the impact of lifestyle factors on the incidence of non-communicable diseases.
- Coordination and control;
    - principles of hormonal coordination and control in humans, hormones in human reproduction, hormonal and non-hormonal methods of contraception
    - Evolution, inheritance and variation
    - sex determination in humans

Health and Wellbeing Education (KS 3 & 4: Age 11-16 years)

- Mental Wellbeing
- Wellbeing online
- Physical Health and Fitness
- Healthy Eating
- Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Vaping

- Health Protection and Prevention, and Understanding the Healthcare System
- Personal Safety
- Basic First Aid
- Developing Bodies (including Puberty)

Living in the Wider World
(KS 3 & 4: age 11-16 years)

- Economic Wellbeing
- Being a Responsible Citizen
- Careers

7.3 Cross Curricular Links

Through identified cross curricular links with relevant subjects, including Science, ICT, food teach, history and English, we further complement, reinforce and extend our students' PSHE learning through related contexts, being clear not to duplicate or repeat any learning.

Consultation and Adaptations to the PSHE Curriculum

The organisation of our PSHE curriculum is flexible where needed, allowing us to respond to the feedback gathered by school and community stakeholders, alongside emerging concerns, relevant local health information, community issues, and/or news related events.

We regularly engage our students, parents/carers and wider stakeholders in the review and development of our PSHE curriculum, as follows:

- Student consultation – Annual survey of all y7-10 during civics lesson at the end of the year.
- *Biennial boroughwide anonymous survey of year 8,10 & 12.*
- Parental consultation – Annual update of Civics padlet.
- Community partners – PHSE association membership,

As a result of feedback gathered this year, we have adapted our PSHE curriculum 2026 with the following changes;

Example list: adapt to include areas that you have prioritised through your latest consultation findings

- Assemblies on consent for all year groups year 7-11
- Online exploitation – year 9.
- Continued collaboration between our student leadership team and the Ben Kinsella trust addressing student concern with knife crime.
- The rise of AI, fake content and its impact on relationship, student wellbeing and future employment.
- Add any point raised via the SHEU survey

8. Issues Specific to Sex Education

8.1 Engaging and Consulting with Parents/Carers

On entry to the school, parents/carers are invited to read our PSHE policy, including our approach to RSE. We place the utmost importance on sharing equal and joint responsibility with parents/carers for their children's education, including sexual matters, and as such we establish open and transparent engagement, keeping all parents/carers fully informed of the content and delivery of our PSHE curriculum, reinforcing this dual responsibility for PSHE learning.
We do our best to find out any religious or cultural views parents/carers may have, which may affect the Sex Education they wish to be given to their children, and we always carefully consider any request that compromises our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

We take every opportunity to inform and involve parents/carers, providing transparency of the content and delivery of our relationships, sex and health education, in the following ways:

1. By creating a padlet that outlines all the topic taught in Y7-12.
2. Parent feedback taken during parents evening
3. Governor's meeting
4. Text message to alert parents of updates.

8.2 Parental Right to Withdraw from Sex Education

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from all or some of Sex Education. As such, parents/carers are specifically made aware of their right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education lessons that we deliver within statutory RSE, but not from those lessons which fall under the statutory science, relationships or health education curriculum (refer to section 8.1).

To confirm, statutory Relationships Education does not involve explaining the detail of different forms of sexual activity, but can cover sensitive topics such as sexual violence, in order to keep young people safe.

The parental right to withdraw your child applies up until three terms before your child turns 16. After that point, if the young person wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, they have the statutory right to request to do so without their parents/carers being notified or seeking their permission. At these times, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those three terms.
These are the only lessons that students can be withdrawn from:

Year 7: Term 2 1st half term:

L1: Puberty and managing emotional changes

Term 2 2nd half term

L1: Deciding what to watch

L2: Relationships on screen

Year 8: Term 2 2nd half term:

L2: Sexualised media

L3: Safer online relationships

L4: Sexual harassment and online behaviour

Year 9: Term 3 1st half term:

L1: Consent – avoiding assumptions

L2: Consent – Freedom & capacity

L5: Feelings about sharing nudes

Year 10: Term 3 1st half term (subject to student's birthday)

L1: Role of intimate pleasure

L2: The impact of pornography

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any lessons on Relationships or Health Education.

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from Sex Education we ask that they discuss it with the Head Teacher, and with the young person if appropriate, and then complete a 'Request for Withdrawal from Sex Education Lessons' form, Appendix 1 of this policy, and send this to the headteacher. Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

8.3 Supporting Students withdrawn from Sex Education

Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.
We encourage curiosity in young people as it is an important part of their learning and we recognise that students who have been withdrawn from these lessons may ask questions outside of the lesson time related to sex education. We feel it is important to answer questions honestly, with factual information and in an age appropriate way. If we have a concern with regards to safeguarding due to the nature of a question we would follow our safeguarding procedures. We need to be mindful that young people who don't have their questions answered may look to other sources for information, such as other students, the internet or social media, which might provide inaccurate information.

9. Principles for the Safe and Effective Delivery of PSHE

9.1 Creating a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment

PSHE often works within students' real life experiences, addressing a wide range of personal, social, emotional and health issues. A safe, supportive and respectful learning environment is created by establishing clear ground rules, developed and agreed with all students in each learning group across the school. These ground rules are referred to during PSHE lessons. This helps secure an atmosphere within which students feel able to discuss ideas, share feelings, raise concerns, explore sensitive or challenging issues.

9.2 Safeguarding and Confidentiality

Discussions about a wide range of PSHE issues, including sensitive areas, may lead to personal disclosures and increased safeguarding reports, for example students may indicate in some way that they are vulnerable or at risk. In these circumstances staff are aware that they must refer to the school's Safeguarding/Child Protection policy and procedures, in line with the current DfE guidance 6 *(update as necessary),* to ensure that they are clear about what is required in such circumstances. Staff will work

within the school's agreed procedure for recording and reporting disclosures and the nature of access to this information.

The school will ensure that staff understand that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality to students, and that the students themselves know that teachers cannot offer them unconditional confidentiality, whilst always being reassured that their best interests will be maintained. The students will be reminded that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported as appropriate. They are encouraged to talk to their parents/carers and other trusted adults, and are provided with support to do so.

9.3 A skilled PSHE Delivery Team

To maintain the high quality, effective delivery of our programme, we provide a range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)s opportunities for our staff to develop the high level of knowledge, skills and confidence needed to teach PSHE effectively, particularly the more complex, sensitive and challenging areas. This is achieved through a range of CPD activities, including:

- Induction programme for ECT/ITT new staff.
- on-site staff training during twilight,
- interactive specialist half termly training for all civics teachers focusing on skills and
- 1-1 support to teachers who are found to struggle.
- We ensure to draw on the expertise and specialism of relevant local and national organisations where possible to support our training and development programmes.

9.4 Participative and Interactive Learning Approaches

Active, interactive and participative learning approaches are particularly effective for engaging students with the wide range of personal, social, emotional and health related issues in PSHE, particularly when addressing the more sensitive and complex content. Our skilled staff, along with our external partners, use a wide range of teaching and learning activities, within the boundaries of the agreed ground rules, to effectively engage students including, for example through structured or open discussion, games, role-play, group debates, use of technology for mock interviews, blogs or vlogs, online games, alongside pupil presentations, the use of literature and visits by theatre groups.

9.5 Choosing Resources

Resources used in PSHE, including those used by our external partners, are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are up to date, relevant, age and stage appropriate, and accessible for all students. We take into account how the language, cultural attitudes and images within our resources are inclusive and unbiased, avoiding any form of discrimination, misinformation, or promotion of harmful content in any way.

9.6 External Organisations and Partners

We work with a range of various external organisations to enhance the delivery of PSHE across our planned programme, in order to bring in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging our young people. Our partnership approach ensures that the activities and resources used by external organisations are delivered in accordance with the aims of this policy and the content of our planned programme. All external contributions complement the teaching delivered by our own staff, to enhance and enrich the overall experience of our students.

All external contributors are made aware of our confidentiality and safeguarding policies to ensure any safeguarding issues that arise are dealt with in line with school policy and procedure.

9.7 Responding to All Students' Questions

We will ensure to respond to all students' questions in the most appropriate manner, with an emphasis on supporting the child. The form in which questions are addressed may be in smaller group activities, or on a one-to-one basis, as appropriate. We recognise that if children's questions go unanswered, particularly in relation to content not covered in our curriculum of from those students who have been withdrawn (see section 9.5) they are likely to turn to other sources of support which may be unreliable, so no question will be disregarded. We will encourage children to talk to their own parents/carers or a trusted adult, or signpost them to organisations, for further information/support.

9.8 Meeting the Needs of SEND Learners

PSHE lessons need to be accessible to all students including those with special educational needs and disabilities. The SEND code of practice outlines the need for schools to prepare children for adulthood outcomes. These students can be more vulnerable to exploitation and bullying which means that sensitive and age-appropriate Relationships and Health Education is an essential part of their learning. We will ensure that our curriculum is accessible to all students by adapting content and pace of learning where needed, using varying appropriate resources, adapting small group work, providing 1:1 support, and delivering relevant CPD for all staff.

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

As an inclusive school we value the difference and diversity of our community and the wider world. Within our PSHE programme we teach and promote equality, tolerance, respect and the prevention of discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Equalities Act and Schools Guidance 2010.

Within this duty to foster an understanding of equality and respect, we ensure that all students grasp the concept of protected characteristics as directed under British law, in an age appropriate way, and to avoid discrimination based on any of these characteristics, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion of belief, sex and sexual orientation. We also promote British values within our whole school aims and values. The personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence the teaching of any elements of PSHE.

Within the RSE elements of our programme, young people are supported and guided in lifelong learning about relationships, emotions, the human biology of sex, sexuality and sexual health. Along with parents/carers, we aim to help our young people to understand and manage their physical and emotional development in adolescence and prepare for the decisions to be made in adult life, and to learn the communication skills necessary to help them take increasing responsibility for their own sexual behaviour.

We recognise and value our diverse community at school, valuing all our young people, parents/carers, staff and visitors who may be, for example, from varying backgrounds, faiths, heritages, who are LGBTQ+, who are in different types of families such as single parents/carers or those who are married or in civil partnerships, children living in care, or young carers, or those living in poverty. In exploring and developing a wide range of issues related to acceptance, tolerance, and the avoidance of discrimination, our young people can live respectfully with all members of the community, in preparation for their lives in a globally connected world.

11. Impact: Monitoring, Evaluating and Assessing PSHE

The PSHE Lead will be responsible for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the teaching and learning in PSHE and measuring the progress and outcomes of pupils within PSHE as follows:

11. ensuring the policy and pprogrammes of studys are implemented as agreed
12. monitoring and evaluating the teaching of PSHE through learning walks, leadership evaluation and lesson observations.
13. ensuring assessment is built into the PSHE teaching and programmes of study in all year groups, including before and after exit card to allow students to identify areas they have improved in and what they still need to work on. Continued use of AFL and mini white board to check student understanding in line with the school's assessment procedures
14. The use of annual student and staff surveys inform the curriculum to suit our context.
15. Our biennial borough survey allows us to survey impact over time on bigger societal issues.

12. Disseminating and Reviewing the PSHE Policy

A copy of this policy will be supplied to all staff and governors. A full copy will be published on the school website and made freely available to parents/carers and partners on request.

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the governors, senior leadership team and PSHE lead, informed by feedback gathered from the students, parents/carers and partners.