Werneth School

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy (RSE)

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1. Statement of Intent

At Werneth School, we understand the importance of educating pupils about sex, relationships and their health, for them to make responsible and well-informed decisions in their lives. The teaching of RSE and health education prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life. It allows us to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils at school and in wider society.

RSHE is predominantly taught in our Life Learning curriculum to all students in Years 7–11 and during our Form Time curriculum once per week. We provide high-quality, evidence-based, and age-appropriate teaching.

Statutory Guidance Alignment:

Statutory Update (September 2026):

The delivery of this curriculum is underpinned by the DfE's 7 evidence-based Guiding Principles. Werneth School takes a positive approach that builds healthy norms and avoids language that normalises harmful behaviours. Crucially, we anchor our curriculum sequence using Engagement with Pupils (Pupil Voice) to ensure content remains relevant, safe, and adaptive to the local context.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2025/2026) 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' (Statutory guidance in effect September 2026)
- DfE (2015) 'National curriculum in England: science programmes of study'
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019

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- Children and Social Work Act 2017

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy & Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy & Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding Policy & Confidentiality Policy
- E-safety and Acceptable Use Policy

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- Ensuring the RSHE curriculum is well-led, effectively managed, and well-planned.
- Evaluating provision quality through regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Ensuring that teaching is accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND.
- Providing clear transparency to parents regarding subject content and withdrawal rights.
- Ensuring RSHE is resourced, staffed, and timetabled effectively.

The Principal is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring all staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects safely.
- Ensuring parents are fully informed of the curriculum and sample materials.
- Reviewing and managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory sex education components.

The Life Learning Subject Leader and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) are responsible for:

- Overseeing the delivery of RSHE and tracking curriculum progression across year groups.
- Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate, high-quality, and reflective of local trends.

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- Providing teachers with adequate resources, guidance, and continuous professional development (CPD).
- Monitoring the delivery of sensitive topics, ensuring safeguarding disclosures are actioned immediately.

Subject Teachers are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in an inclusive, factual, and non-judgemental tone.
- Ensuring they do not express personal views or beliefs when delivering content.
- Liaising with the SENCO to modify resources for individual student needs.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures immediately to the DSL.

4. Organisation of the RSHE Curriculum

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): Defined as teaching pupils about developing healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, helping them understand human sexuality, and encouraging respect for themselves and others.

Health Education: Defined as teaching pupils about how they can make good choices regarding their physical health and mental wellbeing, highlighting how the two are interlinked.

The majority of the curriculum is delivered through Life Learning lessons and weekly Form Time sessions, supplemented by statutory elements in the Science, ICT, PE, and Food Technology curriculums. The Life Learning subject leader ensures clear sequencing to prevent unnecessary duplication.

5. RSE Subject Overview

By the end of secondary school, pupils will study:

Families and Respectful Relationships

- The characteristics and benefits of stable, long-term relationships, including the legal rights and protections surrounding marriage and cohabitation.
- The characteristics of positive friendships (online and offline), including trust, boundaries, consent, and conflict management.

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- Prevention of Harassment: Recognising criminal relationship behaviours, coercive control, sexual harassment, and sexual violence, reinforcing that these are always unacceptable.

Online Wellbeing and Media (Updated)

- AI Literacy & Deception: Understanding the risks of AI chatbots, fake accounts, and deepfakes (AI-manipulated media used to impersonate individuals).
- Tackling Misogyny & Incel Culture: Identifying and challenging online misogyny, toxic subcultures, and incel ideology, and evaluating their harmful impacts on boys, girls, and sexual ethics.
- Financial & Digital Harms: Understanding the risks associated with online fraud, scams, identity data exploitation, and digital sextortion.
- Pornography: Objective teaching on how sexually explicit material distorts views of healthy relationships, creates misconceptions, and causes emotional harm.

Intimate Relationships, Consent, and the Law

- The concepts and legal realities of sexual consent, exploitation, abuse, grooming, forced marriage, and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- Impartial, medically accurate facts regarding contraception, pregnancy choices (including abortion and adoption), and the transmission, prevention, and treatment of STIs.

6. Health Education Subject Overview

By the end of secondary school, pupils will study:

General & Mental Wellbeing (Updated)

- How to discuss emotions accurately and spot early indicators of mental health concerns like anxiety and depression.
- Suicide Prevention: Safe, age-appropriate, and preventative learning regarding self-harm, eating disorders, and suicide prevention, delivered by staff specifically prepared to handle the topic safely.
- Strategies for navigating grief, loss, and bereavement.

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Physical Health and the Changing Body (Updated)

- Gynaecological & Menstrual Health: Enhanced focus on menstrual wellbeing, pelvic floor health, and conditions such as endometriosis and the menopause.
- Health Protection & Autonomy: The scientific evidence supporting vaccines and immunisations. Understanding Gillick competency and how young people can confidentially access healthcare services.
- Addiction Awareness: Facts on legal/illegal drugs, including a dedicated focus on the dangers of vaping, nicotine addiction, and prescription drug misuse.

Personal Safety (New Section)

- Risk Management: Developing safety literacy regarding fire safety, water safety, road safety, and rail awareness.
- Conflict Resolution: Understanding the laws, risks, and avoidance strategies related to knife crime, gangs, and physical conflict resolution.

7. Delivery of the Curriculum

Sequencing: Knowledge is sectioned into manageable units sequenced within a clear framework of progression.

Inclusivity & Neutrality: RSHE is delivered factually and inclusively. Werneth School maintains the objective distinction between biological sex and gender reassignment in line with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring staff do not teach contentious gender theories as established facts.

LGBTQ+ Content: LGBTQ+ content is naturally integrated into the core curriculum sequence (e.g., covering diverse family structures and stable same-sex relationships) rather than being taught as an isolated or standalone topic.

8. Curriculum Links

RSHE delivery is explicitly mapped across multiple disciplines to enhance reinforcement:

- Science: Biological facts of reproduction, puberty, anatomy, and disease prevention.
- ICT & Computing: Data privacy, identifying AI manipulation, digital safety, and reporting online abuse.

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- PE & Food Technology: Physical fitness, body image, nutrition, and healthy weights.

9. Working with Parents (Updated)

Werneth School operates on a foundational commitment to parental transparency.

- All RSHE curriculum overviews, term maps, and exact sample teaching resources are accessible to parents via the school's online learning portal.
- The school proactively communicates upcoming sensitive topics and hosts engagement opportunities where parents can review materials and consult directly with the Life Learning subject leaders.

10. Working with External Agencies

External experts may be brought in to enrich instruction, provided they:

- Have their credentials and resources fully checked by the school leadership team ahead of time.
- Align completely with the provisions, tone, and objective requirements of this policy.
- Never replace standard classroom teachers, but rather work in tandem with them.

11. Withdrawal from Lessons

- Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education components delivered within statutory RSE.
- There is no right to withdraw from relationships education or health education components.
- Requests must be made in writing to the Principal. Before any request is approved, the Principal will discuss the matter with parents to clarify the curriculum purpose and highlight the educational benefits.
- Alternative, purposeful educational provision is provided to any student withdrawn for the duration of those specific lessons.

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12. Equality and Accessibility

The school ensures that the RSHE curriculum complies fully with the Equality Act 2010. The curriculum is built to protect all individuals regardless of age, sex, race, disability, religion, gender reassignment, or sexual orientation.

- SEND Allocations: The curriculum is adapted carefully alongside the SENCO to ensure accessible delivery for pupils with learning difficulties or physical vulnerabilities.
- Challenging Norms: Lessons actively break down harmful gender stereotypes, promote mutual respect, and explicitly reinforce that sexual violence and harassment will not be tolerated.

13. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

While teachers respect classroom confidentiality, RSHE topics can trigger safeguarding disclosures.

- Teachers cannot promise absolute secrecy to a pupil.
- If a safeguarding risk or disclosure occurs, staff are mandated to report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

14. Assessment

Werneth School maintains high standards of work for RSHE, matching other academic subjects.

- No formal public examinations are sat for RSHE.
- Student progress is evaluated via structured "confidence checks" mapped against lesson learning objectives.
- Quality of learning is monitored routinely through exercise book scrutiny, lesson walks, and student focus group interviews.

15. Staff Training

Regular CPD training is coordinated by the Life Learning subject leaders to keep delivery staff abreast of changing societal dynamics, technological developments, and statutory criteria.

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- Specific Preparation: Prior to teaching sensitive areas like suicide prevention or online exploitation, the school ensures delivery staff possess the explicit skills, emotional literacy, and preventative training required to lead sessions safely.

16. Monitoring Quality

The monitoring of teaching standards and learning efficacy remains the responsibility of the Life Learning subject leader and Senior Leadership Team (SLT). This includes a combination of annual self-evaluations, formal lesson observations, topic feedback forms, and strategic learning audits.

17. Monitoring and Review

This policy undergoes a full review on an annual basis to ensure it dynamically adapts to emerging legal changes and pupil needs.

- Note: In line with the DfE updates, the structural framework will adapt to the DfE's scheduled formal content reviews to assure ongoing legal and safeguarding compliance.

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