



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

RSHE Policy

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education
2026–27

Document Control

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Approved by	Trust Board, 08 October 2026
Next review	September 2027, or sooner if statutory guidance changes

What has changed in version 2.0

- Renamed as the RSHE Policy and rewritten for the revised DfE statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (July 2025), which schools must follow from September 2026. It replaces the 2019 guidance.
- New content required at primary level is reflected, including communicating needs and boundaries, change, loss and grief, correct names for body parts, online safety, and the inclusion of different family structures, including same-sex parents.
- Greater transparency for parents: the curriculum overview and teaching materials, including those from external visitors, are available to view, and parents are consulted on this policy.
- The right to withdraw from non-statutory sex education is set out clearly, with a request form (Appendix B). In a primary school, the Principal will grant such requests.
- The FGM reporting duty is corrected: it is a personal duty on the teacher to report to the police. Safeguarding, confidentiality and disclosure procedures are aligned with KCSIE 2026 and the Child Protection Policy.
- Governance terminology changed to the Trust Board; the RSHE Co-ordinator is named; out-of-date references (the 2019 guidance, remote learning arrangements) are removed; and the missing appendices are replaced.

1. Aims

At Sparken Hill Academy, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) helps children to develop the knowledge, skills and values they need to lead confident, healthy, safe and independent lives, and to become informed, active and responsible citizens. Understanding healthy and respectful relationships and appropriate boundaries is central to our safeguarding and to our aim of helping every child grow into a confident, caring and respectful young person.

Our RSHE aims to:

- provide a consistent, high-quality programme of relationships and health education across the school;
- help pupils develop self-respect, confidence, empathy and resilience;
- develop the skills to communicate effectively, express their needs and set boundaries, and to recognise when a relationship is unhealthy or unsafe;
- create a positive culture of communication about relationships, bodies and health;
- teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies, so that they can stay safe and seek help;
- provide a safe framework in which sensitive discussions can take place;
- prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of their changing bodies, health and hygiene;
- give pupils an age-appropriate understanding of reproduction before they move to secondary school;
- help pupils understand how to stay safe online, and how to recognise and report harm; and
- help protect pupils from abuse and exploitation by teaching them how to recognise it and whom to tell.

2. Statutory Requirements

As an academy, Sparken Hill must provide Relationships Education and Health Education to all pupils, under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the associated regulations. We have regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (July 2025), which schools must follow from September 2026.

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, other than the elements included in the science national curriculum. The statutory guidance recommends that all primary schools have a sex education programme tailored to the age and maturity of pupils, so that boys and girls are prepared for the changes adolescence brings and understand how a baby is conceived and born. Our approach is set out in Section 5.

This policy also has regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice, the Education Act 2002 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and fundamental British values) and the science national curriculum.

3. Definitions

Relationships Education	Teaching about the building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults, including online.
Health Education	Teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing, the link between them, and how to make healthy choices. It includes the changing adolescent body (puberty), including menstruation.

Sex Education	Teaching pupils how human reproduction occurs, including how a baby is conceived and born, beyond what is covered in science.
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RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

4. Curriculum\

RSHE is taught mainly through our planned PSHE curriculum (PSHE Association SoW – adapted by Sparken Hill and augmented by resources from Kapow. This is supported by science, computing, PE, RE, circle time, assemblies and stories. The curriculum is sequenced so that learning builds from the Foundation Stage to Year 6, and is adapted to the age, needs and circumstances of our pupils. A curriculum overview is published on the Academy website (Appendix A sets out the key elements by year group).

Relationships Education

- **Families and people who care for me:** the importance of family and of stable, caring relationships; that families can look different, including families with single parents, same-sex parents, grandparents, adoptive or foster parents and carers, and that these differences should be respected; and how to seek help if family relationships make them feel unhappy or unsafe.
- **Caring friendships:** what makes a good friend, how to make and keep friends, how to manage conflict and repair friendships, and how to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable.
- **Respectful relationships:** respecting others who are different from them, courtesy and manners, self-respect, the different types of bullying and the role of bystanders, stereotypes, and seeking and giving permission. This includes communicating effectively, and being assertive in expressing their needs and boundaries.
- **Online safety and awareness:** that people can behave differently online, the same principles of respect apply online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, how information and images are shared, that not everything online is true, and how to report concerns.
- **Being safe:** appropriate boundaries, privacy, and that it is not always right to keep secrets; that each person's body belongs to them; the difference between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe contact; how to respond to adults they do not know; and how to report concerns or abuse, keeping on telling until they are heard. Pupils are taught the correct names for body parts, including external genitalia, so that they have the vocabulary to keep themselves safe and seek help.

Health Education

- Mental wellbeing, including recognising and talking about feelings, the benefits of physical activity, time outdoors and good sleep, loneliness, and where to get help. This includes change, loss and grief, and that everyone grieves differently.
- Online safety and harms, including the benefits and risks of the internet, screen time, and how to be a discerning consumer of information.
- Physical health and fitness, healthy eating, and the risks of an inactive lifestyle.
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco, including the risks of vaping.
- Health and prevention, including hygiene, dental health, sun safety, sleep and immunisation.
- Basic first aid, including how to call for help in an emergency.
- The changing adolescent body: puberty, the physical and emotional changes it brings, and menstruation, taught before most pupils reach puberty.

Children are taught about families and relationships in a way that ensures no child is stigmatised because of their home circumstances, and that reflects sensitively the circumstances of children who are looked after, young carers, or who have experienced loss. Teaching about sex and about

the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 is factual, age-appropriate and in line with the statutory guidance.

5. Science and Sex Education

Science national curriculum (statutory)

In the Foundation Stage, children learn about life cycles and, through personal, social and emotional development, how to form positive relationships. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to name the main parts of the body, that animals including humans have offspring which grow into adults, and about the basic needs of humans, exercise, diet and hygiene. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn about nutrition, the skeleton and muscles, digestion, teeth, the circulatory system, the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle, reproduction in some plants and animals, and the changes as humans develop to old age.

Puberty (statutory Health Education)

Puberty is taught in an age-appropriate way from Year 4 so that pupils learn about the physical and emotional changes, including menstruation, before most of them experience them. Learning is revisited and extended in Years 5 and 6.

Sex education (non-statutory)

Because we believe children should understand the facts about human reproduction before they leave primary school, we teach some non-statutory sex education in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are taught:

- that for a baby to begin to grow, part comes from a mother and part from a father, and that in humans the baby grows inside the mother;
- that when a sperm and an egg meet, this is called conception, that conception usually happens as a result of sexual intercourse, and what sexual intercourse means;
- how a baby develops in the womb and how babies are born.

This helps prepare pupils for secondary school and supports their personal and social development. Parents may withdraw their child from these lessons (Section 9). Resources for these lessons, including Growing Up with Yasmine and Tom, can be viewed on request from the RSHE Co-ordinator.

6. Delivery

RSHE is taught by class teachers, who know their pupils well, in a safe and supportive environment. Lessons are usually taught in mixed groups. Some content, such as menstruation and some question sessions, may also be covered in single-sex groups.

Ground rules are agreed with each class and revisited at the start of relevant lessons. As a minimum they include: listening to each other; everyone has the right to speak and the right not to; respecting everyone's contributions; not asking or answering personal questions; and using the correct vocabulary once it has been taught.

Questions and sensitive issues

Questions are answered honestly, sensitively and in an age-appropriate way. An anonymous question box is used in RSHE lessons. Where a question falls outside the planned curriculum or is not appropriate to answer in front of the class, staff may use distancing techniques, answer the child individually, or refer the child back to their parents, in which case the teacher will let the parents

know the context. Staff who are unsure how to answer a question will discuss it with the RSHE Co-ordinator or a senior leader first.

External visitors

External visitors, such as the school nursing team, the NSPCC or the police, may support the programme. They are managed under the Visitors and VIPs procedure. Their materials are checked in advance to ensure they are age-appropriate and in line with this policy. A member of staff is always present, and parents can view the materials on request.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board	Approves this policy and holds the Principal to account for its implementation.
Principal	Ensures RSHE is taught consistently and well, that staff are trained, that parents are consulted and informed, and manages requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory sex education.
RSHE Co-ordinator (Hannah Bridges)	Leads the curriculum, supports and trains staff, keeps resources up to date and in line with the statutory guidance, and makes materials available to parents.
Class teachers	Deliver RSHE sensitively and consistently, respond to pupils' individual needs, respond appropriately to pupils who are withdrawn, and assess pupils' progress. Teachers do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Any concerns are discussed with the Principal.
All staff	Model positive, respectful relationships, challenge discriminatory language and behaviour, and report any safeguarding concern to a DSL.
Pupils	Engage fully in RSHE and treat others with respect and sensitivity.

8. Working with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are the first educators of their children about relationships and growing up. We work in partnership with them by:

- consulting parents and carers on this policy and the RSHE curriculum;
- publishing this policy and a curriculum overview on the Academy website;
- telling parents before relevant units, particularly puberty and sex education, are taught;
- making all teaching materials, including those used by external visitors, available for parents to view on request;
- answering parents' questions and taking seriously any concerns they raise.

9. Right to Withdraw

Parents cannot withdraw their child from Relationships Education, Health Education (including puberty) or the science national curriculum, which are statutory.

Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of the non-statutory sex education described in Section 5. Parents are invited to discuss the request with the class teacher or RSHE Co-ordinator, who will explain what is taught and the possible impact of withdrawal. Requests should be made in writing to the Principal using the form at Appendix B. In a primary school, the Principal will grant the request. A record of pupils who have been withdrawn is kept and shared with the teachers concerned. Pupils who are withdrawn are given appropriate alternative work in another class. Parents may withdraw a request at any time.

10. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

RSHE helps pupils recognise abuse and know how to seek help, and may lead to disclosures. Staff cannot promise confidentiality. Any disclosure or concern, including concerns about harmful sexual behaviour, child-on-child abuse or online harm, is reported immediately to a DSL and recorded on CPOMS, in line with the Child Protection Policy and the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy. Pupils can also raise worries with any trusted adult, through the Worry Boxes in each corridor, the QR posters in Key Stage 2, or the Year 6 Worry Ambassadors.

Where a teacher discovers that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18, they have a personal, mandatory duty to report this to the police (by calling 101). This duty cannot be passed to the DSL, although the teacher should also inform a DSL.

11. Inclusion, SEND and Equality

RSHE is accessible to all pupils. Teaching is adapted for pupils with SEND, who may be more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and may need additional or repeated teaching, visual resources or small-group work. This is planned with the phase SENCO.

RSHE is taught in line with the Equality Act 2010. Teaching is factual and age-appropriate, reflects the law and the diversity of families in our community, and does not promote any particular viewpoint. Pupils are taught to respect the beliefs and choices of others, even where they differ from their own. The personal beliefs of staff do not influence the teaching of RSHE. Materials are chosen to reflect the diversity of our community, and stereotypes and discrimination are always challenged.

12. The School Environment

- Displays and resources use positive images and celebrate difference and diversity.
- Pupils can raise questions and worries privately, through the RSHE question box and the Worry Boxes in each corridor.
- Pupils know how to approach staff, and communication between staff and pupils is welcomed.
- Period products and appropriate sanitary disposal facilities are available free of charge for pupils who need them.
- Discriminatory language and behaviour are always challenged.

13. Monitoring, Training and Review

The RSHE Co-ordinator and senior leaders monitor the quality of RSHE through planning reviews, learning walks, pupil voice and work sampling. Pupils' learning is assessed by class teachers. Staff receive training on the curriculum, on handling sensitive questions, and on responding to disclosures, as part of the Academy's CPD programme.

Parents who have concerns about RSHE should speak to the class teacher or RSHE Co-ordinator first, and may use the Complaints Policy if the matter is not resolved.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Principal and the RSHE Co-ordinator, in consultation with parents, and approved by the Trust Board.

14. Linked Policies

- Child Protection Policy 2026–27 and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Relationships and Behaviour Regulation Policy

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- SEND Policy and Equality Policy
- Visitors and VIPs procedure
- Complaints Policy

Appendix A: RSHE Curriculum Overview by Year Group

This overview summarises how key elements are sequenced. The full curriculum map is published on the Academy website

Year	Relationships and Health Education (statutory)	Puberty, science and sex education
Foundation Stage	Friendships, feelings, families, keeping safe, caring for ourselves (EYFS PSED)	Life cycles; naming body parts
Year 1	Families and people who care for us; being a good friend; personal hygiene; asking for help	Naming the main parts of the body, including correct names for external genitalia
Year 2	Respecting differences; privacy and appropriate touch; online safety; feelings	Science: humans have offspring which grow into adults
Year 3	Respectful relationships; bullying and bystanders; healthy lifestyles; change and loss	Body changes as we grow
Year 4	Communicating needs and boundaries; online relationships; mental wellbeing	Puberty introduced, including menstruation
Year 5	Stereotypes; managing friendships; online safety and information; drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping	Puberty: physical and emotional changes, menstruation. Science: changes as humans develop to old age; reproduction in plants and animals. Sex education (non-statutory): conception
Year 6	Healthy relationships; privacy, consent and permission; preparing for secondary school; first aid	Puberty revisited, including emotional changes. Sex education (non-statutory): conception, pregnancy and birth

Appendix B: Parental Request to Withdraw from Non-Statutory Sex Education

This form applies only to the non-statutory sex education lessons described in Section 5 of the RSHE Policy. Relationships Education, Health Education (including puberty) and science are statutory, and pupils cannot be withdrawn from them.

Pupil name	
Class	
Parent / carer name	
Lessons you wish your child to be withdrawn from	☐ All non-statutory sex education ☐ Specific lessons (please give details below)
Reason for request (optional)	
Have you discussed this with the class teacher or RSHE Co-ordinator?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Parent / carer signature and date	

For Academy use

Request received by / date	
Agreed by the Principal / date	
Alternative arrangements	
Class teacher informed / withdrawal register updated	