



Bowden House School

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

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Agreed by the schools governing body and minuted at their meeting.

Agreed: Summer Term 2026

Review date: Autumn Term 2027

Statement of intent

At Bowden House School, we recognise the vital role that high-quality Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) plays in supporting pupils' personal development, wellbeing and safeguarding. RSHE supports pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and values they need to form positive, respectful and healthy relationships, to keep themselves and others safe, and to make informed and ethical decisions throughout their lives.

This policy has been updated in line with the **DfE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance (July 2025)** and reflects statutory requirements coming into force from **September 2026**, which Bowden House School has chosen to adopt early.

RSHE is delivered in a way that reflects our therapeutic, trauma-informed ethos and our *Stage Not Age* curriculum model. Teaching is inclusive, age- and stage-appropriate, and responsive to the needs, vulnerabilities and lived experiences of our pupils.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty
- Human Rights Act 1998
- DfE (2025) *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education – Statutory Guidance*
- DfE *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (current edition)

This policy operates alongside the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality and Accessibility Policy

2. Definition of RSHE

For the purpose of this policy:

- **RSHE** refers to the planned program of Relationships, Sex and Health Education.
- **Relationships Education** focuses on developing pupils' understanding of positive relationships, respect, boundaries and safety.
- **Sex Education** (secondary) includes factual, legally accurate learning about intimate relationships, sexual health, reproduction and consent.
- **Health Education** focuses on physical health, mental wellbeing, online safety and healthy lifestyles.

RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity. It is about equipping pupils with the knowledge, skills and values they need to thrive, stay safe and build healthy relationships.

3. Aims of the Policy

RSHE at Bowden House School aims to:

- Support pupils' emotional, social, mental and physical development
- Promote self-respect, resilience, empathy, kindness and integrity
- Help pupils recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Teach pupils how to stay safe, including online
- Provide accurate, evidence-based information
- Support safeguarding by enabling pupils to recognise and report abuse or harm
- Prepare pupils for the responsibilities and opportunities of adult life

4. Statutory Requirements

As a secondary school, Bowden House School provides **statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)** and **Health Education** to all pupils.

Parents **cannot withdraw** pupils from: -

- Relationships Education

- Health Education
- Content taught as part of the science curriculum

Parents **may request withdrawal** from non-statutory elements of sex education, subject to the provisions outlined in Section 10 of this policy.

5. Curriculum Organisation

RSHE is delivered primarily through:

- RSHE/PSHE lessons
- Science (biological aspects of sex education)
- Complementary curriculum areas where appropriate

The curriculum:

- Is sequenced carefully to build knowledge over time
- Is adapted to pupils' developmental stage rather than age alone
- Reflects local and national safeguarding priorities
- Is inclusive of different family structures, identities and experiences

A detailed curriculum overview is provided in **Appendix 1**.

6. Curriculum Content

Relationships Education

Pupils will learn about:

- Families and committed relationships (including marriage and civil partnership)
- Respectful relationships, kindness, empathy and tolerance
- Consent, boundaries and power dynamics
- Bullying, prejudice, misogyny and harmful stereotypes
- Ending relationships safely and respectfully
- Understanding the characteristics of healthy intimate relationships, including respect, consent, trust, communication, equality and the importance of mutual care and responsibility.

Online Safety and Awareness

Pupils will learn:

- How online behaviour mirrors offline expectations
- Risks of sharing images and personal data
- The law relating to sexual images, including AI-generated imagery and deepfakes
- Grooming, sextortion and online sexual harassment
- How to report concerns and access support

Being Safe

Pupils will learn:

- How to recognise abuse, exploitation and coercive control
- The law relating to consent, sexual offences, forced marriage and FGM
- How to seek help and report safeguarding concerns

Health Education

Statutory Health Education Content:

As part of statutory Health Education, pupils are taught factual, age-appropriate information about sexual health, contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including how to access support services.

Pupils also learn about pregnancy and the range of choices available when someone becomes pregnant, including parenting, adoption and abortion. This content is delivered in a factual, balanced and impartial manner.

Teaching also explores how alcohol and drugs can impair judgement, increase vulnerability and raise risks in relationships and sexual situations.

These topics are included within Health Education to ensure that all pupils receive essential safeguarding and health information.

Teaching Sensitive Topics:

Teaching about pregnancy choices, contraception, sexual health and related topics will always be delivered in a factual, age-appropriate and impartial manner. Staff will ensure that teaching is sensitive to the diverse values, beliefs and backgrounds of pupils and their families, while ensuring that all pupils receive accurate information necessary to support their health, safety and wellbeing.

Pupils will be encouraged to respect differing views and beliefs, and classroom discussion will be managed carefully to ensure that all pupils feel safe, respected and able to engage with the learning. Staff will not promote any particular personal view but will ensure that pupils understand the range of lawful options available in the UK.

RSHE Statutory Curriculum Coverage

Area of Learning	Key Topics Covered
Relationships Education	Healthy relationships, consent, respect, communication, online relationships, recognising abuse and exploitation
Health Education	Mental wellbeing, internet safety, physical health, substance misuse, sexual health, contraception, STIs, pregnancy choices, and risk awareness
Sex Education	Intimate relationships, sexual activity, contraception, STI prevention and reproductive health
Science Curriculum	Reproduction, reproductive health, and biological aspects of sexual development

7. Inclusion and SEND

RSHE is accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND. Teaching is:

- Differentiated and adapted
- Delivered in small groups or 1:1 where appropriate
- Sensitive to trauma, attachment and emotional needs

Reasonable adjustments are made in line with pupils' EHCPs and individual needs

8. Use of Resources and External Agencies

All RSHE resources:

- Are age- and stage-appropriate
- Are evidence-based and from credible sources
- Are reviewed by the RSHE Lead prior to use

External agencies are only used where:

- Their content aligns with statutory guidance
- Materials are shared in advance

Safeguarding and impartiality checks are completed

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

- Approves and reviews this policy
- Ensures statutory compliance

Headteacher

- Has overall responsibility for RSHE
- Considers withdrawal requests
- Ensures staff training and safeguarding oversight

RSHE Lead

- Oversees curriculum design and delivery
- Monitors quality and progression
- Supports staff with training and resources

All Staff

- Deliver RSHE sensitively and professionally
- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Do not promote personal beliefs

10. Parents Right to Withdraw

- Parents may request withdrawal from **non-statutory sex education only**
- Requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher
- The Headteacher will meet with parents (and pupil where appropriate)
- From **three terms before the pupil's 16th birthday**, pupils may opt back in
- The Headteacher may **refuse withdrawal in exceptional circumstances**, including safeguarding concerns

A record of decisions will be kept.

11. Working with Parents and Carers

- Parents are consulted when the policy is reviewed
- Parents have the right to view **all RSHE materials on request**
- Any significant curriculum changes are shared in advance

Parents will be informed about the content of the RSHE curriculum and are encouraged to discuss topics with their child at home.

12. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

RSHE supports safeguarding by:

- Encouraging disclosure
- Teaching correct vocabulary
- Reinforcing that abuse is never the child's fault

Staff follow safeguarding procedures for any disclosures. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where a pupil is at risk of harm.

13. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

RSHE is monitored through:

- Lesson observations
- Pupil voice
- Staff feedback
- Safeguarding reviews

This policy is reviewed **annually** by the Governing Body.

Appendix 1: Bowden House School – RSHE Curriculum Overview

This appendix reflects the statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum for secondary pupils, aligned with the DfE July 2025 guidance.

Relationships Education (Secondary)

Pupils will know:

- The characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships
- The importance of respect, kindness, consent and equality
- How power imbalances and stereotypes (including misogyny) can cause harm
- How to end relationships safely and respectfully

Online Safety and Awareness

Pupils will know:

- The legal and personal risks of sharing images and information online
- That creating, sharing or possessing sexual images of under-18s (including AI-generated imagery) is illegal
- How grooming, sextortion and online harassment occur
- How to report concerns and access support

Being Safe

Pupils will know:

- How to recognise abuse, coercive control and exploitation
- The law relating to consent, sexual offences, forced marriage and FGM
- How to seek help for themselves or others

Intimate and Sexual Relationships

Pupils will know:

- The characteristics of healthy intimate relationships
- How to reduce risk of STIs and unplanned pregnancy
- The full range of contraceptive options
- Pregnancy choices, taught factually and impartially
- How substance use increases vulnerability and risk

Health Education

Pupils will learn about:

- Mental wellbeing and emotional regulation
- Physical health, fitness and healthy eating
- Internet safety and online harms
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco

Appendix 2: Letter to Parents and Carers – RSHE

Dear Parents and Carers, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

Since September 2020, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) has been a compulsory subject in secondary schools. At Bowden House School, RSHE is an important part of our curriculum and supports pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and values they need to build healthy relationships, stay safe and make informed decisions.

RSHE covers a wide range of topics across Key Stages 3 and 4, including:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Friendships and consent
- Online safety and digital awareness
- Being safe and safeguarding
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including LGBTQ+ relationships

Some aspects of RSHE are taught within the science curriculum, such as human reproduction, the menstrual cycle, fertilisation, pregnancy and birth, and the effects of drugs and alcohol. RSHE lessons allow these topics to be explored in greater depth, particularly in relation to relationships, consent, safety, wellbeing and personal decision-making.

Our children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives both online and offline. While this brings many positive opportunities, it also presents challenges and risks. RSHE helps pupils to navigate these experiences safely, respectfully and with confidence. We value the role of parents and carers as partners in RSHE and welcome your involvement in the development and review of this subject. Your views help us ensure that our provision meets the needs of our pupils and community.

Right to Withdraw

Parents and carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education or Health Education. You may request to withdraw your child from non-statutory elements of sex education only (this does not include content taught as part of the statutory science curriculum). If you wish to discuss withdrawal, please contact the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Requests must be made in writing and will be considered in line with statutory guidance.

Further Information

A summary of RSHE topics taught in Years 7–11 is attached. You can also access the school's RSHE Policy via the school website: <https://bowdenhouse.school/policies/teaching-curriculum-staff>

The website also includes an RSHE FAQs page and a facility to submit questions, which are sent directly to the RSHE Lead Teacher. You are also welcome to raise any questions during your child's annual review.

Please let us know if you would like any of the following:

- The RSHE Scheme of Work for Bowden House School
- Your child's Stage Not Age RSHE booklet
- Examples of resources used in lessons

If you would like to discuss RSHE provision further, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Kind regards,
Victoria Bastock
RSHE Lead Teacher