



Marshland
HIGH SCHOOL

Relationship & Sex Education Policy

Reviewed by:	Governing Body
Approved:	March 2026
Review Date:	March 2028

Member of staff responsible: Deputy Headteacher

Background Information

Marshland High School is a rural comprehensive school catering for children from 11-16 years old.

This policy was developed by the Headteacher, in consultation with the school PSHE Co-ordinator, through a variety of consultation methods. These took into account the views of students, parents/carers, staff, governors and relevant outside agencies. A similar approach was used when developing the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme.

Policy Statement

RSE is a lifelong learning process of acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive beliefs and attitudes about sex, sexuality, relationships and feelings (Sex Education Forum 1999).

Effective RSE can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by students if they are to establish and maintain relationships. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

The 1996 Education Act consolidates all relevant previous legislation and states that all secondary schools are required to provide an RSE programme that includes (as a minimum) information about sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. The sex education elements contained in the National Curriculum Science Orders are also mandatory. All schools must provide an up-to-date policy that describes the content and organisation of RSE provided outside the National Curriculum Science Order. The DfE Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (2000) supports this legislation and suggests that schools should set sex education within a broader base of self-esteem and responsibility for the consequences of one's actions.

The Department for Education introduced compulsory Relationships Education for primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for secondary pupils from September 2020. It is compulsory for all schools to teach Health Education. Statutory guidance has been updated (implemented by September 2026).

This policy was updated to reflect the new guidance and includes feedback from the parent and student consultation undertaken.

Other related policies and documents include the PSHE Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Drugs Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Single Equality Policy.

Aims and Objectives

This policy is a working document which provides guidance and information on all aspects of RSE in the school for staff, parents/carers and governors. To be accessible to all of these groups the document is available on request and presented in a way that is easy to understand.

Moral and Values Framework

The RSE programme at Marshland High School reflects the school ethos and demonstrates and encourages the following values:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Kindness
- Honesty
- Perseverance

Equal Opportunities Statement

The school is committed to the provision of RSE to all of its students. Our programme aims to respond to the diversity of students' cultures, faiths and family backgrounds. Equal time and provision are allocated for all groups but there may be occasions where students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities are given extra support from SEND staff.

Content

During Years 7 and 8, students start to look at the feature of different relationships, including families and romantic relationships and what makes them healthy and unhealthy. They also explore body changes including puberty to prepare them for later study, and learn how to stay healthy including physical health online behaviours and mental health.

During Years 9 to 11, students learn how good relationships can promote mental wellbeing, how to manage their feelings positively, and how to manage changing relationships. They learn the law relating to sexual behaviour; negative behaviour in relationships both physically, mentally and online; how to develop skills of assertiveness in order to resist peer pressure; and stereotyping, sex and relationships in the media including pornography; sources of advice and support; and when and where to get help, such as from a genito-urinary medical clinic.

Students will also learn to recognise the influences and pressures around sexual behaviour, gain advice on how to respond appropriately, and how to seek professional health advice with confidence. They learn how HIV and other sexually transmitted infections affect the body, how different forms of contraception work, the risks associated with early sexual activity and links with alcohol. Arguments around moral issues such as abortion, contraception and the age of consent are also considered.

Lesson content was decided upon taking into account the views of students, parents/carers, staff, governors and relevant outside agencies and using the Ofsted Sex and Relationship Guidance (2002) and DfE guidance on the content of RSE from 2020 as a key source of information and guidance. A more detailed scheme of work is available on request.

Materials and images used are appropriate to the age and cultural backgrounds of students including LGBT students. The range of material used is available to parents/carers and informative books are available to students in the library.

Organisation

At Marshland High School the main content is delivered in PSHCE lessons which includes Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education (PSHE) and Citizenship, as well as other curriculum areas such as Science, Religious Studies, ICT and PE. In addition, this content is complemented by school assemblies and collapsed timetable "Super Learning Days". At Marshland High School the *main* content is delivered in PSHCE lessons to all years.

RSE is normally delivered by experienced teachers in mixed gender groups, other than when it is deemed more appropriate for topics to be covered in single sex groups. Active learning methods which involve children's full participation are used when appropriate.

Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSE. Marshland is currently part of the Norfolk Constabulary Safer Schools Team. As part of this provision key messages are delivered to Years 7 to 10 throughout the year, including CSE issues, online relationships, peer on peer abuse, healthy relationships, knife crime and county lines.

Marshland High School has a code of practice for using visitors to support the delivery of PSHE:

- Visitors are invited into school because of their particular expertise or contribution they are able to make
- All visitors are familiar with, and understand the school's RSE policy and work within it
- All inputs to PSHE lessons are part of a planned programme, negotiated and agreed with staff in advance
- All visitors are supervised/supported by a member of staff at all times
- The input of visitors is monitored and evaluated by staff and students which informs future planning

Evaluation of the RSE programme outside the Science Order is conducted using a variety of informal activities built into the programme. Teachers are required to make their own personal evaluations of their lessons and these are used by the co-ordinator to inform future planning.

Marshland High School believes in the importance of training for staff delivering RSE. Staff are encouraged to access appropriate training and support to help them deliver content effectively.

Specific Issues within RSE

Withdrawal

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from parts of the sex education elements but not from the relationship lessons. The school can refuse a request in exceptional circumstances. Those parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited in to see the Headteacher, who will explore any concerns and discuss the impact that withdrawal may have on the child. Once a student has been withdrawn, they cannot take full part in the RSE programme until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

Materials are available to parents/carers who wish to supplement the school RSE programme or who wish to deliver RSE to their children at home.

The school considers that there are no full lessons which only focus on the 'sex' element of the statutory guidance which pupils can be removed from as they also contain elements of relationships, health or internet/online safety. However, there are elements of the below lessons which focus on sex. Should parents/carers wish to discuss removal from parts of these lessons: Year 9 – sex, relationships and being ready and Year 10 – sex and relationships then please contact the Deputy Head who will support in arranging a meeting with the Head.

Confidentiality

As a general rule, student confidentiality is maintained by the teacher or member of staff concerned. If this person believes that the student is at risk or in danger, they discuss with the named student protection coordinator who may confer with the Headteacher before any decision is made.

The student concerned will be informed that confidentiality is being breached and the reasons why. The student will be supported throughout the process.

Safeguarding/Child Protection

The school has a separate Child Protection Policy. Effective RSE may bring about disclosures of child protection issues, and staff should be aware of procedures for reporting concerns.

Disclosures

If a member of staff learns that a student who is less than 16 years old is sexually active or contemplating sexual activity, the school will ensure that:

- The young person is counselled to talk to their parent/carer
- Child protection issues are addressed
- The young person receives adequate counselling and information
- The Headteacher will monitor the above.

Controversial and Sensitive Issues

Staff are aware that views around RSE-related issues are varied. However, while personal views are respected, all RSE issues are taught without bias. Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that students are able to form their own, informed opinions, but also respect others who may hold different views.

Dealing with Questions

Both formal and informal RSE-related issues arising from students' questions, are answered according to the age and maturity of the student concerned. Questions do not have to be answered directly, and can be addressed individually, later. The school believes that individual teachers must use their skill and discretion in this area and refer to the designated senior professional if they are concerned.

Sexual Identity, Sexual Orientation and LGBT

Marshland High School believes that RSE should meet the needs of all students, regardless of their developing sexuality, and that those staff delivering RSE should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Homophobic bullying is dealt with strongly yet sensitively. The school liaises with parents on this issue, with a view to providing reassurance and guidance. This includes informing parents of appropriate external sources of support.

Dissemination

All members of staff and governors receive a copy of this policy. Training on the policy content is delivered to staff from time to time, as appropriate. Copies of this policy are available from the school office on request, or on the website. A short summary of the policy is included in the school prospectus and on the school website.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and will be shared with parents and carers who will be invited to share their views, which will then be considered when updating this policy.