



Huntington Community Primary School

Learn to Live, Live to Learn

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

2026

Document name	Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy
Author	David Erne, Headteacher
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Signed Headteacher	
Signed Chair of Governors	

Important note on statutory guidance transition

The DfE published updated RSHE statutory guidance in July 2025. This guidance replaces the 2019 version and becomes mandatory for all schools from 1 September 2026.

This policy has been written to comply with the incoming 2025 guidance in full, ensuring that Huntington Community Primary School is prepared for September 2026. Where the 2025 guidance introduces new requirements or changes to the 2019 version, these are highlighted throughout this document.

Until 1 September 2026, the school remains bound by the 2019 statutory guidance. From September 2026, this policy and the school's curriculum will be fully compliant with the 2025 guidance.

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1. Statement of Intent

At Huntington Community Primary School, we understand that pupils must be provided with an education that prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life. Relationships education, health education, and — where we have chosen to include it — sex education, are fundamental to this.

Relationships education focuses on giving pupils the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health, and relationships, and to build their self-efficacy. Health education equips pupils with the knowledge to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. Sex education, which is not compulsory at primary level, is taught at Huntington Community Primary School from Year 5 and Year 6, in line with the DfE's recommendation.

We are committed to delivering a high-quality, age-appropriate, evidence-based, and inclusive RSHE curriculum for all our pupils. This policy sets out the framework for that curriculum, clarifying how it is informed, organised, delivered, and reviewed. It has been written with full regard to the DfE's updated RSHE statutory guidance (July 2025), which becomes mandatory from 1 September 2026.

— David Erne, Headteacher, Summer 2026

2. Legal Framework

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

- Section 80A of the Education Act 2002
- Section 403 of the Education Act 1996
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (statutory)
- DfE (2025) 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' — statutory from 1 September 2026
- DfE (2019) 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' — statutory until 31 August 2026
- DfE (2023) 'Science programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2'

This policy operates alongside the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- Ensuring the curriculum is well led, effectively managed, and well planned.
- Evaluating the quality of provision through regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Ensuring teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND.
- Providing clear information for parents on subject content and their rights to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education.
- Ensuring the subjects are properly resourced, staffed, and timetabled.
- Approving and publishing this policy on the school website.

- Ensuring that parents are proactively engaged and consulted in the development and review of the RSHE curriculum, in line with the 2025 statutory guidance.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects, including any additional training required by the 2025 statutory guidance.
- Ensuring that parents are fully informed of this policy and that all curriculum materials are available for parents to view on request.
- Reviewing and granting or declining requests from parents to withdraw their children from sex education.
- Discussing requests for withdrawal with parents and, where appropriate, the pupil.
- Organising appropriate and purposeful alternative education for pupils where a withdrawal from sex education is granted.
- Reporting to the Governing Body on the effectiveness of this policy.
- Reviewing this policy at least every three years, or earlier if statutory guidance changes.

The PSHE Subject Leader is responsible for:

- Overseeing the delivery of the subjects and ensuring they are age-appropriate and high-quality.
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching.
- Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to relationships, health, and sex education.
- Ensuring the curriculum is inclusive and accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND.
- Working with other subject leaders to ensure the curriculum complements, and does not duplicate, the national curriculum.
- Reviewing all materials used in delivery — including those from external providers — to ensure they are accurate, age-appropriate, inclusive, and do not present contested views as fact.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subjects and providing annual reports to the Headteacher.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Delivering a high-quality and age-appropriate relationships, health, and sex curriculum in line with statutory requirements.
- Using a variety of participative and interactive teaching methods and resources to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Not expressing personal views or beliefs when delivering the programme.
- Modelling positive attitudes to relationships, health, and wellbeing.
- Being transparent with pupils about the limits of confidentiality and their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Responding to any safeguarding concerns in line with the Safeguarding Policy.
- Liaising with the SENDCo to identify and respond to the individual needs of pupils with SEND.

The SENDCo is responsible for:

- Advising teaching staff on how best to identify and support pupils' individual needs within the RSHE curriculum.
- Advising staff on the effective use of TAs to meet pupils' individual needs.

4. Organisation of the Curriculum

Every primary school is required to deliver statutory relationships education and health education. These are delivered as part of the school's PSHE curriculum, with some elements delivered within the Science curriculum.

For the purpose of this policy:

- "Relationships education" is defined as teaching pupils about healthy, respectful relationships — focusing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online — and the skills needed to communicate effectively, be assertive, and manage difficult feelings in relationships.
- "Health education" is defined as teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing, including how to make healthy lifestyle choices, build resilience, and regulate emotions.

- “Sex education” is defined as teaching pupils about developing healthy sexuality, beyond what is covered in the science and health curricula, determined in response to the needs of the relevant cohort. At Huntington Community Primary School, sex education is taught in Years 5 and 6.

The curriculum takes into account the views of teachers, pupils, and parents, and is organised to be appropriate for the age and developmental stage of pupils in each year group. When organising the curriculum, the religious backgrounds of all pupils will be considered, so that topics are taught appropriately.

The school has adopted the Jigsaw scheme of work for relationships, health, and sex education, delivered in accordance with the programme of study set out in Appendix 1. Jigsaw is aligned to the PSHE Association.

New requirement from September 2026 (DfE RSHE Guidance, July 2025)

The 2025 guidance introduces ‘guiding principles’ for all schools’ RSHE curriculum. Huntington Community Primary School will apply these principles, which include: proactive engagement with pupils and parents; positivity and age-appropriateness; careful sequencing of content; skilled and participative delivery; transparency with parents about all materials used; and a recognition that RSHE is not static and must respond to the evolving needs of pupils.

The guidance specifically emphasises teacher agency — it is for teachers to use their professional judgement about when and how to teach certain content, based on the needs of their school community.

5. Consultation with Parents

The school understands the important role parents play in enhancing their children’s understanding of relationships, health, and sex. Parents’ views are integral to shaping our curriculum, and the school is committed to proactive and genuine engagement with parents as the 2025 guidance requires.

The school will consult with parents when developing and reviewing the RSHE curriculum, giving parents regular opportunities to voice their opinions and concerns. The school will use the views of parents to inform curriculum content and delivery; however, parents do not have a ‘veto’ on curriculum content, and all final decisions remain the school’s to make.

Parents are provided with the following information:

- An overview of the relationships, sex, and health curriculum — its delivery and the resources used — via the PSHE pages of the school website and this published policy.
- Clear information about the legalities surrounding withdrawal from sex education.
- The opportunity to view all materials used in sex education lessons in Years 5 and 6 before they are taught, enabling informed decisions about withdrawal.
- Access to any other curriculum materials used in RSHE, upon request.

Parents can contact the school at any time to provide feedback by requesting a meeting with the Headteacher or emailing head@huntington.cheshire.sch.uk.

New requirement from September 2026 (DfE RSHE Guidance, July 2025)

The 2025 guidance strengthens the expectation for parental engagement, stating schools must ‘proactively engage and consult parents’ when developing and reviewing RSHE policy. Schools must also ‘be transparent with parents about all materials used in RSHE’, including those from external organisations.

All curriculum materials must be made available to parents on request. This is now an explicit expectation rather than a recommendation.

6. Relationships Education Overview

Relationships education is statutory for all primary pupils. The following sets out the expected knowledge by the end of primary school, as drawn from the DfE's statutory guidance.

Families and people who care for me

By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security, and stability.
- The characteristics of healthy family life, including commitment, care, protection, and the importance of spending time together.
- That stable, caring relationships — which may be of different types, including same-sex relationships — are at the heart of happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up.
- That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other, which is intended to be lifelong.
- How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice.

Caring friendships

By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- How important friendships are and the characteristics of healthy friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, loyalty, kindness, and trust.
- That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming and do not make others feel excluded.
- How to manage conflict, repair friendships, and seek help when needed.

Respectful relationships

By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- The importance of respecting others, even when they are different from them or make different choices.
- About stereotypes, and how they can be unfair, negative, or destructive.
- The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships.
- The different types of bullying, including cyberbullying, and how to seek help.

Online relationships

By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- That the same principles of respect apply online as in face-to-face relationships.
- The rules and principles for keeping safe online, including how to recognise harmful content and contact, and how to report these.
- How information and data is shared and used online, and the risks of sharing personal information.

Being safe

By the end of primary school, pupils will know:

- What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships and other relationships, including in a digital context.
- That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate physical or other contact.
- How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.

New requirement from September 2026 (DfE RSHE Guidance, July 2025)

New content in the 2025 guidance (from September 2026): pupils should develop the ability to communicate effectively, be assertive, and express their needs and boundaries. Skills for managing difficult feelings in relationships — such as disappointment, frustration, and loneliness — are now explicitly required.

Online content: pupils should learn strategies for resisting pressure to share information or images online. The guidance notes that some schools may decide — based on the needs of their pupils — to cover image sharing or online sexual content in late primary (Years 5/6) if they know this is affecting pupils.

The 2025 guidance confirms that LGBTQ+ content should be integrated throughout the curriculum rather than delivered as a standalone unit, and that parents do not have the right to withdraw pupils from content on protected characteristics, including sexual orientation.

7. Health Education Overview

Health education is statutory for all primary pupils. The following sets out the expected knowledge by the end of primary school, as drawn from the DfE's statutory guidance.

Mental wellbeing

By the end of primary school, pupils will know about the normal range of emotions, how to recognise and talk about their feelings, the benefits of physical exercise and time outdoors, how to recognise triggers for seeking support, and where to find that support. Pupils will also learn about building resilience, coping with difficult situations, and emotional regulation.

Internet safety and harms

By the end of primary school, pupils will know about the benefits and risks of time spent online, how to be a discerning consumer of online information, how to recognise and report online abuse, and the risks of excessive time spent on devices.

Physical health and fitness

By the end of primary school, pupils will know the characteristics and benefits of an active lifestyle, the risks of an inactive lifestyle, and how to build regular exercise into daily and weekly routines.

Healthy eating

By the end of primary school, pupils will know what constitutes a healthy diet, the principles of planning healthy meals, and the risks associated with unhealthy eating.

Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco

By the end of primary school, pupils will know the facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and the associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use, and drug-taking.

Health and prevention

By the end of primary school, pupils will know how to recognise early signs of physical illness, about safe sun exposure, the importance of good sleep, dental health, personal hygiene, and the facts about immunisation and vaccination.

Basic first aid

By the end of primary school, pupils will know how to make a call to emergency services and the concepts of basic first aid, including dealing with common injuries and head injuries.

Changing adolescent body

By the end of primary school, pupils will know key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes, and key facts about menstrual wellbeing.

New requirement from September 2026 (DfE RSHE Guidance, July 2025)

The 2025 guidance adds new primary content on: building resilience and coping strategies; emotional regulation skills; and AI awareness — including the risks of AI-generated imagery, deepfakes, and how online content can normalise misogyny and harmful attitudes.

The guidance clarifies that puberty education should take place before the onset of changes, not during or after — typically in Years 4 and 5.

Suicide prevention content is retained but the 2025 guidance emphasises that schools should consult mental health professionals and ensure evidence-based staff training before teaching this content. Approaches should not be fear-based.

8. Sex Education

All pupils must be taught the aspects of sex education outlined in the primary science curriculum — including the main external parts of the human body, how it changes as it grows from birth to old age, and the reproductive process in some plants and animals. This content is not optional.

The school has decided to teach sex education beyond what is required by the science curriculum. Sex education is taught in Years 5 and 6, in line with the DfE's recommendation in the 2025 guidance.

Parents are fully consulted in the organisation and delivery of the sex education curriculum, in accordance with sections 4 and 5 of this policy. Parents are given the opportunity to view all materials to be used in Years 5 and 6 sex education lessons.

The age and development of pupils is always considered when delivering sex education. Pupils who are absent from school during sex education lessons in Years 5 and 6 will receive the relevant education as soon as possible after their return to school.

The school delivers sex education in Years 5 and 6 through the Jigsaw 'Changing Me' units, which cover puberty, conception, and healthy relationships in an age-appropriate and progressive way. The programme of study for this content is set out in Appendix 1.

Biological sex and gender identity

In line with the 2025 RSHE statutory guidance, the school will teach pupils the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment. Pupils will be taught that gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and that those with this characteristic should be treated with respect and dignity and protected from discrimination.

Beyond these facts and the law, the school recognises that there is significant debate about gender identity. The school will not teach as fact that all people have a gender identity, and staff will not endorse any particular view on this contested topic. The school will be mindful to avoid any suggestion that social transition is a simple solution to feelings of distress or discomfort.

Resources from external organisations on this topic will be carefully reviewed by the PSHE subject leader before use, and materials that present contested views as fact or that could encourage pupils to question their gender will not be used.

9. Delivery of the Curriculum

The relationships, sex, and health curriculum will be delivered as part of the school's PSHE curriculum, with some elements delivered within the Science curriculum.

Through effective organisation and delivery, the school will ensure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of manageable size.
- The required content is communicated to pupils clearly, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned scheme of work.
- Teaching is participative and interactive, with group work, discussion, and role-play used as core pedagogical approaches. The use of worksheets as the primary teaching method is not encouraged.
- Teaching includes well-chosen opportunities for pupils to embed knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations.
- Lessons are not fear-based. Approaches will be positive and empowering, building pupils' confidence and agency rather than relying on shock or anxiety to motivate behaviour.

All teaching and materials will be appropriate for the ages and developmental stages of pupils, their religious backgrounds, and any additional needs including SEND. Resources will be formally assessed by the PSHE subject leader before use. Materials from external organisations will be reviewed for accuracy, age-appropriateness, inclusivity, and to ensure they do not present contested views as fact.

When covering sensitive topics — including self-harm, suicide, and gender — teachers will consult with the DSL and, where appropriate, with relevant mental health professionals, before delivering content. Teachers will be trained appropriately before teaching any such content.

The curriculum will be delivered in mixed gender and ability groups, with flexibility to teach in smaller groups where the nature of the topic makes this appropriate (for example, teaching the more detailed elements of sex education to boys and girls separately in Years 5 and 6).

Teachers will establish ground rules at the start of each unit. They will respond to questions sensitively and honestly, in a manner appropriate to pupils' age. Teachers will stop class discussions if pupils begin to reveal personal, private information, and will follow the Safeguarding Policy if they have concerns about anything disclosed.

New requirement from September 2026 (DfE RSHE Guidance, July 2025)

The 2025 guidance places increased emphasis on transparency with parents: schools must make all materials available to parents upon request, including those used by external organisations. The PSHE subject leader will maintain a current register of all materials in use.

The guidance introduces a stronger emphasis on teacher agency and professional judgement about when and how to teach certain content, based on the needs of their school community. This replaces the proposed age limits included in the 2024 consultation draft, which were not introduced in the final guidance.

AI awareness is now an expected topic in primary RSHE: pupils should understand the risks of AI-generated imagery and deepfakes, and how online content can normalise misogyny and harmful attitudes.

10. Working with External Experts

External experts may be invited from time to time to assist with the delivery of the programme. They are expected to enhance, not replace, the teaching delivered by class teachers.

Before any external expert delivers content, the school will:

- Ensure the planned session fits with the school's curriculum and this policy.
- Check the expert's credentials and professional standing.
- Review the lesson plan and all materials to ensure they are accurate, age-appropriate, inclusive, and do not present contested views as fact.
- Ensure parents are informed about any external expert input and that materials are made available to parents upon request.
- Agree procedures for confidentiality and ensure the expert understands how safeguarding disclosures should be handled in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

New requirement from September 2026 (DfE RSHE Guidance, July 2025)

The 2025 guidance introduces a new explicit requirement that schools review all materials from external organisations before use, including materials on gender identity, to ensure they do not present contested views as fact or encourage pupils to question their gender. Schools must also be transparent with parents about any external organisation involvement.

11. Equality and Accessibility

The school is fully committed to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and will not unlawfully discriminate against any pupil because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics relevant to this policy include age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, and marriage or civil partnership.

The school will make reasonable adjustments wherever possible to ensure the RSHE curriculum is accessible and inclusive for all pupils, including those with SEND or social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. Teachers will adapt their planning and teaching methods accordingly.

LGBTQ+ content will be fully integrated into the relationships and health curriculum, rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from content relating to protected characteristics, including sexual orientation.

The school recognises that RSHE topics may be triggers for teaching staff who have their own experience of trauma. Any member of staff in this position is encouraged to speak with the Headteacher or Mental Health Lead (SENDCo) in confidence.

12. Curriculum Links

The school seeks to draw links between RSHE and other curriculum subjects to enhance learning. Key links include:

- Science — main external parts of the body; changes to the body as it grows; puberty; reproduction in plants and animals.
- Computing and Online Safety — e-safety; responsible, respectful, and secure use of technology; how to access help and support online.
- PE — physical activity, active lifestyles, and healthy living.
- PSHE — British Values, respect, difference, values, and the characteristics of individuals and communities.

13. Withdrawing from the Subjects

Relationships education and health education are statutory at primary level. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from these subjects.

As sex education is not statutory at primary level (other than what must be taught as part of the science curriculum), parents have the right to request the withdrawal of their child from all or part of the sex education curriculum.

On receipt of a withdrawal request, the Headteacher will:

- Discuss the request with the parent and, where appropriate, the pupil, to ensure their wishes are understood.
- Explain the nature and purpose of the curriculum and the potential benefits of the education, including social and emotional benefits.
- Automatically grant the withdrawal request. The parent will be informed of this decision in writing.
- Keep a written record of the discussion.
- Arrange appropriate and purposeful alternative education for the pupil while sex education is being taught.

No child will be prevented from accessing the national curriculum content on puberty and reproduction that forms part of the science curriculum.

14. Behaviour

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying of any kind. We aim to foster a culture of mutual respect and understanding in every aspect of school life.

Any bullying incidents arising from RSHE content — including those related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or other protected characteristics — will be dealt with as seriously as any other bullying incident. Incidents will be reported by pupils to any member of staff, and will be handled in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

The Headteacher will determine whether it is appropriate to notify the police or the LA anti-social behaviour coordinator in cases involving significant bullying or harassment.

15. Staff Training

Teachers will receive regular training, led by the PSHE subject leader, to ensure they are fully equipped to teach the subjects effectively and with confidence.

Training will address any updated guidance or new developments, including topics such as AI-generated content, online misogyny, suicide prevention, and gender identity, as new guidance requires.

New requirement from September 2026 (DfE RSHE Guidance, July 2025)

The 2025 guidance places greater emphasis on the need for staff training, particularly for sensitive topics such as suicide prevention and gender. The DfE has indicated that government-funded training will be made available to support implementation. The school will access this training when available and ensure all relevant staff complete it before the relevant content is taught.

16. Confidentiality

Teachers will respect the confidentiality of their pupils as far as is possible. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where a safeguarding concern arises. Pupils will be fully informed of the school's safeguarding responsibilities and will be aware of what action may be taken if they make a disclosure.

Any reports or disclosures made during lessons, or as a result of content taught through the curriculum, will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and handled in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

17. Monitoring Quality

The PSHE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning for the subjects. Monitoring activities will include:

- Pupil and staff evaluations of the programme.
- Review of planning, resources, and schemes of work.
- Lesson observations and learning walks.
- Annual review of materials from external providers.

The PSHE subject leader will produce annual subject reports for the Headteacher and Governing Body, evaluating the quality of provision and identifying priorities for development.

18. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body is responsible for approving this policy.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the PSHE subject leader, Headteacher, and Curriculum Committee. The next scheduled review is Summer 2028. This policy will also be reviewed earlier if there are changes to statutory guidance, significant feedback from parents, staff, or pupils, or issues in the school or local area requiring a response.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff, parents, and — where appropriate — pupils.

Review cycle and the 2025 guidance

The DfE has proposed a technical review of RSHE guidance every three years, and a full content review every six years. This policy will be reviewed in light of any technical updates and will be fully revised following any content review.

Until 1 September 2026, the school remains bound by the 2019 statutory guidance. From that date, this policy — which is written to comply with the 2025 guidance — will be the operative document.

Appendix 1: Answering Difficult Questions

Teachers should establish a clear set of ground rules with pupils at the start of each unit. These might include:

- Any questions that pupils are uncomfortable asking aloud, or that might be uncomfortable for others, can be written anonymously and placed in a questions box.
- If a question is too explicit for the classroom setting, acknowledge it respectfully and make clear that the matter could be discussed privately, or with the pupil's parents.
- If the answer to a question is not known, say so. The class and teacher can research the answer together.
- If a pupil needs further support, they can be referred to the school ELSA, Mental Health Lead (SENDCo), or an appropriate outside agency or service.
- Any concern about sexual abuse or harm should be referred to the DSL under the Safeguarding Procedures.

On questions about gender identity: pupils may ask questions about gender identity, trans people, or related topics. Teachers should answer factually, with reference to biological sex and the law (including that gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010). Teachers should not offer personal opinions, endorse contested views, or teach as fact that all people have a gender identity. Where a pupil's question reflects personal distress, the DSL should be informed.

On questions about self-harm or suicide: teachers should avoid providing detailed information and should not use fear-based or sensationalist approaches. Any disclosure of self-harm or suicidal ideation should be reported immediately to the DSL.