



Carleton High School: Relationships, Sex, Health Education Policy

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Type of policy:	☐ Network-wide ☐ Schools-wide ☐ Set for School ☒ Tailored by school ☐ Central Only	Approval:	Ark Schools Management Team
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ARK LIBRARY COMPONENT

Component	Element
☐ Strategic Leadership & Planning ☐ Monitoring, Reporting & Data ☐ Governance & Accountabilities ☐ Teaching & Learning ☐ Curriculum & Assessment ☐ Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing ☐ Pathways & Enrichment ☐ Parents & Community ☐ Finance, IT & Estates ☐ Our People	e.g. Finance

Policy Context, Aims and Objectives

This policy outlines Carleton High School's approach to teaching Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

The Department for Education's statutory guidance requires all secondary schools to teach Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, as set out in *The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019*, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act (2017).

This guidance requires secondary schools in England to have a written RSE policy. In line with best practice, this RSHE policy also covers Health Education.

This policy details how the RSHE provision at the school meets the DfE 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Statutory Guidance (2025)'.

Please note: This policy is currently in draft and is published for consultation purposes only. It will be reviewed and finalised following consultation with parents/carers and governors.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in secondary schools includes learning about:

- families
- caring friendships
- respectful relationships
- online relationships
- consent and being safe (online and offline)
- Sex Education

Health Education includes learning about:

- mental wellbeing
- physical health and fitness
- healthy eating
- drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- health and prevention
- basic first aid
- emotional and physical changes during puberty

This RSHE policy also supports legal requirements relating to the following:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education Act 1996
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following academy policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equalities Statement & Objectives
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- SEND Policy

RSHE at Carleton High School

Our school's overarching aim is for pupils to be equipped to navigate the world independently, successfully and safely. Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is central to achieving this aim.

RSHE is underpinned by the *Guiding Principles for Relationships, Sex and Health Education* (Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance 2026) and reflects our school values. These principles are embedded across teaching, curriculum design and wider school practice.

Our vision is for pupils to become healthy, independent and responsible members of society. We aim to develop positive, respectful relationships, foster aspiration, and promote an appreciation of diversity. RSHE enables pupils to understand respect, love and care, and to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

RSHE is central to safeguarding, helping pupils to recognise risks, report concerns and seek support. Through RSHE, pupils are taught the foundations of positive relationships, including boundaries, privacy and respect. They learn how to stay safe, including online, and how to respond to concerns, preparing them for the increasing complexity of relationships in secondary education and beyond.

At Carleton High School, RSHE is delivered through an evidence-informed, whole-school approach, underpinned by key policies such as behaviour and safeguarding, ensuring a consistent ethos of respect and kindness.

Intended outcomes

The intended outcomes of our RSHE programme are that pupils will:

- know and understand key concepts related to relationships, sex health and wellbeing
- understand their rights, including the right to feel safe and respected
- recognise their responsibilities towards themselves and others
- develop essential life skills such as communication, decision-making and self-regulation
- develop positive attributes including empathy, respect, resilience and integrity

Policy Design

This policy was developed by the PSHE Lead in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and governors.

Review process

The policy was reviewed by the PSHE Lead, who considered the existing policy alongside current local and national guidance. Updates were made to reflect best practice and any changes in statutory requirements.

Staff consultation

Staff were consulted through a dedicated staff meeting. The draft policy was shared in advance, and staff were invited to provide feedback, comments and suggested amendments.

Parent consultation

Parents were consulted through meetings and/or surveys. They were given opportunities to review the draft policy and share their views. Feedback from parents informed the development of the policy and helped identify areas where further engagement and awareness-raising may be needed.

School Performance Review Board (SPRB) consultation

SPRBs were consulted through a governor meeting. The draft policy was shared in advance, and governors were invited to provide feedback and suggest amendments.

Entitlement and Equality of Opportunity

This policy has been developed in accordance with The Equality Act 2010.

RSHE is designed and delivered to reflect the diversity of our school community and is taught in a way that does not discriminate against any pupil or group. Teaching is inclusive, non-judgemental and evidence-based, providing clear, impartial and factual information. Pupils are supported to understand the importance of equality and respect, and to develop an awareness of protected characteristics over time.

We recognise and reflect a range of family structures, including those with same-sex parents, in accordance with statutory guidance. Pupils are taught that families may look different, and that all people should be treated with respect and dignity.

Teaching about different types of relationships, including same-sex relationships, is delivered in an age-appropriate and factual way. It does not intend to promote any particular sexual orientation, but to ensure that pupils understand the importance of respect, inclusion and the law.

We acknowledge that pupils may come from a range of religious and cultural backgrounds, and we approach these topics with sensitivity. Where appropriate, pupils are supported to understand that people may hold different beliefs, while making clear that discrimination and bullying, including homophobic language or behaviour, are not acceptable.

Any teaching that reflects a particular faith viewpoint will be clearly identified and balanced with factual information.

RSHE is adapted to ensure it is accessible for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), in line with the SEND Code of Practice (0–25 years) and our school's SEND Policy. We recognise that some pupils may be more vulnerable to risks such as exploitation, abuse or bullying, and ensure that teaching supports them to stay safe.

Roles and Responsibilities

School Performance Review Board (SPRB)

The SPRB will ensure that:

- all pupils make progress towards the expected outcomes
- teaching is accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND
- curriculum content and teaching materials align with statutory guidance
- clear information is provided to parents about content, delivery, external providers and the right to request withdrawal from sex education

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is delivered consistently across the school and for managing any requests to withdraw pupils from Sex Education, in line with statutory guidance.

PSHE Lead

The PSHE Lead is responsible for overseeing the planning and delivery of RSHE, supporting staff, monitoring provision and ensuring the curriculum meets statutory requirements and reflects best practice.

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- delivering RSHE in a sensitive, inclusive and age-appropriate way
- modelling positive attitudes and behaviours
- monitoring pupil progress
- responding to the needs of individual pupils

All teaching staff, including cover staff, are expected to deliver RSHE. Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Any concerns should be discussed with the Principal.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSHE and to approach discussions with respect, sensitivity and maturity, in line with the school's values.

Staff Training

All staff involved in delivering RSHE receive regular training to ensure they are confident, competent, and up to date with statutory guidance and best practice. Training covers:

- Curriculum content, including statutory and non-statutory elements
- Safe and inclusive teaching approaches, including differentiation for students with SEND and other students vulnerable to disadvantage
- Managing sensitive questions and using distancing techniques
- Safeguarding procedures and identifying concerns during RSHE
- Promoting equality, diversity, and respectful relationships

The PSHE Lead is responsible for identifying staff development needs and ensuring appropriate support and guidance are provided. Staff are also encouraged to seek advice from senior leaders when handling challenging topics or disclosures.

Curriculum Delivery

RSHE is delivered as an integral part of the school's Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education provision from Year 7 to Year 11 (and, where applicable, in post-16 provision). Learning is sequenced and age-appropriate, and is further reinforced through the wider curriculum and everyday school life.

Key aspects of RSHE are also covered through other areas of the curriculum. For example, elements of online safety and digital relationships are delivered through the Computing curriculum, while themes such as respect, equality and wellbeing are reinforced through other curriculum subjects (including RS at key stage 3), assemblies and through wider school experiences.

RSHE forms a core part of both PSHE and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development. It supports pupils to explore human and social diversity, develop self-worth, and understand the importance of respect, equality and inclusion. Pupils are supported to recognise, accept and value differences, both within the school community and in wider society.

Time Allocation

RSHE is delivered through timetabled PSHE lessons, tutor time and drop down days across the school year.

Curriculum Content

At Carleton High School RSHE is primarily delivered through PSHE curriculum time, ensuring full statutory coverage through an evidence-informed, relational and pupil-centred approach. The curriculum supports pupils to build and maintain healthy relationships, understand and regulate their emotions, and make informed choices that promote their safety, wellbeing and happiness. It includes learning on diversity, online safety, financial education and aspiration.

The PSHE curriculum is designed to develop both knowledge and practical skills, using realistic and diverse scenarios that reflect pupils' lived experiences. It provides regular opportunities for reflection and discussion, enabling pupils to explore their views in a safe and supportive environment.

The RSHE curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to emerging needs and challenges, including those identified through public health data, changing technology and pupil voice.

Inclusion and Accessibility

The curriculum is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all pupils, with resources aligned to accessibility principles such as WCAG 2.2 accessibility guidelines. Teaching approaches support a range of learning needs, including the use of visual supports, structured tasks, key vocabulary and guided discussion to aid understanding and participation.

Provision is adapted for pupils with SEND in line with the school's SEND Policy. This may include differentiated tasks, pre-teaching, small group delivery and additional visual or practical support where appropriate. Staff work closely with the SENCo and external agencies, where needed, to ensure all pupils can access the curriculum and are supported effectively.

Sex education

In secondary schools, parents/carers may request that their child is withdrawn from some or all Sex Education delivered as part of RSE (see the 'Right to Withdraw' section of this policy). Relationships Education and Health Education are statutory and pupils cannot be withdrawn from these elements.

Sex Education is taught in an age-appropriate way across the secondary phase and includes, for example, consent (including the legal definition), healthy and unhealthy intimate relationships, sexual health, contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy choices, and how to access support and healthcare services. Teaching is factual, inclusive and sensitive, and is sequenced to reflect pupils' developing maturity.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The quality of RSHE teaching will be monitored termly through lesson observations, learning walks, and book looks, carried out by the PSHE Lead.

Pupils will be assessed at the end of each unit, with progress against key learning measured through a combination of teacher assessment and pupil self-assessment. Assessment outcomes will inform future planning to ensure that key concepts are learned and embedded.

Pupil voice will be gathered termly to capture feedback on learning and understanding. Findings from monitoring and evaluation will be used to identify staff development needs and ensure continued effectiveness of PSHE teaching and learning and to inform curriculum development. The evaluation of teaching and learning assessments will be shared with pupils and parents as appropriate.

Safe and Effective Practice

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is central to our RSHE curriculum, which is designed to prepare pupils to live safely in the modern world. The PSHE Lead works closely with pastoral and safeguarding staff to ensure the curriculum reflects pupils' needs and supports effective safeguarding.

This policy aligns with statutory and non-statutory guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*, and should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Staff recognise that RSHE may lead to disclosures of safeguarding concerns. In such cases, they will act promptly, follow school procedures and share information only with those who need to know. Staff will never promise complete confidentiality. All concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will take appropriate action, including liaising with external agencies where necessary.

The DSL ensures that pupils receive appropriate support and that staff are guided in responding to concerns. Pupils are taught how confidentiality works, what happens if they make a report, and how to access help, including from trusted external services.

Teachers will use their professional judgement when addressing sensitive issues and will consult the DSL where there is any concern. Any disclosures or risks identified through RSHE will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Working with external organisations

On occasion external visitors, experts and agencies may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSHE to enhance delivery of these subjects, bringing specialist knowledge. It is important to note that where outside visitors help to deliver RSHE, they are not there to replace teachers but to enrich existing programmes by supporting the school.

When this happens, our school will:

- Check the visitor or visiting organisation's credentials
- Ensure the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with our planned programme and our published policy
- Discuss the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils
- Ask to see in advance the materials visitors will use as well as a lesson plan so that collectively we can ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs (e.g. special educational needs)
- Agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with our school's policy
- Arrange for the visitor to be supervised/supported by a member of school staff at all times
- Monitor and evaluate the visitor input to inform future planning

Answering difficult questions

We ensure a safe learning environment by establishing clear ground rules for discussions, which are agreed by teachers and pupils. These include using correct and agreed terminology for body parts, respecting others' views, and not requiring anyone to share personal information. Confidentiality will be included within this agreement so pupils are clear of the limits of confidentiality that can be guaranteed by a teacher. This supports safe, inclusive and respectful discussions.

Distancing techniques, such as the use of characters, are used where appropriate to discuss sensitive issues in a safe and appropriate way. This avoids pupils feeling under pressure to participate or disclose information beyond that which is appropriate or feels comfortable.

Pupils' questions are answered in an age- and stage-appropriate way, using factual and accurate information. Teachers will respond based on pupils' level of understanding and may not answer questions in full where it is not appropriate to do so. Opportunities are provided for pupils to ask questions anonymously, for example through a question box, or written questions, to reduce embarrassment and encourage openness. These will be regularly reviewed, and staff will decide whether a question needs to be followed up with an individual pupil, referred to safeguarding/pastoral teams, or addressed through whole-class teaching.

If a pupil's question goes beyond the content taught, or relates to sex education from which they have been withdrawn, teachers will respond sensitively and supportively. This may include suggesting the pupil speaks to a parent or trusted adult, signposting appropriate support, or addressing the question individually at a later time.

Teachers use their professional judgement when responding to questions and are trained to recognise when a question may indicate a safeguarding concern. In such cases, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

Partnership with parents

Carleton High School recognises parents as partners in the delivery of effective RSHE and values their role in supporting their child's learning and wellbeing. The school communicates with parents through RSHE workshops, the school website, and letters, and encourages open dialogue regarding any worry or concerns.

We proactively support parents to feel confident in discussing RSHE topics at home, including signposting resources and offering workshops where appropriate.

Parents are consulted during the development and review of the school's RSHE policy and are invited to discuss any concerns.

Parents are informed at the start of each term about the content their children will be learning. On request, parents may view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE. Requests to view curriculum materials can be made to the PSHE Lead.

Right to Withdraw

Parents **do not** have the right to withdraw their children from statutory Relationships Education (within RSE) or Health Education. Parents **may** request withdrawal from some or all elements of Sex Education delivered as part of RSE.

In line with statutory guidance, parents can request withdrawal from Sex Education up to and until three terms before the pupil turns 16. After that point, if the pupil wishes to receive Sex Education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements for the pupil to do so during one of those terms.

The following process must be followed if a parent or carer wishes to withdraw their child from sex education:

- Parents/carers will be informed about Sex Education before it is due to be taught, including the topics to be covered and how they are taught
- Parents/carers should contact the school by letter, email or phone to arrange a meeting with the Principal (or a delegated senior leader)

- The school will meet with the parent/carer (and where appropriate, the pupil) to discuss the request, address concerns, and explain the purpose of Sex Education and the potential impact of missing it
- Following the meeting, parents/carers will be asked to confirm in writing the specific elements from which they wish to withdraw their child. This will be recorded on the pupil's file
- When Sex Education is taught, suitable alternative supervised educational activity will be provided for any pupils who are withdrawn

Parents should be aware that withdrawn children may still hear about the lesson content from peers or seek information from other sources, such as friends, siblings, or the internet. These sources can be inaccurate, age-inappropriate, or misleading.

To support informed decision-making, lesson content will be shared with parents annually, ensuring they have full information before choosing to withdraw their child from sex education lessons.

Policy Dissemination and Review

The Principal will:

- Disseminate a copy of the RSHE policy to all staff members and SRPB governors
- Provide regular training to staff on the policy content
- Ensure that there are copies of the RSHE policy available from the school office and the school website for parents to access on request

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if the RSHE curriculum is amended, for example in response to emerging themes, changing pupil needs or introduction of new legislation and guidance.

This policy will be reviewed in July 2028.