

John Spence Community High School
'Relationship and Sex education' Policy

Overview:

School: John Spence Community High School

Date of policy: March 2020

Member of staff responsible: Rebecca Howard

Last updated: October 2026

Review date: October 2027

1. Aims

Our vision is to ensure that, upon leaving school, John Spence Community High School pupils are 'Fit for Life'.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) has been an integral part of our work at John Spence Community High School, helping students to be physically, socially, and emotionally healthy. RSE involves learning about the emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality, and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills, and positive values needed to form safe, fulfilling relationships, enjoy their sexuality, and take responsibility for their sexual health and mental and physical well-being.

This policy aims to:

- Provide an overview of the RSE programme for each year group, along with a justification for the timing and content of its delivery.
- Summarise the learning that will take place for pupils in each year group.
- Offer a clearer understanding of each of the key strands within the programme
- Explain how each strand overlaps with and complements the others.

2. Legislation and Statutory Requirements

The RSE programme has been informed by the *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education* (2019) guidance published by the Department for Education, as well as the Equality Act 2010. We are beginning to implement changes in accordance with the updated framework, which is due to be in place from September 2026.

3. Vision

Our RSE curriculum aims to:

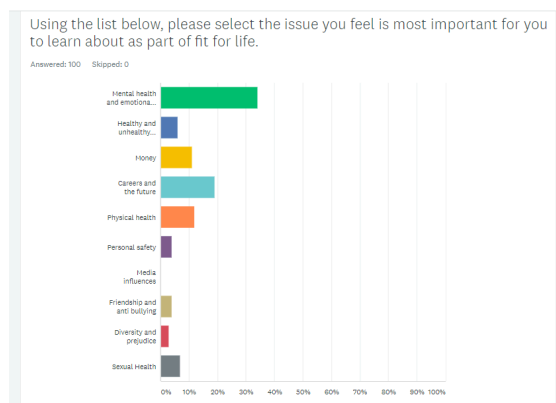
- Support young people in developing skills, consideration, and resilience.
- Enable pupils to make well-informed choices about their well-being, health, and relationships.
- Build self-efficacy in pupils.
- Better equip pupils to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges, and complex situations.
- Educate against discrimination and prejudice.
Enable pupils to learn about spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental, and physical development.
Encourage pupils to explore their own attitudes and those of others.
- Develop the skills needed to lead informed, healthy lives.

4. Justification for the content and delivery of RSE:

At present, the content delivered in RSE meets the statutory guidance outlined in *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education* (2019), published by the Department for Education. We are currently making additions to the curriculum to ensure compliance with the 2026 framework.

The schemes of work were designed following an extensive period of research, which included staff and student *Fit for Life* surveys, data collection from feeder primary schools, the North Tyneside

Schools Survey, and other credible sources such as Women’s Aid and the World Health Organization. For example, the results of the *Fit for Life* survey (see below) highlight that pupils view mental health and emotional wellbeing as the most important issue to them. As a result, this topic is prioritised and delivered in Year 7.



Parents are informed of the RSE content delivered in *Fit for Life* through the Headteacher’s bulletin, email communication, and a designated section on the school website. In addition, parents are consulted on the RSE curriculum as part of our commitment to working in partnership with families. This consultation ensures that parents have the opportunity to view the content, provide feedback, and ask questions, helping to create a shared understanding of how sensitive topics are approached and delivered in school.

5. Content Overview

We have carefully designed the curriculum to ensure that each theme is delivered sequentially, with age-appropriate and increasingly complex content explored as pupils progress through the school. Additionally, the curriculum reflects the unique context of our school and local community, ensuring it is relevant and meaningful for our pupils.

Year	Relationship and sex education	Health and mental well-being
	Main themes	
7	- Respectful relationships - Online safety and awareness - Being safe	- Mental wellbeing - Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system - Basic first aid - Wellbeing online - Personal safety
8	- Online safety and awareness - Being safe	- Mental wellbeing - Developing bodies - Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system - Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping - Physical health and fitness - Healthy Eating - Personal safety
9	- Families - Respectful relationships	Mental wellbeing

	• Online safety and awareness • Online harm (deepfakes, image based abuse) • Being safe • Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	• Health protection and prevention, and understanding • Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco and vaping (personal safety) • Wellbeing online • Personal safety
10	• Respectful relationships • Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health • Online safety and awareness • Being safe • Mysogany	• Mental wellbeing • Wellbeing online • Personal safety
11	• Respectful relationships • Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health • Online safety and awareness • Being safe	• Mental wellbeing • Wellbeing online • Personal safety
Key note	• Online safety and awareness and wellbeing online is also delivered in computing lessons	• Online safety and awareness and wellbeing online is also delivered in computing lessons

Please see Appendix 1 for the specific content taught in each year group.

8. Content delivery

This curriculum is delivered through three main strategies:

- Fit for Life lessons
- Drop down days
- Subject Lessons (especially Computing lessons)

Fit for Life lessons

RSE is primarily delivered within *Fit for Life*. Students have formal *Fit for Life* lessons on their timetables, which are led by a range of teachers. All RSE lessons ensure that pupils of differing abilities are suitably challenged and supported. Throughout all methods of delivery, we ensure that we respond to local public health and community issues, meet the needs of our community, and adapt materials to suit our pupils. Additionally, we comply with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that our provision is suitable and accessible to all pupils, including those who are LGBT or have SEND, making reasonable adjustments when required.

Specifically regarding SEND, lessons reflect research and guidance such as that from Rodden, with a clear focus on oracy skills—such as how to talk about emotions—and the use of direct, clear language in resources to support effective communication.

Drop-Down Days

There are several opportunities to engage in RSE throughout the year, including drop-down days and presentations from both internal and external providers.

Subject Lessons (especially Computing lessons)

As we follow the national curriculum, we provide opportunities to make connections between subjects and integrate RSE teaching where appropriate.

In particular, Computing lessons include significant content on online safety, awareness, and wellbeing. Pupils are supported in developing a better understanding of how to stay safe and responsible in digital environments, while also promoting positive mental health in relation to their online experiences.

9. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of the RSE Lead to ensure that both staff and parents are informed about our Relationships and Sex Education policy and subject content. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.

Before granting such a request, the RSE Lead and/or Headteacher will discuss the matter with the parents, and where appropriate, with the child, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Once these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child up to three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Headteacher considers the pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND when making this decision. If a pupil is excused from sex education, the school is responsible for ensuring that the pupil receives appropriate and purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

Teachers deliver relationships and sex education lessons sensitively. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to create a safe environment through ground rules and distancing techniques. However, if a child causes the teacher concern, the teacher will take the matter seriously and treat it as a child protection issue. Similarly, if a child indicates they may have been a victim of abuse, the teacher will speak to the child urgently.

If concerns arise, the teacher will report them to the Head of Year and Head of Safeguarding, who will then manage the matter in consultation with healthcare professionals.

Pupils are encouraged to ask further questions and discuss issues with their teachers and support staff. Teachers will answer pupils' questions in an open, factual, and age-appropriate manner but will not engage in discussions about personal issues. Governors and staff agree that questions will be answered as long as they are appropriate for the pupils' age. Staff will also encourage pupils to discuss questions with their parents.

10. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation

To support staff in providing safe and effective practice, the Headteacher and RSE Lead will ensure that all staff receive sufficient continuous professional development. This enables them to teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

We hold the same high expectations for the quality of work produced in RSE as in any other curriculum area. To ensure the curriculum is having the desired impact, the following monitoring processes are applied:

- Learning walks
- Work scrutiny
- Regular feedback from teaching staff during departmental meetings
- Regular feedback from middle leaders during curriculum leaders' meetings
- Regular feedback from pastoral leads during pastoral meetings
- Pupil surveys
- Parental feedback
- Evaluation of CPD and student events

Throughout and at the end of each unit, pupils revisit, retrieve, and consolidate key concepts. A variety of formative and summative assessment activities—including discussions, short tasks, and scenario-based work—are used to check understanding, address misconceptions, and encourage reflection on personal attitudes and skills. Outcomes from the end-of-topic summative assessments help identify where additional support or intervention may be needed. These insights are also shared with Heads of Year to ensure the pastoral team is well-informed about any factors that may be affecting pupil wellbeing.