



Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy

2025-2026

SLT Responsible for this Policy

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This policy is reviewed on an annual basis

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This policy has been approved by SLT and adopted on behalf of the Governors, and is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and is available on the school's [portal](#). It is available to parents on request. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working, including when this involves being away from the school.

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1. Introduction

Abbey College Cambridge values and respects the variety of nationalities, backgrounds and cultural traditions among its students and staff.

RSE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care.

It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate.

This policy follows the guidance outlined in the following documents:

- DfE Relationships, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance 2025
- The Equality Act 2010

2. Aims

To give students opportunities to learn about three key areas:

1. Attitudes and values

- Learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral considerations.
- Learning the value of family life and stable loving relationships for the nurture of children.
- Learning the value of respect, love and care.
- Learning how to identify and learn from positive male role models
- Exploring, considering and exploring moral dilemmas and developing critical thinking as part of decision making.
- Learning about the links between sexism and misogyny and violence against women and girls

2. Personal and social skills

- Learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively
- Developing self-respect, self-confidence and empathy for others.
- Learning to make choices based on an understanding of difference and an absence of prejudice.
- Developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.
- Managing conflict and learning how to recognise exploitation and abuse and developing strategies to deal with these issues.
- Learning about grief and loss
- Learning about ethical behaviour in relationships beyond respecting boundaries and consent

3. Knowledge and understanding

- Learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages.

- Understanding their own mental health wellbeing and the range of advice and support available.
- Understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health emotions and relationships.
- Learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services.
- Learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay.
- The avoidance of unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.
- Understanding the implications of on-line relationships and knowing how to manage them safely.

- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Preparing pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Teaching students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

The school aims to take a common sense approach to securing balance and ensure issues are discussed in a fair and dispassionate way and that alternative viewpoints are considered.

Staff should actively challenge everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes.

3. Statutory Requirements

Abbey College Cambridge aims to provide RSE to all students as per the Children and Social work act 2017. In teaching RSE, we have due regard for the guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

4. Delivery

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is carefully planned and delivered through:

- Timetabled, tutor-led personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE).
- Assemblies with a variety of speakers.
- Specified science lessons.
- PSHEE Association and other approved resources are used to deliver content.
- Students also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

Assemblies, tutor and PSHEE sessions are a time when groups within the school meet together in order to learn about and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. Assemblies take place once a week for 20 minutes and PSHEE takes place in a 50 minute session each week.

Abbey College Cambridge approved visitors are welcomed to speak on specialist subjects from time to time (for example the Police Community Liaison Officer speaking about personal safety, a veteran on Remembrance Day and a specialist nurse informing students about consent and Sexual Health) and will be given guidance by the Housemasters (HSM) regarding planning for these events.

The College undertakes to ensure that visiting speakers are appropriately checked, to prevent presentations (including the distribution of materials) which are contrary to fundamental British values, and that they are supervised at all times. Speakers will not be able to address students without a member of staff being present.

The College will not use a visiting speaker where any link is found to extremism, such as extremist groups and movements. The College's responsibility to students is to ensure that they can critically assess the

information that they receive as to its value to themselves, and that such information is aligned to the ethos and values of the College and Fundamental British Values.

Students arrive in Years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 and some are Compulsory School Age (CSA). The age range is 12 to 23 years and RSE provision is both age and course appropriate.

CSA, GCSE and Pre-Sessional students explore a range of topics including:

- Peer pressure.
- Puberty.
- Body image.
- Personal hygiene.
- How to have healthy friendships and relationships.
- Rights and responsibilities in relationships.
- How having a baby changes a relationship.
- The reality of young parenting.
- Consent and sex in the UK.
- The role of consent, and awareness of power dynamics
- Negotiating with adults.
- Effects of changes caused by divorce, separation, bereavement and new family members.
- Grief and loss
- Mental health and well being

All students will explore a range of age appropriate topics including:

- The consequences of high risk behaviour in relation to sexual activity.
- Underage sex, the law and emotional and physical impact.
- Different cultural norms regarding sex and relationships.
- The impact of drug use on relationships.
- The dangers of date rape drugs.
- The impact of drug use on health.
- The dangers of drug use including legal highs, cigarettes and alcohol.
- STIs.
- HIV / AIDS – the global dimension.
- Misogyny and the manosphere
- How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours
- How sub-cultures such as ‘incels’ might influence our understanding of sexual ethics
- The prevalence of AI-generated sexual imagery and 'deepfakes'
- Contraception – making the right choices.
- Exploitation in relationships.
- Domestic violence.

5. National Curriculum Science

At secondary school, the National Curriculum in Science requires that the following elements of RSE should be taught:

KEY STAGE 3 Year 7-9

- Fertilisation in humans is the fusion of a male and female cell.
- The physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence.
- The human reproductive system, the menstrual cycle and fertilisation.
- How the foetus develops in the uterus.

- How the growth and reproduction of bacteria and the replication of viruses can affect health.
- How fertilisation can be prevented by contraception and how some methods of contraception protect us from disease.

KEY STAGE 4 Year 10-11

- The way in which hormonal control occurs, including the effects of sex hormones.
- Some medical uses of hormones, including the control and promotion of fertility.
- The defence mechanisms of the body.
- How sex is determined in humans.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The governing board has delegated the approval of this policy to the Principal

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE

Teachers

All teachers are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE
- Actively challenging everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes

Any teacher who has concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss these with the Principal/VPP or PSHE Lead.

Housemasters, the Vice Principal Pastoral and the PSHEE Lead research and plan the schedule and content of Assemblies and PSHEE/RSE, using approved resources such as those signposted by the PSHE association and external specialist support as necessary.

Teachers are given regular training on how to deliver the content, create a safe and secure classroom environment and how to respond to difficult questions.

If a question asked is too personal or explicit, the teacher should, in consultation with the Housemaster refer the student to an appropriate agency, such as the school nurse, GP or academic mentor.

Staff must make sure that no student is pressured to join a group, club or society.

All staff must follow the ACC Safeguarding Policy when a disclosure is made.

The Housemaster is responsible for sending an email to parents of those students who are Compulsory School Age to explain how RSE is delivered and to inform them of the content of this.

Parents

The school will proactively engage and consult parent/guardians when developing or reviewing your RSHE policy.

An outline of the RSE curriculum will be shared with parents/guardians at the start of the academic year and curriculum materials are available to view all on request.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from some, or all, RSE lessons, but not statutory science lessons. Whilst Abbey College Cambridge recognises the right of parents to withdraw students, and provision will be made by the Housemaster at these times we do however, have a strong tradition of being fully inclusive, and whilst we respect parental wishes, would wish to encourage discussion of concerns regarding RSE to avoid students feeling excluded and to share with parents the importance of relationship and sex education, encouraging inclusion, healthy relationships and encouraging empathy.

7. Concerns

The following are recommended guidelines for specific sex and relationship incidents. Each incident is unique and therefore the guidelines should be used as a reference rather than a set of rules.

Staff, students, carers, hosts, parents and anyone associated with the school community can contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with concerns regarding anyone in the community regarding sex and relationships. Staff should be alert to changes in a student's behaviour or any signs that a student may be at risk. This includes concerns on school trips, in the holidays and concerns relating to pre-admission to the school.

Staff have a duty of care to report any welfare concerns to the DSL immediately and provide a full and detailed report of the concern. This includes any disclosures from any member of the school community to staff, and disclosures must be shared immediately. All concerns should be recorded on CPOMs.

From time to time questions may be raised by students which staff may have difficulty in addressing, due to their nature and content. The staff member in question is not required to answer such questions immediately. In such cases they are advised to defer a reply and consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead before taking further action. Teachers and tutors are urged to use their skill, good sense and discretion in such situations. The recommended ground rules involve the students being able to ask anything they wish as long as they respect the right of both staff and other students not to answer questions if they do not wish to.

8. Monitoring and Review

A central plan and record of the themes and content of assemblies and PSHEE time is kept on Onenote.

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Vice Principal Pastoral, the Assistant Principal Pastoral, the PSHEE Lead and the Housemasters through the Assuring Pastoral Excellence programme by:

- Work scrutinies
- Learning walks
- Student Feedback
- Staff Feedback
- Parent feedback

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps: The content is reviewed and amended annually in light of Government guidance, student/staff feedback and parental comments and developments in the real world.

9. Links to other Policies

- PSHEE Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Student drugs and misuse policy
- Smoking Policy
- Student Health Policy
- DfE Relationships, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance 2025
- The Equality Act 2010
- E-safety Policy
- Visitor and Visiting Speaker Policy
- Reflection and Worship Policy.
- Fundamental British Values Policy
- SEND Policy

10. Appendices

Appendix 1

By the end of secondary school pupils should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships • How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children • What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony • Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into • The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships • The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting • How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed • The effects of grief and loss

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships, including friendships	• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs • The links between sexism, misogyny, the manosphere and violence against women and girls • How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours • How sub-cultures such as 'incels' might influence our understanding of sexual ethics • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help • That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control • What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable • The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal
Online and media	• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online • Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them • What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online • The impact of viewing harmful content • The prevalence of AI-generated sexual imagery and 'deepfakes' • That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners • That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Being safe	• The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships • How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	• How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship • That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing • The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women • That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others • That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available • The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage • That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help) • How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing • About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment • How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour • How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

APPENDIX 2

Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of Student		Class	
Name of Parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider regarding this policy and the delivery of relationships and sex education at Abbey College Cambridge			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	Include notes from discussions with parents and agreed actions taken.