Relationships and Sex Education Policy

To be read in conjunction with:
Academic Support Policy
Anti-bullying Policy
Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff
Drugs Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools
Equality and Diversity Policy
Keeping Children Safe in Education
Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools
Preventing and Tackling Bullying
Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC
Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE, July 2025)
Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
Sexual Violence and Harassment between Children in Schools
SMSC requirements for independent Schools The Equality and Human Rights Commission

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The purpose of this policy is to inform parents about the delivery of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Bedford Modern School. It outlines the provision of Relationships Education and Sex Education across all year groups, as well as aspects of Health Education that are linked to Sex Education.

1. Definition:

Throughout Bedford Modern School, we aim to provide students with accurate and reliable information about human reproduction, physical and emotional changes during puberty, and the development of healthy attitudes toward their bodies. It is delivered sensitively and inclusively, ensuring that students feel supported and confident in discussing these topics. It is not about encouraging sexual activity or promoting specific lifestyles but about

equipping students with the knowledge and skills to navigate their personal development and relationships responsibly and respectfully. Sex education is a carefully planned and age-appropriate component of the broader Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum.
In differentiating between the broader Relationships Education and what is considered Sex Education the below may be considered useful;

In the **Junior School**, sex education is teaching foundational knowledge, including the biological aspects of human reproduction and the physical changes associated with puberty. The programme is tailored to the age, physical, and emotional maturity of students, ensuring that they are prepared for the changes of adolescence.

Relationships Education explores consent which is embedded within the curriculum and includes consent in relationships from Year 4.

A range of relationships are explored, including, types of families, friendships and personal relationships with themselves. Romantic relationships, attraction to others, and marriage are also taught.

In the **Senior School**, sex education expands to include discussions about sexual health, safe practices, and the emotional aspects of intimacy. It aims to empower students to make informed, responsible decisions while respecting their values and those of others.

In Relationships Education the theme of consent remains central, with an emphasis on understanding personal boundaries and fostering respect in various types of relationships.

2. Aims and Objectives

At Bedford Modern School, our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme seeks to:

Whole School Approach

- Ensure a clear progression in the delivery of RSE, transitioning seamlessly from Junior School to Senior School and into Sixth Form.
- Deliver age-appropriate and differentiated content tailored to the diverse needs of all students, including those with special educational needs (SEND) and other vulnerabilities requiring bespoke provision.
- Provide objective, balanced, and sensitively delivered information.
- Foster the development of social skills and strategies to reduce risks of exploitation, misunderstanding, and abuse.
- Ensure positive representation of diverse individuals within the curriculum (e.g., people from ethnic minorities backgrounds, LGBTQ+, and people with disabilities).
- Prepare students for their journey from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood.
- Create a safe environment for students to learn about sexual orientation and gender identity while addressing misconceptions and challenging stereotypes, including those related to LGBTQ+ identities.
- Prioritise online safety by educating students about the risks associated with social media and digital platforms.
- Develop self-respect, confidence, and empathy.
- Provide a safe space for discussing sensitive issues and seeking support when needed.

Aims for Relationships Education

Relationships education at Bedford Modern School aims to:

- Teach students to recognise and establish healthy, respectful relationships in all contexts, including friendships, family dynamics, and online interactions.

- Equip students with the skills and understanding needed to navigate the challenges of adolescence, including recognising and addressing unhealthy or abusive relationships.
- Emphasise the importance of mutual respect, consent, and effective communication in relationships.
- Represent diverse family structures and relationships, including those who identify as LGBTQ+, in a positive and inclusive manner.
- Empower students to identify and challenge stereotypes and discrimination in relationships and society.
- Explore the physical, emotional, and social aspects of all types of parenting and the readiness required for it.

Aims for Sex Education

Sex education at Bedford Modern School aims to:

- Prepare students for the physical and emotional changes of puberty while promoting health and hygiene.
- Provide age-appropriate knowledge of sexual and reproductive biology, including conception, and childbirth.
- The prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as HIV, in an inclusive way that reflects all types of relationships.
- Develop students' understanding of the implications and responsibilities of sexual behaviour, including the importance of delaying sexual activity.
- Equip students with knowledge about various contraceptive methods and how to access them.
- Ensure students understand the risks associated with sexual activity and how to protect themselves.
- Address the dangers of pornography and promote healthy attitudes towards sex and intimacy.
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe their bodies and discuss topics related to sexual development.
- Provide a safe space for discussing sensitive issues and seeking support when needed.

3. Legal Requirements

Under the Education Act (1993) and the Education Reform Act (1998) all schools are required to maintain a statement of Policy regarding RSE and make it available to parents on request. . This policy complies with the statutory guidance Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Department for Education, July 2025), which is mandatory for all schools, including independent schools, from 1 September 2026. As an independent school, Bedford Modern School is also required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014), which require the provision of a programme of personal, social, health and economic education.

The governors of Bedford Modern School are responsible for reviewing and monitoring the implementation of this policy. They are responsible for ensuring that the subjects are well-led, effectively managed, and thoroughly planned; that self-evaluation of the quality of provision is regular and effective; that teaching is accessible to all students, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); that clear and accessible information is provided to parents and carers about subject content and the right to request withdrawal from non-statutory sex education; and that the subjects are appropriately resourced, staffed, and timetabled. The delivery of the RSE programme is the responsibility of the Head and Governors, coordinated by the Head of PSHE and RSE in the Senior School, and overseen by the Director of Sixth Form and the Deputy Head Pastoral in the Junior School.

This policy has been developed in consultation with a range of staff and key stakeholders. Contributions from teachers, students, families, and other members of the school community have been gathered to ensure the policy meets the needs of those it serves. A draft version was shared during a two-week consultation period, providing families with the opportunity to review and offer feedback before the policy was finalised.

The statutory guidance Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Department for Education, July 2025) sets out the curriculum content that schools must deliver and the legal duties with which all schools must comply. It applies to all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained, or independent. See Appendix 1 for the statutory curriculum content requirements.

4. Course Content

Detailed content of the Relationships and Relationships & Sex curriculum will be made available to parents on request. Our curriculum content will cover the required themes as set out in ***Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers.***
See ***appendix 2*** for our programme of study in each year group. We continuously assess when topics are delivered to ensure they align with the needs of our students and reflect feedback from teachers and students.

- Family
- Respectful relationships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Relationships and RSE curriculum for SEND students

Where possible all students will remain with their tutor/form group for PSHE lessons and teaching groups for RSE lessons. As with any lesson, teachers will differentiate for students with SEND and those who are vulnerable. This may mean differentiated work or alternative delivery depending on the nature of the need. The SENDCo and Head of PSHE and RSE/Deputy Head in the Junior School will make the relevant adjustments at the start of each academic year, in consultation with parents.

5. Safe and Effective Practice

To ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for Relationships and Sex Education, teachers at Bedford Modern School follow these principles:

- **Establish a Safe Learning Environment**
  Teachers collaborate with students to create and uphold clear ground rules for discussions. These rules emphasise respect, appropriate language, confidentiality, and the right to opt out of personal disclosures or activities. This ensures that all students feel safe, respected, and supported during RSE lessons.
- **Handle Sensitive and Controversial Topics Thoughtfully**
  Teachers address sensitive topics with care, ensuring their responses are appropriate for the students' age and understanding. If a question is deemed too explicit or unsuitable for group discussion, it will be handled privately or deferred until the teacher can consider the most suitable response. The Head of PSHE and RSE alerts Heads of Year and teachers to upcoming topics, highlighting those of a sensitive nature. This means discussions can be had in advance with students as needed.
- **Maintain Professionalism**
  Teachers avoid sharing personal views or experiences, focusing instead on providing factual, unbiased information. They remain sensitive to the diverse

needs and backgrounds of students, ensuring discussions align with the school's values and policies, while fostering a respectful and inclusive environment.

- **Prioritise Safeguarding and Confidentiality**
  Any disclosures or concerns about safeguarding are managed according to the school's safeguarding procedures. Students are informed that confidentiality will be maintained unless a safeguarding issue arises, at which point appropriate action will be taken to protect them.
- **Promote Inclusivity**
  Teachers ensure RSE lessons are inclusive, representing diverse genders, sexual orientations, cultures, and family structures. Misconceptions and discriminatory behaviour, such as racism, homophobia, and transphobia, are actively challenged to foster an environment of equality and respect.
- **Use Distancing Techniques**
  To encourage open discussion without personal discomfort, teachers use scenarios, stories, or fictional characters. These distancing techniques help students engage with topics objectively while protecting their privacy and feelings.
- **Encourage Questions and Provide Support**
  An anonymous question box is available to allow students to ask questions discreetly and without fear of embarrassment. Teachers ensure students are informed about how and where to access reliable support, both within and outside the school, for any issues raised during lessons.
- **Address Online Safety**
  Discussions about online safety are integrated into RSE lessons to help students critically evaluate risks associated with social media, internet use, and online interactions. Students are equipped with strategies to navigate online challenges safely and responsibly.

This guidance ensures that all RSE lessons are delivered in a way that prioritises student well-being, fosters trust, and promotes effective and respectful learning.

Staff delivering RSE receive support from the Head of PSHE and RSE, Heads of Year, and Assistant Heads. If a teacher feels unable to teach a session, one of these staff members will take over. The Mental Health Lead is also available to offer support to staff when required.

6. Organisation and Delivery

Junior School

- Our RSE programme is an integral part of our whole school PSHE education provision.
- The planning takes on a spiral approach, which gradually revisits and reintroduces topics at a deeper and more complex level in each year group.
- RSE is delivered by form tutors during two 50-minute sessions each cycle and will be taught through a range of teaching methods and interactive activities.
- Baseline assessment at the start of each RSE topic allows the form tutor to adapt the programme to the form group and students are encouraged to reflect on their own learning and progress at the end.
- In the Junior School, exercise books are treated in the same way as other academic subjects. Books include a progress grid that reflects whether or not students have developed understanding of the subjects covered, written in student-friendly language. Form tutors reflect on the year's PSHE education in their end of year comments in formal reports.

Senior School

- All students in senior school have one timetabled PSHE lesson per cycle with their tutors and one additional timetabled lesson per cycle for RSE. In addition, all students receive one tutorial lesson on relevant themes. This RSE lesson is

delivered by a specialist RSE teacher or selected members of the Extended Leadership Team, as needed.

- All students within the school have equal access to Relationships & Sex Education. Topics are revisited to allow provision for previous absences and different levels of understanding, maturity and learning abilities. The curriculum is progressive.
- Teachers and all those contributing to Relationships & Sex education will work within an agreed framework as set out in this policy. On occasion external specialist organisations, consultants, and healthcare professionals are invited to deliver aspects of the RSE curriculum to ensure our curriculum reflects current best practices (see below).
- Assessment in PSHE and RSE is reflective rather than exam-based and is designed to monitor progress and encourage students to recognise their own development. Methods include baseline tasks, self-assessment, end-of-unit reflections and teacher observation.
- Students complete self-assessments once per half term, while tutors and RSE teachers formally assess once per term. Ipsative assessment is used each half term, enabling students to compare their current performance with previous work through activities such as quizzes, pre- and post-assessments, and self-evaluation tasks.
- Formal reports in PSHE and RSE are provided for Years 7 to 9. Descriptors for knowledge, participation, teamwork, reflection and decision-making are combined to produce a single effort grade, and a summary of the topics covered is included in full reports at the end of the year. Progress across all year groups is monitored through baseline tasks, reflections and departmental review.

Sixth Form

- All form tutors deliver PSHE and RSE to their tutor group, supported by the Head of PSHE and RSE. Teachers and all those contributing to Relationships & Sex education will work within an agreed framework as set out in this policy. The curriculum is reviewed and overseen by the Director of Sixth Form.
- PSHE and RSE form a core component of our wider curriculum, sitting alongside Careers, Citizenship and UCAS guidance. It is delivered through designated lessons, tutorials and assemblies.
- On occasion external specialist organisations, consultants, and healthcare professionals are invited to deliver aspects of the RSE curriculum to ensure our curriculum reflects current best practices.
- Students engage in assessments, evaluations where they compare their current performance to their own previous performance, using various methods.

7. Working with Parents

Parental support is essential to the success of our RSE curriculum. While we have an educational and legal responsibility to provide young people with Relationships and Sex Education, we acknowledge and respect the primary role of parents in guiding their children on these matters.

At the start of each academic year, parents receive a letter outlining the PSHE Year Overview, which includes the content covered in the RSE curriculum. The RSE policy is also accessible on the school website. This letter invites parents to provide feedback or raise any questions by contacting the Head of PSHE and RSE. Parental input is valued and considered as part of our annual curriculum review to ensure effective collaboration and alignment with the needs of our school community.

In accordance with the statutory guidance effective from 1 September 2026, parents and carers have the right to view all RSE curriculum materials and resources on request. To exercise this right, parents and carers should contact the Head of PSHE and RSE to arrange a suitable time. Parents and carers are also notified in advance of any upcoming RSE topics their child will be studying.

As part of the BMS Parent Programme, parents are also invited to participate in workshops related to the RSE curriculum, providing an opportunity to engage directly with the content and its delivery.

8. Right to Withdraw

Under the Education Act 1993, parents/carers have the legal right to withdraw their child from RSE in primary and secondary education, for aspects of sex education that are not part of the National Science curriculum. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. This is applicable up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child expresses a desire to continue receiving sex education despite parental wishes for withdrawal, the Head of PSHE and RSE will ensure the student has access to an appropriate curriculum.

In the Junior School, consent will be sought at the beginning of Year 6. Before the Spring term, parents will receive further details about the curriculum content. Parents who wish to withdraw their children from sex education must contact the Head of the Junior School to discuss their concerns. Once withdrawal is confirmed, the student will be excused from any sex education not covered in the science curriculum. The process will be documented on CPOMS.

Parents with concerns or considering withdrawing their child from Sex Education in the Senior School should in the first instance contact the Head of PSHE and RSE who will invite the parent to a meeting to discuss their concerns and reassure the parents of the health and educational benefits of RSE. In most cases this resolves any concerns, but should parents still wish to withdraw their child then a request should be made in writing to the Head. BMS will document the process on CPOMS.

Students withdrawn from parts of Sex Education will receive enriching lessons on topics within the RSE and PSHE curriculum.

In exceptional circumstances, for example where a withdrawal request raises safeguarding concerns, the Head may decline a parental request to withdraw a student from sex education. Where this occurs, the decision will be communicated to parents and, where applicable, discussed with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

9. Confidentiality

Effective RSE should empower and encourage young people to speak with a trusted adult if they are in a sexual relationship or are considering entering one. Ideally, this trusted person would be their parent or carer, although this is not always possible. The law permits health professionals to provide confidential consultations and, in certain cases, treatment for young people. This process often includes counselling and discussions about the importance of involving parents or carers.

If a member of staff becomes aware that a student under 16 is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, they are required to report this to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Similarly, if they learn that a 16-year-old student is considering sexual activity with someone under the age of 16, the DSL will assess the situation and take appropriate action in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

10. The Role of Health Professions in the Delivery of Relationships and Sex Education

The school can work with health and other external professionals in the development and implementation of the schools' Relationships & Sex programme. Any visitors used to help in the delivery of the Relationships and Relationships & Sex Education programme will be clear about the boundaries of their input and will be aware of the Relationships & Sex Education curriculum, and relevant school policies, and their work will be planned and

agreed in advance. The School works with charities including Brook, NCT, our Police Liaison Officer, iCash, Mind, etc.

Students can see the school nurse on topics relating to healthy sexual practices if they feel comfortable doing so.

In accordance with our safeguarding procedures, all visitors are vetted by the staff member responsible for organising the event. Additionally, a 'Visitors to the School Record' form is completed and securely maintained by the school. In line with our Safeguarding Policy, visitors will always be accompanied by a member of staff.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of this policy will be monitored and evaluated through the normal processes of Departmental Review that apply to all areas of the curriculum.

The school provides opportunities to garner parental feedback regarding the RSE curriculum. Parents are invited to attend Health Education (Puberty & Hygiene) and Sex Education workshops aimed at complementing the curriculum content.

Students complete surveys annually and are invited to participate in focus groups where the curriculum and resources are reviewed. This is to ensure the curriculum content meets the needs of our students and is current and accurate.

This policy and the schemes are frequently, and at least annually, updated in accordance with changes in legislation and statutory guidance. This policy is reviewed annually by our compliance committee chaired by our Senior Deputy Head.

Monitoring and Evaluation is used to ensure that all teachers are delivering the PSHE and RSE curriculum effectively. This takes the form of lesson drop-ins, learning walks, and the sharing of effective resources. Staff receive whole-school CPD, Twilight CPD sessions, and termly pastoral meetings where schemes of work are discussed and reviewed. The Head of PSHE and RSE offers staff drop-ins to address any concerns or questions.

Mrs. L. Bucktin
Director of Sixth Form

Mr J Bungard
Deputy Head Pastoral (Junior School)

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Head of PSHE and RSE (Senior School and Sixth Form)

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12. Annexe 1: Statutory RSE Curriculum Content Requirements (DfE, July 2025)

Junior School: content to be covered by the end of primary
Relationships education: content to be covered by the end of primary. The focus for primary relationships education should be on teaching the skills and knowledge that form the building blocks of all positive relationships, supporting children to grow into kind, caring adults who have respect for others and know how to keep themselves and others safe.

Families and people who care for me
1. That families are important for children growing up safe and happy because they can provide love, security and stability.
2. The characteristics of safe and happy family life, such as commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
3. That the families of other children, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care.
4. That stable, caring relationships are at the heart of safe and happy families and are important for children's security as they grow up.
5. That marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong.
6. How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.

Caring friendships
1. How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends.
2. That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. Pupils should learn skills for developing caring, kind friendships.
3. That not every child will have the friends they would like at all times, that most people feel lonely sometimes, and that there is no shame in feeling lonely or talking about it.
4. The characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security, including mutual respect, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences, and support with problems and difficulties.
5. That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened.
6. How to manage conflict, and that resorting to violence is never right.
7. How to recognise when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, and how to get support when needed.

Respectful, kind relationships
1. How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others, including in families and friendships.
2. The importance of setting and respecting healthy boundaries in relationships with friends, family, peers and adults.

3. How to communicate effectively and manage conflict with kindness and respect; how to be assertive and express needs and boundaries; how to manage feelings, including disappointment and frustration.
4. The difference between being assertive and being controlling, and conversely the difference between being kind to other people and neglecting your own needs.
5. That they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and the importance of respecting others, including those who are different.
6. Practical steps they can take and skills they can develop in a range of different contexts to improve or support their relationships.
7. The conventions of courtesy and manners.
8. The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.
9. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders, and how to get help.
10. What a stereotype is, how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive, and how to challenge a stereotype.
11. How to seek help when needed, including when they are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

Online safety and awareness

1. That people should be respectful in online interactions, and that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including where people are anonymous.
2. How to critically evaluate their online relationships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. How to recognise harmful content or harmful contact, and how to report this.
3. That there is a minimum age for joining social media sites (currently 13), which protects children from inappropriate content or unsafe contact with older social media users, who may be strangers.
4. The importance of exercising caution about sharing any information about themselves online, including privacy and location settings.
5. Online risks, including that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once a picture or words has been circulated there is no way of deleting it everywhere.
6. That the internet contains content that can be inappropriate and upsetting for children, and where to go for advice and support.

Being safe

1. What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others, including online.
2. The concept of privacy and its implications for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
3. That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe contact, including physical contact.
4. How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter in all contexts, including online.
5. How to recognise when a relationship is harmful or dangerous, including skills for recognising who to trust and who not to trust.
6. How to report abuse, concerns about something seen online or experienced in real life, or feelings of being unsafe, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
7. How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.

Senior School: content to be covered by the end of secondary

Secondary relationships and sex education curriculum content. Schools should continue to develop knowledge of topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary.

Families

1. That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
2. How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children.
3. Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections not available to cohabiting couples.
4. That 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.
5. That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.
6. How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.
7. The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development.
8. How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when students are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.

Respectful relationships

1. The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.
2. How to treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces. Students should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal.
3. The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these support healthy relationships with others.
4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs.
5. Skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict.
6. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying, and how and where to get help.
7. Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration.
8. The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships, and that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, and an awareness of power dynamics.
9. How stereotypes, particularly those based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage. Students should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice.
10. How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships.

11. How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours.
12. How some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called involuntary celibates (incels) or online influencers.

Online safety and awareness

1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts.
2. Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately.
3. The characteristics of social media, including that some accounts are fake and/or AI-generated, and that some users present exaggerated or idealised profiles.
4. The serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images.
5. That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI-generated imagery.
6. How to report concerns about material that has been circulated, including images or videos.
7. About the prevalence of deepfakes, how they can be used maliciously and how to identify them.
8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including content encouraging misogyny, violence or use of weapons.
9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflict, how to avoid these and where to get help.
10. How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive control or other abusive and/or illegal behaviour.
11. That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners.
12. How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
13. That websites may share personal data about their users for commercial purposes, including targeted advertising.
14. That criminals can operate online scams, and about the risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support.
15. That AI chatbots can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice, and the importance of critically evaluating new types of technology.

Being safe

1. How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including early romantic and sexual relationships. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent.
2. Strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure.
3. How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, and how to judge when a relationship is unsafe.
4. How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including strategies for seeking help and reporting harmful behaviour.

5. What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable and is never the fault of the person experiencing it.
6. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language, attention or touching, sharing intimate images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring others to do sexual things, and upskirting.
7. The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault.
8. The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, including all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people.
9. The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.
10. That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help.
11. The concepts and laws relating to exploitative harms, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, grooming and financial exploitation.
12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.
13. The physical and emotional damage caused by FGM, virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law in these areas, including that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in these practices.
14. That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that any activity involving applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering their mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death.
15. That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful.
16. How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

1. That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive.
2. The law about the age of consent; that many young people wait until they are older; and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex.
3. Sexual consent and the capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given.
4. That all aspects of health can be affected by choices made in sex and relationships, positively or negatively.
5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
6. The full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate information about sexual and reproductive health.
7. That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Students should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help.
8. How different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are transmitted; how risk can be reduced through safer sex, including condom use; and information about PrEP and PEP.
9. The prevalence of STIs, their short and long-term impact, and key facts about treatment.
10. How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour.

11. How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships, including sexual violence or harms.
12. How to counter misinformation and access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

13. Appendix 2 - RSE Programme of Study Bedford Modern School

Junior School

Year Group	Updated PSHE / RSE unit	Content covered	Term of delivery
Year 3	**Me, my friends and belonging**	Friendship, respect and inclusion; recognising healthy friendships; making others feel included.	Autumn 1
	Mental health and wellbeing	Exploring emotions, managing distraction, managing thoughts and worries, and developing self-regulation strategies.	Autumn 2
	Building healthy habits	Healthier food and drink choices, dental health, physical activity and embedding healthy routines.	Spring 1
	Making choices online	Protecting information online, passwords, devices, age ratings and making safe choices about online content.	Spring 2
	Keeping safe out and about	Identifying and managing risk, including sun safety, road and rail safety, and water safety.	Summer 1
	Looking out for each other	Basic first aid, allergies, bites and stings, and making an efficient emergency call.	Summer 2
Year 4	**Mental health and wellbeing**	Extending self-regulation strategies and exploring factors that support wellbeing.	Autumn 1
	Exploring ways to manage risk	Assessing and managing risk in different contexts, including home, road, firework and gambling-related risk, and the role of peer influence.	Autumn 2
	Forming respectful relationships	Responding appropriately to conflict and bullying; understanding respect, identity, belonging and community.	Spring 1
	Money matters and news literacy	How attitudes and influences affect money decisions; critically engaging with news and recognising how news can affect emotions.	Spring 2
	Me, my body and growing up	Physical and emotional changes during puberty, personal hygiene, privacy and the Talk PANTS rule.	Summer 1

	Families and growing together	Diverse family structures, family relationships, family change, marriage and partnership.	Summer 2
Year 5	**Friendships, stereotypes and bullying**	Respectful relationships, inclusion, bullying, stereotypes, prejudice and extreme views.	Autumn 1
	Mental health and wellbeing	Noticing and naming emotions, managing distraction, changing thinking habits, rumination, worry and reactivity.	Autumn 2
	Positively engaging with our world	Healthy engagement with news, targeted news, climate change, empathy, agency and wellbeing.	Spring 1
	Respecting boundaries	Personal boundaries, permission, different types of touch, consent, unwanted contact, the PANTS rule and FGM safeguarding guidance.	Spring 2
	Safe connections online	Online socialising, respectful relationships online, cybercrime, online fraud and safe reporting.	Summer 1
	Embedding healthy habits and learning first aid	Sun safety, regular exercise, goal setting, first aid, asthma and head injuries.	Summer 2
Year 6	**Mental health and wellbeing**	Regulating emotions, managing distraction, positive thinking habits, rumination, worry, stress, change, loss and transition.	Autumn 1
	Managing money and online spending	Economic wellbeing, online financial harms, spending influences, being a critical consumer and gambling-related risk.	Autumn 2
	Changes in puberty and sex education *	Puberty recap, managing change and independence, healthy relationships, how a baby is made, sleep and wellbeing.	Spring 1
	Drug education: assessing risk and managing influences	Medicines, legal and illegal drugs, influences and pressure, and tobacco, vaping and alcohol in the media.	Spring 2
	Developing our understanding of AI	Types of AI, generative AI, chatbots, digital deception, deepfakes, rights, safety, wellbeing and ethical image use.	Summer 1
	Looking to the future	Career-related learning, job skills, career routes, transition to secondary school and embracing change.	Summer 2

* Denotes unit containing sex education content from which parents of students in Year 6 may request withdrawal. See Section 8 of this policy.

14. Annex 3 - Senior and Sixth Form RSE Curriculum.

This annexe sets out the RSE specialist-taught curriculum for 2026-27 by year group. Content is delivered in a structured, progressive spiral curriculum from Year 7 to Year 13. Years 7 and 8 contain no withdrawable sex education content. From Year 9 onwards, units on contraception, STIs, and related content constitute sex education from which parents may request withdrawal.

Year Group	Half-Term	Ref	Unit	Lesson Topic
Year 7	Autumn 1	R1	Healthy Relationships	A healthy friendship and making new friends
		R2	Healthy Relationships	The importance of friendship
		R3	Healthy Relationships	Changing friendships
	Autumn 2	R4	Digital Literacy	Fake news and critical evaluation of the media
		R5	Digital Literacy	Why do people become influencers?
		R6	Digital Literacy	The impact of fake information
	Spring 1	R7	Growth and Development: Our changing bodies	Looking after ourselves during puberty
		R8	Growth and Development: Our changing bodies	Changing emotions
		R9	Growth and Development: Our changing bodies	Menstrual health and my emotions
	Spring 2	R10	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health	Understanding and describing my feelings
		R11	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health	Listening skills
		R12	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health	Managing conflict
	Summer 1	R13	Relationships: Power in Relationships	Types of positive relationships
		R14	Relationships: Power in Relationships	Benefits of positive relationships
	Summer 2	R15	Relationships: Power in Relationships	My role in a positive relationship
		R16	Relationships: Power in Relationships	Being happy in relationships

Year 8	Autumn 1	R1	Relationships	Bullying
		R2	Relationships	The impact of bullying
		R3	Relationships	How to stop bullying
	Autumn 2	R4	Relationships: Our online lives	Online bullying and the impact
		R5	Relationships: Our online lives	Responding to online bullying
		R6	Relationships: Our online lives	Why people bully online
	Spring 1	R7	Relationships: Power in Relationships	Harmful sexual behaviour
		R8	Relationships: Power in Relationships	Protecting myself online and seeking support
		R9	Relationships: Power in Relationships	Supporting others through difficult times
	Spring 2	R10	Relationships: Staying Safe	FGM
		R11	Relationships: Staying Safe	Hymenoplasty and virginity testing
		R12	Relationships: Staying Safe	Forced marriage
	Summer 1	R13	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health	How talking supports mental health
		R14	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health	Influences on mental health
	Summer 2	R15	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health	Working with my feelings
		R16	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health	Calming and relaxation techniques
Year 9	Autumn 1	R1	Growth and Development	Puberty and brain development
		R2	Growth and Development	Menstruation and how to access support
		R3	Growth and Development	Puberty: When to seek support
	Autumn 2	R4	Relationships: How do relationships change?	Healthy romantic relationships
		R5	Relationships: How do relationships change?	Long-term relationships
		R6	Relationships: How do relationships change?	Marriage and civil partnership
	Spring 1	R7	Relationships: Power in Relationships	Power and consent

		R8	Relationships: Power in Relationships	Exploitation
	Spring 2	R9	Relationships: Power in Relationships	Sexual harassment
		R10	Relationships: Media Influence	Pornography and healthy relationships
	Summer 1	R11	Relationships: How can sex be safe? *	Healthy intimate relationships
		R12	Relationships: How can sex be safe? *	Condoms
		R13	Relationships: How can sex be safe? *	Other contraceptives
	Summer 2	R14	Relationships: How can sex be safe? *	Sex and other aspects of health
		R15	Relationships: How can sex be safe? *	STIs and HIV
Year 10	Autumn 1	R1	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health Conditions	Mental health conditions
		R2	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health Conditions	Stress, anxiety and OCD
		R3	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health Conditions	Depression
	Autumn 2	R4	Relationships: Separation and Change	Separation and sudden changes
		R5	Relationships: Separation and Change	Death, grief and loss
		R6	Relationships: Separation and Change	Grieving process
	Spring 1	R7	Relationships: Power in Relationships	Healthy relationships
		R8	Relationships: Power in Relationships	Recognising abuse and violence
		R9	Relationships: Power in Relationships	How to protect myself and others

	Spring 2	R10	Digital Literacy: Relationships Online	Online relationships
		R11	Digital Literacy: Relationships Online	Social media and mental health
	Summer 1	R12	Relationships: Healthy Intimate Relationships *	Unhealthy relationships
		R13	Relationships: Healthy Intimate Relationships *	Consent
		R14	Relationships: Healthy Intimate Relationships *	Safety, respect and trust in intimate relationships
	Summer 2	R15	Relationships: Healthy Intimate Relationships *	Drugs, alcohol and risky sexual behaviour
		R16	Relationships: Healthy Intimate Relationships *	Intimate health care
Year 11	Autumn 1	R1	Relationships: Pregnancy Choices *	Pregnancy and the fertility cycle
		R2	Relationships: Pregnancy Choices *	Assisted conception and healthy pregnancy
		R3	Relationships: Pregnancy Choices *	Unintended pregnancy and abortion
	Autumn 2	R4	Relationships: Parenting	Good parenting and models of parenting
		R5	Relationships: Parenting	Child development
		R6	Relationships: Parenting	Where parents and carers can get support
	Spring 1	R7	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health	Fluctuating mental health
		R8	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health	Impacts of poor mental health
	Spring 2	R9	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health	Biological influences on mental health
		R10	Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health	Support for mental health across our lifetime
	Summer 1	R11	Digital Literacy: Our Online Relationships	Online groups and radicalisation
Year 12	Autumn 1	R1	Relationships in Adulthood	Consent and healthy relationships in adult social and university contexts
	Autumn 2	R2	Relationships in Adulthood	Domestic abuse and coercive control: adult context and legal rights
	Spring 1	R3	Sexual Health	Sexual health as an independent adult: contraception access and STI testing

	Spring 2	R4	Relationships	Healthy relationships in the workplace: boundaries and professional conduct
	Summer 1	R5	Health in Adulthood	Managing your physical health as a young adult
Year 13	Autumn 2	R1	Sex Education	Losing It: Myths and Misconceptions (Part 1)
	Spring 1	R2	Sex Education	Losing It: Myths and Misconceptions (Part 2)
	Spring 2	R3	RSE Capstone	RSE Capstone lesson (content TBC)

* Denotes units containing sex education content from which parents of students in Year 9 or above may request withdrawal. See Section 8 of this policy.