

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy

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Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education policy: document provenance

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Summary of changes in this review	• New statutory requirements from the Department for Education (September 2026) included. • Clarification of parental right to withdraw from sex education.
Related policies and documents	• Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version) • Working together to Safeguard Children • Equality Act 2010 • Public Sector Equality Duty. • Anti-Bullying Policy • Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy • Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy • Equality and Diversity Policy • Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy • AI Policy • National Curriculum in England: citizenship, religious education, computing, science and physical education programmes of study

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, the policy will be reviewed as per the review cycle. Should no substantive change be required at this point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.



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1.0 Policy statement

Dixons Academies Trust is committed to delivering high-quality and age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education. Our aim is to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to make informed decisions, to build healthy and respectful relationships, and to safeguard themselves and others from harm by helping them understand and identify when things are not right. This policy was produced in consultation with key stakeholders. It will be reviewed every year, or sooner if statutory requirements change.

This policy is rooted in our duty to safeguard children, promote equality, and foster resilience, kindness, integrity and respect. Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) forms part of our whole-trust approach to safeguarding, wellbeing and positive relationships and is delivered through a planned, age-appropriate and sequenced curriculum that builds knowledge, skills and understanding over time. In addition, staff will respond to questions and emerging issues as they arise, in a manner that is appropriate to students' age, developmental stage and individual needs.

This policy should be read alongside the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (September 2026), and has been developed in accordance with its requirements and principles. As such, it covers aspects of Health Education, as well as Relationships and Sex Education. This guidance can be found online, or we can provide a copy on request:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

2.0 Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory requirements, including:

- Education Act 1996, Section 403
- Education Act 2002, Section 78
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019
- Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

3.0 Scope and purpose

This policy applies to all Dixons academies from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4. Although statutory relationships, sex and health education requirements apply up to the end of Key Stage 4, academies with post-16 provision extend this learning through age-appropriate personal development programmes that support preparation for adult life.

Its purposes are to:

- outline how our trust ensures inclusive, high-quality, age-appropriate teaching of relationships, sex and health education
- define the nature and content of relationships, sex and health education
- demonstrate our trust's commitment to safeguarding and meeting the needs of all students
- provide clarity for staff, families, governors, trustees, and students
- ensure all schools within our trust meet statutory obligations for relationships, sex and health education

4.0 Rationale, ethos and intent

- 4.1 The purpose of relationships, sex and health education at Dixons Academies Trust is to provide preventative education to empower students to build healthy, respectful relationships, keep themselves and others safe, make informed choices, and navigate both offline and online life with resilience and responsibility.



- 4.2 Relationships, sex and health education at Dixons Academies Trust is designed to ensure that all students receive a broad, balanced and age-appropriate education which reflects the statutory guidance. It is not delivered in isolation but as part of a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students.
- 4.3 Our intent is for all students to gain the knowledge and skills that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships. Our approach is rooted in safeguarding, equality, inclusion, and preparing students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Students will develop positive characteristics including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness, and trustworthiness. This teaching will support prevention of harms by helping young people understand and identify when things are not right.
- 4.4 Additionally, as increasing aspects of life take place online, we are aware that it is essential that students are equipped to think critically about emerging technologies and digital trends, recognising both their benefits and the potential risks they may pose to safety, wellbeing, and relationships. Relationships, sex and health education at our trust aims to help students navigate both the online and the offline world.

5.0 Delivery, assessment and content

- 5.1 Relationships, sex and health education will be delivered by academy staff in a safe and supportive learning environment, where students are encouraged to listen respectfully and seek support where needed. Teachers will establish ground rules with students and ensure sensitive issues are managed appropriately. Teaching will use distancing techniques to help students explore sensitive or personal issues safely by discussing situations indirectly — for example, through fictional characters, scenarios, or case studies rather than their own experiences. Students may ask questions, and staff will provide factual, age-appropriate responses, or will defer questions where additional advice is required to ensure responses are consistent with safeguarding responsibilities.
- 5.2 Where external visitors or organisations contribute to delivery, academy staff will remain responsible for the curriculum, safeguarding, and quality assurance of all content. All visitors will be appropriately vetted, briefed on safeguarding procedures, and supervised by academy staff. Further detail can be found on each academy website.
- 5.3.1 Delivery will be:
- age and developmentally appropriate
 - accessible to students with SEND through adaptation and support
 - sequenced to prepare students for experiences before they occur
- 5.4 Content will meet the needs of our students with input from the following stakeholders:
- School and college trust leaders: approve and monitor policy implementation
 - Principals: ensure compliance, adequate curriculum time, and staff training
 - RSE / PSHE / PDS lead: design, oversee and evaluate the programme in each academy, as well as provide CPD for academy staff delivering RSHE
 - Staff delivering relationships, sex and health education: establish safe and supportive learning environments, respond appropriately to students' questions, use formative assessment to identify prior learning and monitor progress and adapt teaching to meet students' needs
 - DSLs: provide support where disclosures arise and integrate safeguarding into delivery
 - SENCOs: support in ensuring the needs of all students are met
 - Families: given access to materials and opportunity to feedback
 - Students: respond to student voice to ensure curriculum relevance.
- 5.5 Assessment in relationships, sex and health education focuses on students' knowledge, understanding, and application of learning rather than personal beliefs or behaviours. Teachers use a range of formative assessment strategies to identify prior learning, monitor progress and inform future planning.
- 5.6 The full statutory content from the Department for Education is included as an appendix to this policy, and details of the curriculum can be found on each academy website. The curriculum includes, but is not limited to:
- By the end of primary, students will have learned about:**
- families and people who care for them, including the importance of stable, caring relationships and respect for diverse family structures



- caring friendships and respectful relationships, with an emphasis on kindness, courtesy, respect, managing conflict and recognising unsafe or harmful behaviour
- respectful relationships, including what a stereotype is; how stereotypes can be unfair, negative, destructive or lead to bullying; and how to challenge a stereotype.
- being safe, including the concepts of privacy, consent, safe / unsafe touch, the correct names of body parts, boundaries, recognising abuse and how to seek help
- online relationships and safety, including respectful interactions, age restrictions, critical evaluation of online content, and strategies to protect privacy and wellbeing
- health and wellbeing, including self-care, exercise, healthy eating, dental care, mental wellbeing, drugs, alcohol and tobacco awareness, basic first aid, and the changes of puberty
- personal safety, including everyday hazards, fire risks, how to recognise danger, keeping safe around roads, railways (including level crossings) and water
- basic first aid, including how to call 999

By the end of secondary, students will have further developed their understanding of:

- families and committed relationships, including marriage, civil partnership, parenting, and the legal and emotional responsibilities that come with raising children
- respectful relationships, including positive romantic and intimate relationships, equality, consent, power dynamics, harassment and sexual violence
- respectful relationships, including fostering respect for diversity, inclusion, and equality; recognising and challenging stereotypes; prejudice and discrimination when it arises; understanding about bullying, including the use of derogatory terms or behaviour relating to sex, race, disability or sexual orientation
- online safety and digital literacy, including managing risks from social media, pornography, harmful content, deepfakes, scams, sextortion and AI-generated materials
- being safe, including recognising exploitation, coercion, harassment, sexual violence, domestic abuse, forced marriage, FGM, and other harmful practices, and knowing how to seek support
- intimate and sexual relationships, including consent, contraception, STIs, pregnancy choices, sexual health services and how alcohol and drugs can impair decision-making
- physical and mental health, including healthy lifestyles, sleep, nutrition, drugs, alcohol and vaping, reproductive health, fertility, menopause, mental ill health, and the importance of support and resilience
- personal safety, including identifying and managing risks in different settings (such as roads, railways, water, online spaces and unfamiliar social situations), resisting peer pressure, avoiding conflict and violence, understanding the law around knives and weapons, recognising signs of grooming or exploitation, and knowing which trusted adults and services they can turn to for help.
- basic first aid

6.0 Curriculum sequencing and safeguarding expectations

- 6.1 Our trust recognises that each academy community is unique, with students facing different local needs, vulnerabilities, and safeguarding contexts. For this reason, our trust will not mandate that all academies deliver individual relationships, sex and health education topics in the same year group or term. Instead, academies are empowered to sequence their curriculum to best meet their students' needs, while ensuring that all statutory content is covered in full across the primary and secondary phases. Each academy's RSHE curriculum will be published on its website, together with information about how families can view curriculum resources and materials.
- 6.2 The guiding principles for sequencing are that:
- teaching is responsive to student need, based on safeguarding trends, student voice, and local data
 - topics are introduced early enough to prepare students for experiences before they are likely to encounter them
 - sensitive or complex issues are revisited and spiralled throughout the curriculum to build knowledge and resilience gradually
 - content is delivered with a positive focus, building students' skills for healthy and respectful relationships and promoting safe, healthy norms
 - language and teaching approaches avoid normalising harmful behaviours or stereotypes



- teaching is based on accurate, evidence-informed information and supports students to develop their own informed views, values and decision-making skills. Staff present information in an objective and balanced way and do not promote personal opinions, beliefs or political views.

6.3 **Health education (primary): developing bodies: naming body parts**

Statutory curriculum content: “The correct names of body parts, including the penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples. Students should understand that all of these parts of the body are private and have skills to understand and express their own boundaries around these body parts.”

Our trust requires all academies to ensure that:

- students are taught the correct names for body parts in Year 1 and Year 2, in line with safeguarding advice, to ensure children have the vocabulary to disclose concerns or abuse
- this vocabulary is revisited throughout the primary years, embedded within relationships education and safeguarding contexts, to reinforce student confidence in using accurate language
- the emphasis remains age-appropriate and delivered sensitively, ensuring children understand personal boundaries, privacy, and respect for themselves and others

6.4 **Health education (primary): developing bodies: puberty**

Statutory curriculum content: “About growth and other ways the body can change and develop, particularly during adolescence. This topic should include the human lifecycle, and puberty should be discussed as a stage in this process” and “The facts about the menstrual cycle, including physical and emotional changes, whilst the average age of the onset of menstruation is twelve, periods can start at eight, so covering this topic before girls’ periods start will help them understand what to expect and avoid distress.”

Our trust requires all academies to ensure that:

- puberty education is delivered in Year 5 and Year 6 to prepare students for the physical and emotional changes they are likely to experience before leaving primary school
- teaching covers the physical changes of puberty (such as menstruation, voice changes, body hair, and growth), the emotional and social aspects, and the importance of personal hygiene and self-care
- menstrual wellbeing is explicitly addressed with all students, including practical knowledge about periods, products, and managing menstruation confidently
- content is taught factually and sensitively, using correct scientific vocabulary, and revisited in secondary school to consolidate understanding
- students are reassured that puberty is a normal part of human development, and misconceptions are addressed to reduce stigma, embarrassment, or anxiety
- students are informed of who they can talk to for support within school and beyond, and are encouraged to seek help if they have worries or questions

6.5 **Health education (secondary)**

Some aspects of health education relate to sexual and reproductive health.

Our trust requires all academies to ensure that students learn about:

- puberty and adolescent development
- menstrual and gynaecological health
- fertility and menopause
- healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy
- pregnancy loss
- how to access healthcare services, including sexual health and family planning services.

6.6 **Relationships education (secondary)**

Some aspects of relationships education relate to sexual relationships. Students learn how to develop healthy, respectful relationships, understand consent and boundaries, recognise sexual harms and abuse, and know where to seek support if they are concerned about themselves or others.

Our trust requires all academies to ensure that students learn:

- how many young people choose to wait until they are older before engaging in sexual activity



- that people can enjoy positive intimate and romantic relationships without sex
- consent and personal boundaries
- recognising and responding to sexual harassment, sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour
- the influence of pornography on attitudes, expectations and relationships
- online sexual harms, including image sharing and sextortion
- the laws relating to issues such as exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and abuse

6.7 Sex education (secondary)

Teaching about human reproduction is delivered through the science curriculum. Sex education as part of RSHE does not teach the mechanics of sexual activity. The purpose of sex education is to ensure that young people can make safe, informed and responsible decisions when they are older and ready to do so. Details of when sex education is taught can be found on each academy website.

6.8 Beyond the specific safeguarding priorities highlighted above, academies have flexibility to determine when specific content is best introduced, provided it remains consistent with statutory requirements and trust expectations. Curriculum decisions will be based on:

- local safeguarding issues identified by DSLs and safeguarding partners
- student maturity, need, and readiness
- consultation with families, staff and governors
- professional judgement of the PSHE / RSE / PDS lead

6.9 Our trust will monitor academy-level curriculum maps annually to ensure statutory coverage, safeguarding priorities, positivity of approach, and age-appropriate sequencing across all phases.

7.0 Family engagement and right to withdraw

7.1 Our trust values our close working relationships with families. This policy is published on our trust website and will be made available free of charge to anyone who requests a copy. Each academy's RSHE curriculum will be published on its website, together with information about how families can view curriculum resources and materials. All materials used to deliver any part of relationships, sex and health education will be available to families for inspection, upon request.

7.2 Families have the right to request withdrawal of their child from some or all of sex education as delivered as part of relationships and sex education. Details of when sex education lessons are occurring, and the content of each, will be published on each academy website. Families do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships education or health education, nor can they be withdrawn from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction.

7.3 Prior to making a request to withdraw a student from sex education, families should set up a meeting with the principal to discuss the content and implications of withdrawal, before making a final decision. Any decision to withdraw a student from sex education must be made to the principal.

7.4 Families should be aware of the importance of high-quality, preventative, age-appropriate sex education in preparing students for future life and safeguarding them from harm. The purpose of sex education is not to encourage sexual activity, but to ensure that young people can make safe, informed and responsible decisions when they are older and ready to do so. Families should also be aware of the likelihood that any student withdrawn from any part of sex education will likely hear their peers' version of what was said in class, which may not be accurate.

7.5 Where primary schools provide sex education, principals must automatically grant a request to withdraw a student from it, other than content that is taught as part of the science curriculum. In secondary, principals can refuse a request in exceptional circumstances, for example because of safeguarding concerns or a student's specific vulnerability.

7.6 If a student is withdrawn from any part of sex education, the academy will ensure that the student receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

7.7 Secondary students may opt back into sex education from three terms before their 16th birthday. For example, if a student turns 16 during the autumn term, the student can opt back into sex education at any time after the start of the previous autumn term.

7.8 Where students raise questions on topics that fall outside of the relationships, sex and health education curriculum, where the student has been withdrawn from some or all of sex education, teachers will provide factual, age-appropriate responses or signpost students to reliable sources, while ensuring safeguarding duties are met.



8.0 Inclusion, equality and diversity

Relationships, sex and health education will:

- uphold the Equality Act 2010, ensuring no discrimination against protected characteristics
- teach students about all protected characteristics in an age-appropriate way
- actively promote respect, inclusion and positive interactions between students of all sexes, genders, sexual orientations, races, religions and abilities. The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to foster good relationships across different protected characteristics
- teach students stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice)
- represent diverse families and relationships:
 - In primary, learning about loving relationships and families will include same-sex parents and carers along with other family arrangements.
 - In secondary, when exploring the features of stable and healthy relations, same-sex relationships will also be considered.
- be accessible to students with SEND through adaptation and support
- respect faith perspectives while ensuring statutory content is delivered.

9.0 Safeguarding and confidentiality

- 9.1 Relationships, sex and health education is a safeguarding tool, helping students recognise abuse, harassment, and online harm, as detailed in our trust's child protection and safeguarding policy.
- 9.2 All staff delivering relationships, sex and health education are trained in safeguarding procedures. Staff cannot promise confidentiality. Any disclosures will be managed according to our trust child protection and safeguarding policy.

10.0 Monitoring, evaluation and review

To ensure relationships, sex and health education in each academy is relevant, effective, and compliant with statutory requirements, our trust will monitor and evaluate the delivery and impact of relationships, sex and health education through:

- student voice
- staff feedback
- curriculum reviews
- family feedback

Appendix: Statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education.

Relationships education: content to be covered by the end of primary

Families and people who care for me

Curriculum content:

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

Curriculum content:

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. Students 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

Curriculum content:

1. How to pay attention to the needs and preferences of others, including in families and friendships. Students should be encouraged to discuss how we balance the needs and wishes of different people in relationships and why this can be complicated.
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. Students should have opportunities to discuss 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 (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices, or have different preferences or beliefs.
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. Students should have opportunities to think about how they foster their own self-esteem and build a strong sense of their own identity, including through developing skills and interests.



9. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult), and how to get help.
10. What a stereotype is; how stereotypes can be unfair, negative, destructive or lead to bullying; 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

Curriculum content:

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. For example, the importance of avoiding putting pressure on others to share information and images online, and strategies for resisting peer pressure.
2. How to critically evaluate their online relationships and sources of information, including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. For example, that people sometimes behave differently online, including pretending to be someone else, or pretending to be a child, and that this can lead to dangerous situations. 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, including other children and adults.
4. The importance of exercising caution about sharing any information about themselves online. Understanding the importance of privacy and location settings to protect information online.
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 and no control over where it ends up.
6. That the internet contains a lot of content that can be inappropriate and upsetting for children, and where to go for advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online.

Being safe

Curriculum content:

1. What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including online). This can include learning about boundaries in play and in negotiations about space, toys, books, resources etc.
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), including those they do and do not know.
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 or feeling bad about any adult 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. Where to get advice e.g. family, school and / or other sources.

Primary health and wellbeing: content to be covered by the end of primary

General wellbeing

Curriculum content:

1. The benefits of physical activity, time outdoors, and helping others for health, wellbeing and happiness. Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family, as well as hobbies, interests and community participation.
2. The importance of promoting general wellbeing and physical health.



3. The range and scale of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) that they might experience in different situations. Students should understand that worrying and feeling down are normal, affect everyone at different times, and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition.
4. How to recognise feelings and use varied vocabulary to talk about their own and others' feelings.
5. How to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.
6. That isolation and loneliness can affect children, and the benefits of seeking support.
7. That bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing and how to seek help for themselves or others.
8. That change and loss, including bereavement, can provoke a range of feelings, that grief is a natural response to bereavement, and that everyone grieves differently.
9. Where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including who in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online).
10. That it is common to experience mental health problems, and early support can help.

Wellbeing online

Curriculum content:

1. That for almost everyone, the internet is an integral part of life. Students should be supported to think about positive and negative aspects of the internet.
2. Students should be supported to discuss how online relationships can complement and support meaningful in-person relationships, but also how they might be in tension, and the reasons why online relationships are unlikely to be a good substitute for high quality in-person relationships, looking at the pros and cons of different ways of using online connection.
3. The benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing.
4. How to consider the impact of their online behaviour on others, and how to recognise and display respectful behaviour online.
5. Why social media, some apps, computer games and online gaming, including gambling sites, are age restricted.
6. The risks relating to online gaming, video game monetisation, scams, fraud and other financial harms, and that gaming can become addictive.
7. How to take a critical approach to what they see and read online and make responsible decisions about which content, including content on social media and apps, is appropriate for them.
8. That abuse, bullying and harassment can take place online and that this can impact wellbeing. How to seek support from trusted adults.
9. How to understand the information they find online, including from search engines, and know how information is selected and targeted.
10. That they have rights in relation to sharing personal data, privacy and consent.
11. Where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online.

Physical health and fitness

Curriculum content:

1. The characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle.
2. The importance of building regular physical activity into daily and weekly routines and how to achieve this; for example, walking or cycling to school, a daily active mile or other forms of regular, moderate and / or vigorous physical activity.
3. The risks associated with an inactive lifestyle, including obesity.
4. How and when to seek support including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health.

Healthy eating

Curriculum content:

1. What constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content).



2. Understanding the importance of a healthy relationship with food.
3. The principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals.
4. The characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health).

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping

Curriculum content:

1. The facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, vaping, alcohol use and drug-taking. This should include the risks of nicotine addiction, which are also caused by other nicotine products such as nicotine pouches.

Health protection and prevention

Curriculum content:

1. How to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss, or unexplained changes to the body.
2. About safe and unsafe exposure to the sun, and how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer.
3. The importance of sufficient good quality sleep for health, the amount of sleep recommended for their age, and practical steps for improving sleep, such as not using screens in the bedroom. The impact of poor sleep on weight, mood and ability to learn.
4. About dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, cleaning between teeth, and regular checkups at the dentist.
5. About personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and treated, and the importance of handwashing.
6. The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination and immunisation. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to students.

Personal safety

Curriculum content:

1. About hazards (including fire risks) that may cause harm, injury or risk and ways to reduce risks.
2. How to recognise risk and keep safe around roads, railways, including level crossings, and water, including the water safety code.

Basic first aid

Curriculum content:

1. How to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary, including the importance of reporting incidents rather than filming them.
2. Concepts of basic first aid, for example dealing with common injuries and ailments, including head injuries.

Developing bodies

Curriculum content:

1. About growth and other ways the body can change and develop, particularly during adolescence. This topic should include the human lifecycle, and puberty should be discussed as a stage in this process.
2. The correct names of body parts, including the penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples. Students should understand that all of these parts of the body are private and have skills to understand and express their own boundaries around these body parts.
3. The facts about the menstrual cycle, including physical and emotional changes, whilst the average age of the onset of menstruation is twelve, periods can start at eight, so covering this topic before girls' periods start will help them understand what to expect and avoid distress.



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

Curriculum content:

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 that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony.
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

Curriculum content:

1. The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, students should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.
2. How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. 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 characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Students should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others.
4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs.
5. The practical steps students can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes 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. Students should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Students should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok.
9. How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). 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. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others.
11. How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others.



12. Students should have an opportunity to discuss 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

Curriculum content:

1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
2. Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Students should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues.
3. The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online.
4. Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Students should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Students should understand 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 photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and / or using AI generated imagery. Students should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Students should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Students should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime.
6. What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online.
7. About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them.
8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Students should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Students should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong.
9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.
10. How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and / or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns.
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. This can affect students who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it.
12. How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
13. That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising).
14. That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion.
15. That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk

Being safe

Curriculum content:

1. How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent.
2. That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others.
3. How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
4. How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Students should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Students should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Students might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions.
5. What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it.
6. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and / or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people 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, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language.
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 if needed.
11. The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation.
12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.
13. The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible.
14. That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's 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, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

Curriculum content:

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 they have a choice about whether to have sex, 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 their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent.
4. 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.



5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
6. The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision making.
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 the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma
9. The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them 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, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Secondary health and wellbeing 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:

Mental wellbeing

Curriculum content:

1. How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
2. The benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness.
3. That happiness is linked to being connected to others. Students should be supported to understand what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel unhappy, while recognising that loneliness can be for most people an inevitable part of life at times and is not something of which to be ashamed.
4. That worrying and feeling down are normal, can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal.
5. Characteristics of common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression), including carefully-presented factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental health conditions. This should not be discussed in a way that encourages normal feelings to be labelled as mental health conditions.
6. How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall wellbeing.
7. Understanding how to overcome anxiety or other barriers to participating in fun, enjoyable or rewarding activities – that it's possible to overcome those barriers using coping strategies, and that finding the courage to participate in activities which initially feel challenging may decrease anxiety over time rather than increasing it.
8. That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others.
9. That the co-occurrence of alcohol / drug use and poor mental health is common and that the relationship is bi-directional: mental health problems can increase the risk of alcohol / drug use, and alcohol / drug use can trigger mental health problems or exacerbate existing ones. That stopping smoking can improve people's mental health and decrease anxiety.

Wellbeing online

Curriculum content:

1. About the benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing.
2. The similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image); how people may curate a specific



image of their life online; the impact that an over-reliance on online relationships, including relationships formed through social media, can have.

3. How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours.
4. The risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt.
5. How advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online, understanding the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation online, including conspiracy theories.
6. The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online.
7. The serious risks of viewing online content that promotes self-harm, suicide or violence, including how to safely report this material and how to access support after viewing it.

Physical health and fitness

Curriculum content:

1. The characteristics of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill-health, including cardiovascular ill-health.
2. Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions.
3. That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress.
4. The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

Healthy eating

Curriculum content:

1. How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease.
2. The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
3. The impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping

Curriculum content:

1. The facts about which drugs are illegal, the risks of taking illegal drugs, including the increased risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the potential health harms, including the link to poor mental health.
2. The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
3. The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption. What constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England. Understanding how to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol.
4. The physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency.
5. The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines.
6. The facts about the multiple serious harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.
7. The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit.

Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system

Curriculum content:

1. Personal hygiene, germs and how they are spread, including bacteria and viruses, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.
2. Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth, reducing consumption of sugar-containing food and drinks, and regular check-ups at the dentist.



3. How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals.
4. The importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
5. The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination, immunisation and antimicrobial resistance. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to students.
6. The importance of sufficient good-quality sleep for good health, the importance of screen-free time before bed and removing phones from the bedroom, and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.
7. The importance of healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy, including the importance of pre-conception health, including taking folic acid. The importance of pelvic floor health. Information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and how to access care and support.
8. How to navigate their local healthcare system: what a GP is; when to use A&E / minor injuries; accessing sexual health and family planning clinics; the role of local pharmacies; and how to seek help via local third sector partners which may have specialist services.
9. The concept of Gillick competence. That the legal age of medical consent is 16. That before this, a child's parents will have responsibility for consenting to medical treatment on their behalf unless they are Gillick competent to take this decision for themselves. Students should understand the circumstances in which someone over 16 may not be deemed to have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment.

Personal safety

Curriculum content:

1. How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around roads, railways – including level crossings – and water (including the water safety code), and in unfamiliar social or work settings (for example the first time a young person goes on holiday without their parents).
2. How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media.
3. How to develop key social and emotional skills that will increase students' safety from involvement in conflict and violence. These include skills to support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making, as well as skills to recognise and manage peer pressure.
4. Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if students are worried about violence and / or knife crime.
5. The law as it relates to knives and violence. Content and examples should relate to the local context and avoid using fear as an educational tool. Children should be taught that carrying weapons is uncommon, and should not be scared into the perception that many young people are carrying knives (which can lead to the misconception that they need to carry a knife too).
6. The risks and signs that they may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help where there is a concern.

Basic first aid

Curriculum content:

1. Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments.
2. Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.
3. The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.

Developing bodies

Curriculum content:

1. The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.
2. The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development.
3. About menstrual and gynaecological health, including: what is an average period; period problems such as premenstrual syndrome; heavy menstrual bleeding; endometriosis; and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). When to seek help from healthcare professionals.
4. The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women

