



Relationship Sex Education (RSE) Health Education Policy 2025/26

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Vision & Objectives

At Dartford Science and Technology College, we deliver a high-quality Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education program that empowers our students at every stage of their lives. Delivered through Individual Character Education (ICE) lessons, our RSE and Health Education curriculum equips students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make safe, healthy, and informed relationship choices both as young people and in their adult lives. It supports students with relevant learning throughout Social, Emotional, Spiritual and Culture (SMSC) studies.

We strive to foster a pioneering and innovative curriculum that reflects the world our students inhabit today. By encouraging creativity, we invite students to think differently about their relationships and personal values. Our commitment to resilience ensures that they develop the determination needed to navigate challenges effectively and enhance their wellbeing.

We emphasise kindness and compassion in our discussions, creating an environment where students feel safe to explore and express their thoughts. Curiosity is nurtured as we encourage them to ask questions and seek deeper understanding. Our program promotes bravery, inspiring students to be courageous in their interactions and using their voice to prioritise healthier relationships.

At the heart of our approach is the theme of consent, introduced in Year 7 and revisited annually to ensure age-appropriate understanding. By empowering our students with the ability to openly discuss relationships and sex, we aim to significantly reduce the risk of unhealthy and abusive relationships. We are dedicated to building upon the RSE and Health Education foundations built in primary school, reinforcing the vital role that RSE and Health Education plays in their education and overall well-being.

The content and curriculum is developed inline with the PSHE Association guidance and includes the recommendations from the Health and Well-being, Living in the Wider World and Relationships topics. The curriculum is age appropriate and includes the new 2025 guidance recommendations from the 2025 DFE statutory guidance.

Objectives

At DSTC our ICE Programme seeks to:

- Be age **appropriate and differentiated** to the needs of the students including SEND
- Present information in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner
- Support and enhance levels of wellbeing across the school community
- Encourage the **development of social skills and strategies**, which will **reduce the risk** of exploitation, misunderstanding and abuse
- Be fully **inclusive of all genders, sexual orientations and all types of families (LGBTQ inclusive)**
- Develop a clear understanding of the importance of **consent**; how to give, withdraw, ask for and recognise consent
- Reinforce the importance of **loving relationships**, rooted in **mutual respect**
- Explore the skills needed for **effective parenting** and how to assess one's readiness to be a parent
- To represent all types of families and to explore the different methods for starting a family
- To ensure that groups from the Global Majority, LGBTQ and people with disabilities are positively represented in our curriculum
- Ensure students can identify the qualities of **healthy and unhealthy relationships**

- Allow students to examine the physical and emotional implications of sexual behaviour and to explore the reasons for **delaying sexual activity**
- Make students aware of how and where to **seek help** if they are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship or feel uncomfortable or pressured.
- Prepare students for the journey from **adolescence to adulthood**
- Provide students with a safe environment to learn about **sexual orientation and gender identity**, reinforcing the importance of mutual respect and tackling LGBT misconceptions, homophobia, transphobia, bi-phobia and gender stereotypes
- Ensure that students have a clear understanding of **sexual and reproductive biology**, including knowledge of sexual health: HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases
- Ensure students understand the different risks associated with various types of sexual activity and understand how to engage in **safe sexual activity** by exploring a range of **contraception**
- Place paramount importance on online safety and the risks of using social media and the internet for sexual purposes
- Develop students' understanding of the dangers of pornographic material (and the law around sending photos of this nature)

1. Legal Requirements

In accordance with the Education Act (1993) and the Education Reform Act (1998), all schools are mandated to establish and maintain a policy statement regarding Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), which must be made available to parents upon request. This policy is written to be aligned with the Department for Education (DfE) Guidance on Sex and Relationships Education (2020) and the supplementary guidance from 2014, titled Sex and Relationships Education for the 21st Century.

As of September 2025, the guidance document titled 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, and teachers' has become a statutory requirement. This document outlines the curriculum content that secondary schools are obliged to deliver concerning RSE and Health Education and specifies the legal responsibilities schools must fulfill in teaching these subjects.

The term 'school' encompasses all educational institutions, including maintained, non-maintained, and independent schools, as well as academies, free schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained special schools, and alternative provision settings, including student referral units. For additional details regarding curriculum content, please refer to Appendix 1.

To remain relevant and effective, our curriculum will adapt to emerging issues that affect students' daily lives. Key updates for 2025/26 include:

1. Online Safety and Wellbeing:

- A heightened focus on online financial risks, such as gaming monetisation, scams, and fraud.
- Education on age restrictions for online content and students' rights concerning privacy, consent, and personal data management.

2. Health Education:

- An emphasis on understanding bodily changes, including the correct terminology for body parts (genitalia), to create a safe space for discussing personal safety and recognising signs of abuse.

3. Personal Safety:

- Introduction of statutory content that emphasises risk recognition and reduction strategies related to fire and travel safety.

4. Change and Loss:

- Coverage of topics related to bereavement and the complex emotions that accompany loss.

5. Skills Development:

- Enhanced focus on effective communication, assertiveness, and strategies for managing challenging emotions in relationships, particularly in online interactions.

See appendix 1 for further information on curriculum content.

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

2. Course Content

Our RSE and Health Education curriculum is 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 and teachers.***

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

RSE curriculum for SEN students

Where possible, all students will remain with their class for RSE and Health Education lessons. Students with SEN or students who have been identified as likely to need SEMH support with RSE and Health Education may receive the support of an Independent Support Assistant (ISA) during these lessons, or arrangements will be made for specific students to be withdrawn from RSE lessons with the rest of their class to receive a differentiated version of the programme delivered within the SEND (Special Educational Needs Department). Where appropriate, the SENCO and ICE Lead will make the relevant plans at the start of each academic year.

3. Sensitive or Controversial Topics

In our ICE curriculum, particularly during Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) lessons, sensitive or controversial topics may arise. Teachers will use their professional judgment to

determine whether these subjects are appropriate for class discussion, ensuring that all content is age-appropriate and adheres to the 2025 government guidelines as well as recommendations from the PSHE Association.

Teachers will strive to respond to students' questions with honesty and sensitivity, always considering the context of the discussion. If a question is deemed too explicit for the classroom setting, the teacher will acknowledge it and address it individually, outside of the whole class environment.

To maintain a respectful and safe learning atmosphere, teachers will establish clear ground rules that outline the parameters of discussions. Students will never be asked to disclose personal information about their sexual orientation or that of others.

Respect for all genders, sexualities, and family structures will be a cornerstone of our discussions. Any concerns related to sexual abuse or safeguarding issues will be addressed promptly, following the school's safeguarding procedures.

When discussions about sexual behavior arise from seemingly unrelated topics, teachers will apply their professional judgment to identify and address relevant issues.

Regarding sensitive subjects like HIV/AIDS, teachers will handle discussions about the transmission of the virus with care and objectivity, avoiding bias and prejudice. They will also challenge stereotypes and misconceptions associated with HIV, remaining mindful that some students may have personal connections to this topic.

Additionally, issues such as grooming, sexual exploitation, and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behavior, will be approached with sensitivity and clarity. The curriculum will also address the physical and emotional consequences of female genital mutilation (FGM), ensuring students understand where to seek support and the legal implications surrounding FGM, including the fact that it is a criminal offense to perform or assist in such acts or to fail to protect individuals from it.

4. Organisation and Delivery

The Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education curriculum is delivered to students in Years 7 to 13 through ICE lessons, with each student receiving one hour of instruction fortnightly during their designated curriculum time. This core curriculum is further enriched by assemblies, Form Time activities, and dedicated curriculum days.

All students at Dartford Science and Technology College have equal access to RSE and Health Education. Topics are revisited throughout the curriculum to accommodate various levels of understanding, maturity, and learning abilities, creating a spiral learning experience that builds upon previous knowledge.

Students identified with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will receive a tailored RSE and Health Education programme to meet their specific requirements, as detailed in Section 3 of the Course Content.

Teachers and all contributors to the RSE curriculum will operate within the agreed framework outlined in this policy. To enhance the quality of education, DSTC will utilise resources from reputable PSHE organisations, including the PSHE Association, Bounce Forward charity, the Sex Education Forum, and other government-recommended PSHE providers, ensuring that our curriculum reflects current best practices.

5. Working with Parents

Parental support is crucial to the effectiveness of our RSE and Health Education curriculum. While we have both an educational and legal obligation to provide students with comprehensive RSE, we also honour the primary role parents play in guiding their children through these important topics.

Right to Withdraw from Sex Education

As outlined in the 2025 RSE guidelines, parents have the right to withdraw their child from any aspect of RSE (excluding components that are part of the science curriculum) until three terms before the child's 16th birthday. The guidelines state, "If a child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms."

In instances where parents choose to withdraw their child from RSE, the school will document the process and ensure that the student continues to receive appropriate and purposeful education during the withdrawal period. We encourage open communication with parents to address any concerns and to support their child's educational journey effectively.

5. Confidentiality

The ICE curriculum, encompassing RSE and Health Education, is designed to empower students to engage in open discussions with trusted adults regarding their sexual relationships or considerations of becoming sexually active. While it is ideal for students to confide in their parents or carers, we recognise that this may not always be the case.

Health professionals are legally permitted to provide confidential consultations and treatment to young people in certain circumstances. This confidentiality extends to counseling services, where discussions involving parents may occur.

In accordance with our safeguarding protocols, if a staff member becomes aware that a student under the age of 16 is either currently engaged in, or contemplating sexual intercourse, they are required to report this information to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Similarly, if a 16-year-old student expresses an intention to engage in sexual activity with a student below the age of 16, the DSL will determine the appropriate course of action, adhering to the school's Safeguarding Policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at Dartford Science and Technology College is Emma Beer.

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

The school will work with health professionals in the development and implementation of the schools RSE programme. Any visitors used to help in the delivery of the RSE programme will be clear about the boundaries of their input and will be aware of the RSE curriculum; relevant school policies and their work will be planned and agreed in advance.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

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

ICE, including RSE, is monitored by school leaders using DSTC Quality Assurance of Curriculum & Teaching documentation.

This policy will be reviewed by the Principal annually.

8. Linked Policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Looking for Learning Cycle
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Objectives

Appendix 1 (UPDATED)

Individual Character Education at DSTC: Overview

	Autumn Health & wellbeing	Winter/Spring Living in the wider world	Summer Relationships
Year 7	Transition and safety Transition to secondary school and personal safety in and outside school, including understanding resilience and emotional feelings Health and puberty Healthy routines, influences on health, puberty, unwanted contact, and FGM	Developing skills and aspirations Understanding the role of the media and its influences through the media and beyond Financial decision making Saving, borrowing, budgeting and making financial choices	Building relationships Self-worth, romance and friendships (including online) and relationship boundaries Diversity Diversity, prejudice, and bullying
Year 8	Emotional wellbeing Mental health and emotional wellbeing, including body image and coping strategies. Revisiting resilience and dealing with emotions. Drugs and alcohol Alcohol and drug misuse and pressures relating to drug use, smoking and vaping	Community and careers Equality of opportunity in careers and life choices, and different types and patterns of work. The journey 'from school to life', making choices, overcoming obstacles, roadblocks and decision making at forks in the road. Digital literacy Online safety, digital literacy, media reliability, and gambling hooks	Discrimination Discrimination in all its forms, including: racism, religious discrimination, disability, discrimination, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Identity and relationships Gender identity, sexual orientation, consent, 'sexting', and an introduction to contraception.

Year 9	<p>Peer influence, substance use and gangs</p> <p>Healthy and unhealthy friendships, assertiveness, substance misuse, and gang exploitation</p> <p>Healthy lifestyle</p> <p>Diet, exercise, lifestyle balance and healthy choices, and first aid</p>	<p>Setting goals</p> <p>Learning strengths, career options and goal setting as part of the GCSE options process</p> <p>Employability skills</p> <p>Employability and online presence</p>	<p>Respectful relationships</p> <p>Families and parenting, healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and relationship changes</p> <p>Intimate relationships</p> <p>Relationships and sex education including consent, contraception, the risks of STIs, and attitudes to pornography</p>
Year 10	<p>Mental health</p> <p>Mental health and ill health, stigma, safeguarding health, including during periods of transition or change</p> <p>Exploring influence</p> <p>The influence and impact of drugs, gangs, role models and the media</p>	<p>Financial decision making</p> <p>The impact of financial decisions, debt, gambling and the impact of advertising on financial choices</p> <p>Work experience</p> <p>Preparation for and evaluation of work experience and readiness for work</p>	<p>Healthy relationships</p> <p>Relationships and sex expectations, myths, pleasure and challenges, including the impact of the media and pornography</p> <p>Addressing extremism and radicalisation</p> <p>Communities, belonging and challenging extremism</p>
Year 11	<p>Building for the future</p> <p>Self-efficacy, stress management, and future opportunities. Marketing yourself and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Independence</p> <p>Responsible health choices, and safety in independent contexts</p>	<p>Next steps</p> <p>Application processes, and skills for further education, employment and career progression</p> <p>Careers in core subjects</p>	<p>Communication in relationships</p> <p>Personal values, assertive communication (including in relation to contraception and sexual health), relationship challenges and abuse</p> <p>Families</p> <p>Different families and parental responsibilities, pregnancy, marriage and forced marriage and changing relationships</p>

<p>Year 12</p>	<p>Transition to Post 16</p> <p>Including: Self concept Skills and strategies to manage moving to Post-16 Mental and emotional well-being including Relaxation Personal safety (OSA)</p> <p>Exploring Influence</p> <p>Different classes of drugs and the risks and consequences involved Body image and self-esteem cosmetic procedures</p>	<p>Careers, Finance and Independence</p> <p>Employability skills, computer literacy skills, different jobs, apprenticeships and personal presentation Plagiarism</p> <p>Work experience</p> <p>Preparation for and evaluation of work experience and readiness for work</p>	<p>Healthy Relationships</p> <p>Including: Relationship values; Consent; contraception and parenthood</p> <p>Relationships</p> <p>Addressing extremism and radicalisation honour based violence; unhealthy relationships</p>
<p>Year 13</p>	<p>Health and Well-Being: Emotional Health</p> <p>Healthy lifestyles/Risk and safety</p> <p>Lifestyle choices around independent living</p> <p>Emotional well-being, self-concept and lifestyle choices around independent living</p>	<p>Careers - Financial choices and employment rights</p> <p>Financial choices Employment rights and responsibilities Media literacy</p>	<p>Relationships: Toxic relationships: Toxic Masculinity; Controlling relationships; Tolerating intolerance</p> <p>Living Independently</p> <p>Relationships outside the home moving away</p>