

Norton College Tewkesbury

Relationships, Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy

Statement of intent

At Norton College we understand the importance of educating students about sex, relationships and their health, for them to make responsible and well-informed decisions in their lives. The teaching of RSE and health education can help to prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. It allows us to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of students at College and in the wider society. We have an obligation to provide students with high-quality, evidence and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects. This policy outlines how the College's RSE and health education curriculum will be organised and delivered, to ensure it meets the needs of all students.

Date policy last reviewed:	12/11/2025
Date policy due for review:	12/11/2026

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education
- DfE (2021) 'Teaching about relationships, sex and health'
- DfE (2019) 'The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations
- DfE (2015) 'National curriculum in England: science programmes of study'

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Governing Body of Norton College have the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring the RSE and health education curriculum is well-led, effectively managed and well-planned.
- Providing clear information to parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.
- Keeping an up-to-date policy and ensuring it is published on the College's website and provided free of charge to anyone who requests it. Reviewing this policy annually.

2.2 The SLT of Norton College have the following responsibilities:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring all staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects.
- Reviewing all requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory elements of the RSE and health education curriculum.
- Discussing withdrawal requests with parents, and the student if appropriate, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, including the benefits of receiving the education.

2.3 The Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) subject leader is responsible for:

- Overseeing the delivery of RSE and health education.
 - Working closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the RSE and health education curriculum compliments, and does not duplicate, the content covered in other curriculum subjects.
 - Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate and of high quality.
 - Reviewing changes to the RSE and health education curriculum and advising on their implementation.
 - Monitoring the learning and teaching of RSE and health education, providing support to staff where necessary.
 - Helping to develop colleagues' expertise in the subject.
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the curriculum.

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3. Organisation of the RSE and health education curriculum

3.1 For the purpose of this policy: • “Relationships and sex education” is defined as teaching students about developing healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, and helping them to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.

- “Health education” is defined as teaching students about how they can make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, and how physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked.

3.2 The RSE and health education curriculum will be developed in accordance with DfE recommendations.

3.3 The majority of the RSE and health education curriculum will be delivered through PSHE education, with statutory elements taught via the science curriculum. The RSE and health education subject leader will work closely with their colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the curriculum complements and does not duplicate the content covered in national curriculum subjects.

The College will ensure that the curriculum remains in line with the DfE’s ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education’ guidance at all times. The College will consider the context and views of the wider local community when developing the curriculum to ensure it is reflective of circumstances in the local area. The religious background of all students will also be considered when planning teaching, to ensure all topics included are appropriately handled.

The RSE and health education curriculum will be informed by topical issues in the College and wider community, to ensure it is tailored to students’ needs, e.g. if there was a local prevalence of specific sexually transmitted infections, our curriculum would be tailored to address this issue.

4. RSE subject overview

RSE will continue to develop students’ knowledge on the topics taught at a primary level, in addition to the content outlined in this section.

4.1 Families

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
- What marriage is, including their legal status, e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony.
- Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into.

About the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships.

- About the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting.
- Determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy.
- Judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe, and recognise this in others' relationships.
- Seek help or advice if needed, including reporting concerns about others.

4.2 Respectful relationships, including friendships

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- About the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships in all contexts (including online), including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationships.
- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- How stereotypes, particularly those based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage, e.g. how they might normalise nonconsensual behaviour.
- That in College and wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs.
- About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to seek help.
- About the types of behaviour in relationships that can be criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
- What constitutes sexual harassment and violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- About the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, with reference to the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010, and that everyone is unique and equal.

4.3 Online and media

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- About their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, and that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts.
- About online risks, including that material shared with another person has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.
- Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which they receive.
- What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online.
- The impact of viewing harmful content.

That specifically sexually explicit material, e.g. pornography, presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners.

- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties, including jail.
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

4.4 Being safe

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- About the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships.
- How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn – this includes online.

4.5 Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship.
- That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively and negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
- The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for both men and women.
- The range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others.
- That they have a choice to delay sex or enjoy intimacy without sex.
- The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, their effectiveness and options available.
- The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage.
- That there are choices in relation to pregnancy, with legally and medically accurate, impartial information on all options including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help.
- How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex and the importance of facts about testing.
- About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
- How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
- How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

5. RSE programmes of study

The school will determine an age-appropriate, developmental curriculum which meets the needs of young people and includes the statutory content outlined in section 4 of this policy. This is based on the PSHE Association Programme of Study, which is in turn based on the National Curriculum.

6. Health education subject overview

The physical health and mental wellbeing curriculum will continue to develop students' knowledge on the topics taught at a primary level, in addition to the content outlined in this section.

6.1 Mental wellbeing

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
- That happiness is linked to being connected to others.
- How to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns.
- About common types of mental ill health, e.g. anxiety and depression.
- How to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health.
- About the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.

6.2 Internet safety and harms

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- About the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online, overreliance on online relationships, the risks related to online gambling, how information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online.
- 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.

6.3 Physical health and fitness

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- The positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress.
- The characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health.
- About the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

6.4 Healthy eating

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.

6.5 Drugs, alcohol and tobacco

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- The facts about legal and illegal drugs and their associated risks, including the link between drug use and serious mental health conditions.
- The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
- The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood.
- The physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency.
- The dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.
- The facts about the harms from smoking tobacco, the benefits of quitting and how to access the support to do so.

6.6 Health and prevention

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn about:

- Personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.
- Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist.
- The benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
- The facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination.
- The importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.

6.7 Basic first aid

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- Basic treatments for common injuries.
- Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.
- About the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.

6.8 Changing adolescent body

By the end of their time at College, students will have been given the opportunity to learn:

- The key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual wellbeing.
- About the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.

7. Health education programmes of study

The school will determine an age-appropriate, developmental curriculum which meets the needs of young people and includes the statutory content outlined in section 6 of this policy.

8. Delivery of the curriculum

8.1 Through effective organisation and delivery of the RSE and health education, we will ensure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of a manageable size.

- The required content is communicated to students clearly and in a carefully sequenced way.
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for students to embed new knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations.

8.2 The curriculum will proactively address issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on students' physical, emotional and sexual development. RSE and health education will be delivered in a non-judgemental, age-appropriate, factual and inclusive way that allows students to ask questions in a safe environment.

8.3 The College will integrate LGBTQ+ content into the RSE curriculum – this content will be taught as part of the overall curriculum, rather than a standalone topic or lesson. LGBTQ+ content will be approached in a sensitive, age-appropriate and factual way that allows students to explore gender identity and the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships. The curriculum will be designed to focus on students of all gender identities and expressions and activities will be planned to ensure all are actively involved.

9. Working with parents

9.1 The College understands that parents'/carers' role in the development of their children's understanding about relationships and health is vital; therefore, we will work closely with parents/carers when delivering the content of the school's RSE and health education curriculum, and will withdraw students from the curriculum at the parents'/carers' request.

9.2 The College will remain aware that the teaching of some aspects of the curriculum may be of concern to parents/carers. If parents/carers have concerns regarding RSE and health education, they will contact the school office via email or telephone.

9.3 Working with external agencies

External experts may be invited to assist from time-to-time with the delivery of the RSE and health education curriculum but will be expected to comply with the provisions of this policy.

When working with external agencies, the school will:

- Check the visitor credentials of all external agencies.
- Ensure the teaching delivered by the external experts fits with the planned curriculum and provisions of this policy.
- Discuss with the visitor the details of how they intend to deliver their sessions and ensure the content is age-appropriate and accessible for all students.
- Request copies of the materials and lesson plans the visitor will use, to ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs.
- Agree with the agency on how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports must be dealt with in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Withdrawal from lessons

10.1 The College will always recognise that parents/carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. The College will uphold that parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from the relationships or health elements of the programmes.

11. Equality and accessibility

11.1 The College will comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure the curriculum does not discriminate against students because of their:

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Sexual orientation

11.2 Where there is a need to tailor content and teaching to meet the needs of students at different developmental stages, the College will ensure the teaching remains sensitive, age appropriate, developmentally appropriate and is delivered with reference to the law.

11.3 The College will be actively aware of everyday issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture within which these are not tolerated. Any occurrences of such issues will be identified and managed promptly. Sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

12. Safeguarding and confidentiality

12.1 All students will be taught about keeping themselves safe, including online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

12.2 When teaching issues that are particularly sensitive for students of all ages, e.g. self-harm or suicide, staff will be made aware of the risks of inadvertently encouraging, or providing instructions to, students. Teaching of these subjects will always prioritise preventing harm to students as a central goal.

12.3 All staff will understand that some aspects of RSE may lead to a student raising a safeguarding concern, e.g. disclosing that they are being abused, and that if a disclosure is made, the DSL will be alerted immediately. Students will be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report, and how their report will be handled – this includes the process for when they have a concern about a peer.

13. Assessment

13.1 The College will have the same high expectations of the quality of students' work in RSE and health education as for other curriculum areas. Sessions will be planned to provide suitable challenge to students of all abilities.

Teaching will be assessed and assessments used to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention.

14. Staff training

14.1 Training will be provided by the RSE and health education subject leader to the relevant members of staff to ensure they are up-to-date with the RSE and health education curriculum. Training will also be scheduled around any updated guidance on the curriculum and any new developments, e.g. "sexting", which may need to be addressed in relation to the curriculum.