



Outcomes
First Group

PSHE & RSE POLICY

Options Barton School



PSHE & RSE POLICY 2026-2027

This policy covers the delivery of PSHE and RSE at Options Barton School.

Intended audience:

- Staff
- Governors
- Parents and Carers
- Pupils

School Background Information

Options Barton is a school for children and young people aged 5-19 years. All the students have a diagnosis of autism, many who have additional complex needs including moderate and severe learning difficulties, social emotional and mental health difficulties, global delay, communication and sensory differences. All of our young people are extremely vulnerable, and many have experienced disruption to formal education. For some students this has resulted in long periods of absence from education and has impacted on their self-confidence and self-esteem.

At Options Barton School we believe that all young people deserve the right to an education that will support them to become happy and confident individuals with the right skills, knowledge, qualifications, and achievements that will support them in the future. Our intention is that when students leave Options Barton, they have acquired the necessary life skills, appropriate to their needs. We want all our students to develop strategies to learn how to deal with society so that they will have good mental health and wellbeing.

Our PSHE curriculum promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of our students, preparing them for the opportunities, experiences, and responsibilities for later life. Our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education enables our young people to learn how to be safe, and to develop healthy relationships.

PSHE and RSE

We follow the PSHE Education Planning Framework for students with SEND written by the PSHE Association. Our PSHE curriculum also includes RSE, life skills and enterprise. For students working on our Meadow Pathway to independence the Equals is used to support to support the appropriate delivery of key concepts linked to both PSHE and RSE. PSHE can be observed happening right across the school day. Our students have Personalised Learning Intentions to address areas of need or vulnerabilities identified. The long-term curriculum map may also be adapted at any point in response to wider school issues which arise.

RSE must always be appropriate to the individual learners age and developmental level, and that learners do not need to be taught what they do not need to know.

Primary (KS1 and 2) Curriculum Content:

Relationships Education

The Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 have made Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools. Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and close positive relationships
- Friendships
- Managing hurtful behaviour and bullying
- Safe relationships
- Respecting self and others

Sex Education

The DfE Guidance 2025 (p.23) recommends that all primary schools '*have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils*'. However, '*Sex Education is not compulsory in primary schools*'. (p.23)

Schools are to determine the content of sex education at primary school. Sex education 'should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born'. We define sex education as understanding human reproduction. As is set out in the guidance parents should be consulted about the detailed content on what is to be taught.

We believe that all children at our school should have access to a sex education programme to enable them to:

- Be safe
- Be provided with the correct scientific terminology and information and taught how to use it in the right context
- Make responsible, informed and healthy choices about their lives now and in the future
- Be respectful of themselves and others to enable them to move confidently through childhood, adolescence into adulthood
- Have the understanding to develop and maintain positive and healthy relationships

Health Education

Health Education focuses on the following key areas:

- Mental wellbeing
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness

- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Health and prevention
- Basic first aid
- Changing adolescent body

KS3 and 4 Curriculum Content:

Relationships and Sex Education

The Key Stage 3 and 4 Relationships and Sex Education focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

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

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

Health Education

The Key Stage 3 and 4 Health Education curriculum continues to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition covers the following content by the end of secondary:

- Mental wellbeing
- Internet safety and harms
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Health and prevention
- Basic first aid
- Changing adolescent body

Statutory Requirements

At Options Barton School, the curriculum has been developed to best suit the needs of the children, in line with advice from the DoE and legislation regarding Relationships and Sex education and Health Education. All of the compulsory subject content will be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It must be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect to the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and parents while always with the aim of providing pupils with the knowledge they need of the law.

This relationships, sex and health education policy covers **OFG** approach to teaching relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). RSHE is an integral part of our PSHE curriculum at **Options Barton School** and covers all statutory requirements as per the DFE guidance for relationships and sex education and health education.

Children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world, navigating both online and offline environments that present significant opportunities alongside definite risks. In line with **statutory RSHE and Health Education (2025)**, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and the provisions of the **Equality Act (2010)**, our curriculum plays a central role in safeguarding by equipping pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding to recognise risk, stay safe and make informed decisions about their wellbeing, relationships and health.

At our school, RSHE is not taught in isolation but is embedded within a whole-school safeguarding approach. RSHE provides accurate, age-appropriate knowledge alongside the development of personal and social perspectives. It supports pupils to understand boundaries, consent, healthy relationships, online safety and emotional wellbeing, enabling them to manage their lives safely and positively both now and in the future whilst developing the confidence to seek help when needed.

Relationships (RSE) is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Our approach is underpinned by our commitment to **trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming practice**. We recognise that behaviour and wellbeing are shaped by individual experiences, including trauma and neurodivergence. Through our **Ask, Accept, Develop (AAD)** approach, we work collaboratively with young people—accepting their experiences and needs, and developing together. This ensures that RSHE is inclusive, responsive and grounded in strong, trusting relationships.

RSHE provision at **Options Barton** strengthens safeguarding, promotes wellbeing, and supports all our pupils to achieve positive, lifelong outcomes and to contribute meaningfully to society.

Principles and aims of effective RSHE

RSHE provision at **Options Barton**

- Is an identifiable part of our school curriculum, which planned and integrated across

all Key Stages and classes. .

- Works in partnership with parents and carers, informing them about what their children will be learning and how they can contribute at home.
- Delivers lessons where pupils feel safe and participation is encouraged through a variety of teaching approaches with opportunities to develop critical thinking and relationship skills.
- Is based on reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights, and distinguishes between fact and opinion.
- Promotes safe, equal, caring and enjoyable relationships and discusses real-life issues appropriate to the age and stage of pupils, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and safe relationships online.
- Gives a positive view of human sexuality with honest and medically accurate information so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health in ways that are appropriate to their age and stage.
- Gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their values and influences (such as from peers, media, faith and culture) that may shape their attitudes to relationships and sex and nurture respect for different views.
- Includes signposting to sources of help and advice and reliable information online.
- Embeds diversity through an inclusive whole school approach ensuring that all protected characteristics, including LGBTQ+ identities, are represented positively and routinely and all identities are respected all forms of discrimination are challenged.
- Meets the needs of all pupils with their diverse experiences including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Seeks pupils' views about RSHE so that teaching can be made relevant to their real lives and assessed and adapted as their needs change.
- Ensures school staff have periodical RSHE training in relation to emerging issues and contextually relevant themes.
- Equips pupils to recognise, critically evaluate and respond to misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories, particularly those encountered online. This includes teaching pupils how to assess the reliability of sources, understand the potential harms of false narratives, and develop digital literacy and critical thinking skills in line with the latest [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) guidance.

RSHE and safeguarding

The school's responsibility to safeguard pupils through a curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world is central to the planning and delivery of RSHE.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) work closely with PSHE/RSHE leaders to ensure safeguarding is fully embedded within curriculum content, teaching approaches and resources. This is a two-way process: staff delivering RSHE will share emerging themes, concerns or contextual safeguarding risks identified through classroom discussion, enabling DSLs to respond proactively. In turn, DSLs support staff to plan and deliver content sensitively, particularly where pupils may be vulnerable or where topics may be difficult due to the student's own prior experiences or trauma.

RSHE is delivered using appropriate distancing techniques, such as scenarios or characters, to ensure pupils can engage safely without pressure to disclose personal information. Staff signpost pupils to appropriate sources of support and work closely with pastoral systems and

clinical teams to ensure timely responses to emerging needs. Any disclosures or concerns arising during lessons are treated as safeguarding matters and reported immediately to the DSL, in line with the school's safeguarding policy.

Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher

is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the School, and for managing requests to withdraw students from sex education.

The PSHE lead has responsibility for:

- Ensuring that RSHE is delivered in line with statutory guidance and reflects the school's policy.
- Overseeing all required content is coherently planned and consistently taught across year groups.
- Develops wider staff by identifying training needs, providing appropriate resources, and ensuring teachers have the subject knowledge and confidence to deliver sensitive content safely and effectively.
- Working in partnership with safeguarding leads to ensure the curriculum is responsive to contextual safeguarding issues and the needs of specific pupils or groups.

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress and understanding
- Responding to the needs of individual students

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher

Involving parents and carers

We believe that RSHE is most effective when it is in collaboration between school and home. We therefore wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with parents/carers of children and young people at Options Barton through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. Parents will be informed through termly curriculum planning overviews outlining what will be covered in PSHE/RSE and teachers will communicate with parents regularly as needed throughout the term to share specific topics and discussions.

Parents are able to view other curriculum materials used to teach RSHE on request. The school will provide support to parents and carers through an annual workshop which provides a valuable opportunity to develop awareness of emerging RSHE topics, review the resources being used and discover ways to build on the learning at home. Our school also operates an open-door policy enabling parents to discuss RSHE at relevant times throughout the school year.

Right to withdraw

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents and carers may request that their child is excused from Sex Education, taught outside of the national curriculum for science. If a parent wishes their child to be excused from some or all the non-statutory Sex Education, they should discuss this with the Headteacher, making clear which sessions they do not wish their child to participate in. The Headteacher will outline to parents/carers the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was discussed in classes rather than what was taught directly. Once a decision has been made, parents/carers must inform the school in writing stating their reasons as to why they would like their child withdrawn. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record.

Following the decision, except in exceptional circumstances, Options Barton will respect a parent/carers' request to have their child withdrawn from non-statutory sex education up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education, rather than be withdrawn, the school will provide the child with sex education during one of those terms and document this process.

If a pupil is excused from sex education, the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Where a question arises that is necessary to safeguard a pupil or to address potentially harmful myths or misinformation around sex education topics, staff will provide an appropriate, factual and sensitive response which will be recorded on school safeguarding systems and follow the schools' safeguarding policy. In such cases answers will be framed to support pupil's safety, wellbeing and understanding.

Policy review

Consultation with families and pupils will be conducted on a regular basis to support with reviewing the curriculum to ensure it remains responsive to emerging needs and the policy updated accordingly.

This policy will be annually or sooner if the RSHE curriculum is amended, for example in response to emerging themes, changing pupil needs or introduction of new legislation and guidance.

This RSHE policy is currently aligned with the Department for Education [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education](#) Statutory Guidance (2025).



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