Relationships & Sex Education Policy 2026-27

Date Policy due to be reviewed: September 2027

Committee Responsible for Policy: Full Trust Board

WORK HARD | BE KIND | AIM HIGH

Section 1 - Overview

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education regulations has made Relationships and Sex Education compulsory for all students receiving secondary education. It has also made Health Education compulsory. The new legislation will ensure RSE is appropriate to the age of students and their religious backgrounds. In addition, policy and practice at Hillcrest School fully embraces Birmingham's 'Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2023-2029'.

All students in schools will be made aware of the value of a stable family life and relationships and the responsibilities of parenthood. They will be encouraged to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and others, acceptance of responsibilities, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity. Relationships and Sex education will be promoted as an integral part of the discussions about loving relationships and behaviour that is both acceptable and unacceptable in relationships. Pupils will be enabled to recognise that both sexes must behave responsibly in sexual matters. Relationships and Sex Education is an integral part of the learning process, fully integrated into the curriculum and not isolated, taken out of context or over-emphasised. A Relationships and Sex Education Policy should be for all children including those with physical, emotional or learning difficulties. Teachers should be encouraged to explore values and moral issues considering children's sexuality and personal relationship.

"Sex education should be treated as a positive opportunity for young people to understand and to be in control of their emerging sexualities".

It is important to acknowledge that young children have sexual knowledge of their own, even if they have no sexual experience. This knowledge is gained from an environment which abounds with sexual images and messages. Recent studies have shown that knowledge about sex-related issues does not increase young people's sexual activities but instead leads to more responsible and informed behaviour.

What is Relationships and Sex Education?

RSE is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. The DFE guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (July 2025) states:

"Children need high quality relationship and sex education so they can make wise and informed choices. An effective RSE programme will ensure a deep understanding of the ways in which humans love each other and stress the importance of respecting individual autonomy. Integral to this will be greater awareness of what constitutes a 'healthy relationship', both physically and emotionally, to ensure young people understand their rights and responsibilities in all forms of relationships"

Relationship and Sex Education at Hillcrest School

At Hillcrest, our comprehensive RSE programme provides accurate information on the human body and reproduction and equips students with the essential skills needed to build positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline. Our curriculum and ethos create a safe environment in which students can have informed discussions about feelings, relationships and values. Our work in this area is a key element of our wider safeguarding provision across the school as it feeds into a preventative programme that enables all pupils to learn about safety and risks in relationships, both physically and online.

Why is Relationship and Sex Education important at Hillcrest?

- Children are now reaching puberty at an earlier age than ever before and already have some sexual knowledge. Therefore, they have the right to be made aware of the correct facts about the changes taking place.

- Whilst some parents are very comfortable talking with their children about sex, many admit that they are not. We feel the school should take responsibility for providing information and liaising with parents to form a relationship.

- Early RSE provides opportunities for children to ask questions and discuss their concerns which in turn held to allay any fears they may have regarding their own bodies.

- Children will always ask questions relating to sexual matters so an accepted policy on sex education will enable the school to have a co-ordinated approach to the subject.

- Sex Education is required by the National Curriculum. Some elements within the science core curriculum are mandatory.

Section 2: THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION

Section 241 of the Education Act 1993, effective from August 1994

- requires governors of maintained secondary schools to provide sex education (including education about HIV/AIDS and other STD's) to all registered pupils
- removes references to AIDS. HIV, sexually transmitted diseases and aspects of human sexual behaviour other than biological aspects from National Curriculum Science
- grants parents the right to withdraw pupils in all maintained primary and secondary schools, from all or part of sex education outside National Curriculum
- requires all maintained schools to make and keep up to date a written statement of their policy on sex education, and for this policy to be made available to parents free of charge.

Section 46 of the Education Act (No. 2) 1986

- Requires that the Governing body and Headteacher shall take such steps as are reasonable practicable to secure that where sex education is given to any registered student at the school it is given in such a manner as to encourage those pupils to have due regard to moral considerations to the value of family life.

Section 1 (2) of the Education Reform Act 1988 requires all maintained schools to offer a curriculum which:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the school and society.

The Education (Schools Information) Regulations 1993

- Requires all maintained school to publish in the prospectus a summary of the content and organisation of any sex education they provide.

The 1996 Education Act

- Requires schools to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The 2004 Children Act

- Stated that schools still had a statutory obligation to promote their pupils' wellbeing

The 2010 Equality Act

- Stated that schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief, race, pregnancy, sexual orientation or marital status, including civil partnerships.

The Sexual Health Improvement Framework (2013)

- Focus on schools to deliver 'high quality sex and relationships education'

National Curriculum Framework (DFE – 2013)

- Every school must offer a curriculum which is 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students' and 'prepares students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'

Promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools (November 2014)

Child Sexual Exploitation (DFE - February 2017)

- Definition and guide for practitioners working to protect child from child sexual exploitation

Children and Social Work Act (2017)

- Relationship and sex education must be taught in all secondary schools in England.

Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (DFE - December 2017, republished May 2018 and updated September 2021)

- Provides specific guidance for schools and colleges on what sexual violence and harassment is, how to minimise the risk and what to do when incidents occur or are alleged to have occurred.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (Revised version - April 2018 and updated April 2024)

DFE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health (June 2019 - updated July 2025)

Ofsted Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges (April 2021)

DFE Behaviour in Schools (February 2024)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)

<u>Section 3: Aims and Objectives</u>

"To combat ignorance and increase understanding. To provide full, honest information about the physical, emotional and social aspects of human sexual development and conception to old age, including the nature of love, personal relationships and family life".

Relationships Education

- To liaise with parents and help them to develop their own skills as educators, so that home and school can work in partnership with shared aims to promote healthy relationships.
- To support pupils to understand the importance of respect and developing healthy and nurturing relationships of all kinds including family, friendships, marriage or civil partnership, work colleagues.
- To generate an atmosphere of trust, where questions about relationships, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender questioning and non-conformity and gender reassignment can be raised and answered without

embarrassment and equip students to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adulthood.

- To demonstrate the characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships, including the role of consent, trust, honesty, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, boundaries, privacy and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.
- To stress the value of "family life" recognising the diversity of households and families that people are a part of and the need for proper parental care for all young things, with reference to the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children.
- To demonstrate the value of marriage and civil partnerships and its importance for 'family life' and for raising children, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples that are co-habiting.
- To develop understanding of the concepts and laws around forced marriage.
- To help children understand that they have rights (and should have control over who touches their bodies) and increase communication skills about these, particularly in terms of online child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and threats of sexual violence.
- To demonstrate how inequalities in power can impact on behaviours in relationships.
- To empower pupils to make sounds decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts, and practice strategies for self-protection in terms of online safety, consent, harassment, sexual violence and criminal/sexual exploitation.
- To help children understand how stereotypes, particularly those based on gender identity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, gender questioning, gender non-conformity, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, faith or belief, can cause damage (ie - how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice, including misogyny.)
- To deepen understanding that violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.
- To reduce or eliminate any teasing about sexual matters, which many children fear, and which in some instances may amount to sexism, sexual harassment, threats of sexual violence, gender stereotypes and misogyny. This includes behaviour online.
- To foster respect for other people's beliefs, feelings and needs, including online.
- To develop personal relations skills and belief in the value of many different kinds of friendships, including platonic friendships, and in everyone's right not to be sexually active.
- To increase pupil's confidence, resilience and self-esteem, both offline and online, and help them to learn and practise decision making skills, including those necessary for resisting pressure from peers and others to behave in potentially damaging ways (this begins the process of developing skills for the promotion of long-term sexual health).
- To challenge media stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, raise awareness of potential sexism and the value of equal opportunities for partners in relationships (heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian, transgender, non-binary).
- To demonstrate how pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including normalising harmful sexual behaviours and disempowering some others.
- To develop understanding of how some sub-cultures might influence views on sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called incels or online influencers.
- To increase pupil's knowledge of the rules and principles for keeping safe on-line, including how to recognise risks, harmful contact and content, and how and to whom to report issues of sexual harassment, threats of sexual violence and risks of sexual exploitation.
- To deepen understanding of the risks sharing personal information online and the importance of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect online information.
- To raise awareness that some social media accounts are fake and may have been created by AI, and that the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence of the use of weapons.

- To develop understanding of the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images, even if the image 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.
- To deepen understanding that pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours.
- To raise awareness that AI chatbots can pose potential risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice.
- To develop pupil's personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage and humility, both offline and online, and their understanding of the moral issues involved in human sexual behaviour and explore those held by different cultures and groups.
- To develop awareness of the importance of good physical health and emotional well-being, and the positive impact healthy relationships can have on mental health and self-respect.
- To develop understanding of the facts and laws about marriage, sex, sexuality, sexual health, gender identity, sexual harassment and violence, pornography, online behaviour, sexting, pregnancy and abortion, criminal/sexual exploitation, FGM, virginity testing, hymenoplasty and faith abuse.
- To signpost students how to seek support if they experience any form of abusive or harassing behaviour offline or online.

Sex Education

- To discover "where pupils are" in their understanding of sexual matters, as "it is important to acknowledge that young people have sexual knowledge of their own, even if they have little or no sexual experience".
- To provide an agreed acceptable vocabulary for communicating about sexual matters with confidence and dignity and develop resilience to resist pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure on others).
- To counteract myths, folklore and confusions, which come directly from adult untruths (storks and gooseberry bushes!) from other children's stories and from the media.
- To elucidate the nature of human reproduction and child development in gradually increasing detail and enable children to discuss how they feel about this.
- To provide information about forthcoming pubertal changes (physical, emotional and social) to discuss all the implications and give help in adjusting to these changes, particularly for early developers who may be under stress (remember that puberty can start as early as nine for some girls, so schools may need to review the arrangements and facilities to accommodate their needs).
- To develop understanding of the facts about contraception choices and signposting students to towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health.
- To raise awareness of the choices in relation to pregnancy.
- To deepen understanding of how the different sexually transmitted infections are transmitted and the use and availability of medication to manage infections.
- To enable children to accept that variation in size, growth rates and age at which puberty starts is normal, and to communicate any concerns they may have about their own development to appropriate people.
- To evaluate the sex education programme regularly and revise it in the light of the children's responses, parent's wishes, new research findings, and government directives on RSE.

Section 4 - Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Governors

- The Education 1986 Act placed sex education into the hands of school governors. This has now been extended to 'Relationships' and 'Relationships and Sex' education. Through liaison with staff and
- parents, the governing body will ensure there is a well-defined and detailed school policy which is reviewed on an annual basis.
- Governors will be kept informed of the implementation of the school's Relationship and Sex Education policy on an annual basis.
- The Governors will ensure RSE provision in school is well led, effectively managed, well planned and appropriately resourced, particularly in regard to pupils with SEND.

- The Governors will ensure the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- The provision of CPD and support for staff is essential and Governors will monitor staff have accessed relevant training and have up-to-date knowledge of RSE guidelines.
- The Governors will ensure clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request withdrawal of their child.
- The Governor responsible for RSE at Hillcrest School is **Miss Louise MacArthur-Clare**

Role of the Headteacher

- To liaise with governors and staff to develop appropriate programmes and ensure statutory guidance is embedded in policy and practice.

Role of the DSL (Mr Damon Gariff)

- To co-ordinate wider safeguarding provision, ensuring RSE is central to all aspects of safeguarding and child protection and that the views of children are always listened to as part of this provision.
- Liaise with external services to ensure pupils and their families can access a wide range of relationships and health-related support
- To ensure staff access appropriate training to ensure they have relevant knowledge to deliver effective RSE throughout the curriculum, particularly though the Life Skills and Character Education curriculum. As outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026), training will ensure that child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour, including online, is understood and acted on by all staff.
- To communicate with staff, pupils and parents to review and update RSE and wider safeguarding provision, including our annual review of online safety provision.
- To ensure staff are aware of reporting and support mechanisms if they experience any form of sexual harassment or violence in school.

Role of the Personal Social Development Co-ordinator (Miss Rachel Glendening)

- To plan and review teaching resources and materials to ensure RSE is embedded through the whole school and Life Skills curriculum
- To regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of RSE provision through end of unit assessments and student voice feedback
- To work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure a consistent message is delivered in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner.
- To undertake an annual review of the whole school curriculum to ensure all aspects of the RSE guidance are embedded throughout the wider curriculum.
- To ensure resources used to deliver the RSE curriculum are accessible to parents on request.

Role of Teaching Staff

- "… the majority of the teachers involved have hitherto fulfilled their responsibilities in relation to this aspect of the curriculum with skill and sensitivity. The discharge of their responsibilities in implementing the governor's policy at classroom level will depend in large measure on their professional skill and expertise…."
- All staff should remain vigilant to the possibility of sexual harassment and abuse in school and report any disclosures, overheard conversations or observed changes in behaviour to the DSL. Even though a child may not be ready or able to share information on any form of abuse, all staff should endeavour to build and maintain positive relationships with all pupils to allow a pupil to talk openly about their experiences when they feel ready or able to (KCSIE – September 2025)
- All staff, whether they are involved in the delivery of the RSE curriculum or not, should be able to support the RSE policy and provision in school. Under very special circumstances, however, some teaching staff may have serious reasons why they feel they could not teach relationship and sex education, and this should be honoured.

- For their own protection staff must always be sure that they are always working within the school's RSE policy and model appropriate and positive behaviours in their communication with pupils.
- All staff should follow schemes of learning, lesson plans and resources to ensure content is always age appropriate. Staff inform a member of the safeguarding team if a pupil asks questions or discuss issues or experiences that relate to content restricted to older pupils in the school.
- All staff will be aware of SEND needs and common 'adverse childhood experiences' (such as family breakdown, bereavement and exposure to domestic violence) and when and how these may be affecting any of their pupils and so may be influencing how they experience RSE in Life Skills lessons and/or throughout the curriculum.
- RSE is not value free and teachers need to be aware of their own attitudes and values to lessen the chance of imposing their own subjective biases. They should be able to:

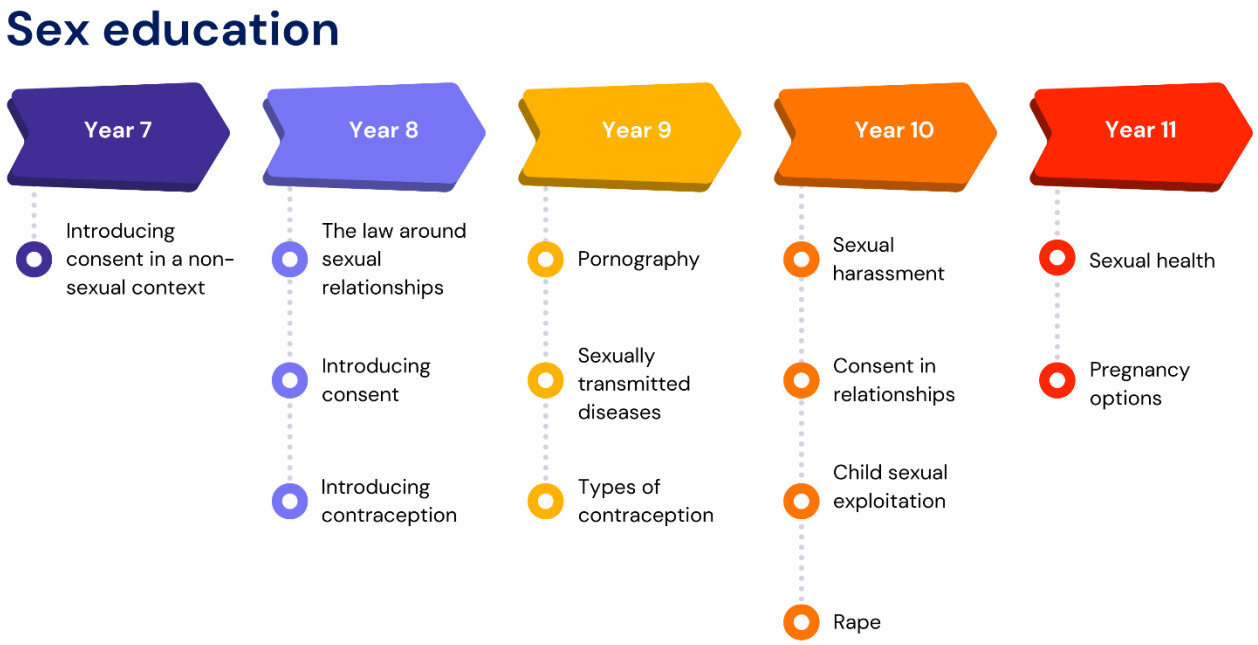
    - examine their own knowledge regarding these issues
    - keep in touch with current affairs, especially with what pupils are seeing within TV programmes, and with other influences on them.

Parents and Carers

- Parents / carers are the key figures in helping their children cope with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up and in preparing them for the challenges and responsibilities which sexual maturity brings. The teaching offered by schools should be complimentary and supportive to the role of the parents.
- The existence of elected parent representatives on governing bodies ensures that there will already be some parental views expressed in a school's RSE policy. Further parental involvement may be secured in various ways, such as sending explanatory letters, invitations to parents and teacher workshops, meetings involving outside agencies i.e. advisory teachers, health promotion officers, health visitors and opportunities to see materials and resources/or children's work.
- Our annual Life Skills Parent Forum provides parents the opportunity to discuss the purpose and content of our RSE provision and allows parents to review curriculum content, resources used and policy guidelines. Through this forum, parents can ask questions about the school's approach, explore teaching resources and materials and increase their confidence in the curriculum provision. Parents are not able to veto curriculum content.
- The school endeavours to ensure parents understand what will be taught and when, as well as ensuring parents understand the purpose and content of the RSE provision. Information on the content of the Life Skills curriculum, methods of assessment and representative samples of teaching resources are displayed on the school website. In addition, information on content is sent via ParentMail to parents at the start of each module, along with links to appropriate resources parents could use to discuss content with their child at the start and end of each Life Skills module. This is designed to inform and support parents to manage conversations started in Life Skills lessons at home.
- In terms of sharing examples of teaching resources with parents, the school will comply with copyright law. This may have an impact on the nature and extent of the content that can be shared directly with parents.

Parents' right to excuse a child from Sex Education

- According to Section 405 of the Education Act (1996), parents have the right to withdraw their child from sex education within the RSE curriculum, other than sex education in the National Curriculum as part of Science (i.e. – the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction that are essential elements of National Curriculum Science). **There is no right to withdraw for Relationships, Health, Community or Financial education aspects of the curriculum.**
- Parents have the right to request their child is withdrawn from the content listed below:



- Parents have the right to teach sex education themselves in a way which is consistent with their values.
- The Headteacher will ask parent(s)/carer(s), in writing, to indicate their reasons for withdrawal, so that any misunderstandings about the nature of the sex education provided by the school can be resolved (See Appendix 2).
- Before granting any such request, the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will discuss with the parent/carer and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure their wishes are understood and clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. During this discussion the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will listen to the views of the parents but will outline the potential detrimental impact of withdrawing the child from RSE.
- After permission has been granted by the Headteacher, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw their child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the student wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education.
- This process is the same for students with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Headteacher may want to take a student's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making the decision.
- Governors have discretion considering and deciding upon such requests for withdrawal. Governors will need to consider the implications of withdrawal for an individual pupil and for the school, in terms of their obligation to ensure a balanced and relevant curriculum for all pupils.
- Pupils cannot request to withdraw from any aspect of the RSE curriculum.

Community - Role of External Agencies

- In enlisting the support of parents, it is often very helpful to utilise outside agencies – such as health visitors, school nurse – to deliver bespoke training for staff, students and parents on key issues, i.e. – body development and image, sexual exploitation, FGM, faith abuse, trafficking, LGBTQ+, healthy and abusive relationships.
- Prior to any visit, the school will check the visitor/visiting organisations credentials, ensure the content of the presentations/resources are age appropriate and accessible for all students (particularly those with SEND and other vulnerabilities), agree how confidentiality will work and that the visitors understand safeguarding procedures in school.

Section 5 - Curriculum

At Hillcrest, we are committed to providing high quality, evidence based (including contextual safeguarding) and age-appropriate teaching that helps to prepare pupils for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life, including online, as well as promoting their spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development.

There are four major sites where RSE may be delivered:

- **The formal curriculum** i.e. the planned programme of learning activities which are expressed through the school's timetable.

  Within this context, RSE may be taught:

  - within one subject area e.g. science, physical education or R.E.
  - a cross-curricular element within the Life Skills or Character Education curriculum
  - as an element within many or all subject areas.

- **The informal curriculum** "It is impossible to avoid the chance of informal discussion on the topic of sex and when such spontaneous discussion arises it should be treated in a way which encourages pupils to have regard for moral considerations and the value of family life".

- **The hidden curriculum** i.e. "all the pupils learn in the school which is not intentionally taught or communicated by the teachers and the school system. (Hargreaves 1982).

  Whilst at school pupils, through their daily interaction with peers and adults, are likely to be exposed to both hidden and explicit messages about sexuality. Beyond the school gates, such messages may be received from a wide range of sources.

  The hidden curriculum transmits messages about personal worth, position and status which are likely to influence the healthy development of the pupils. Even the most carefully planned curriculum will be undermined if it is delivered in an unsupportive environment giving conflicting messages.

- **The extended curriculum** i.e. those activities that are offered outside school hours to extend and enrich the pupil's learning experience. Through residential and work experience, clubs and societies, holidays and visits pupils will be influenced by those they meet.

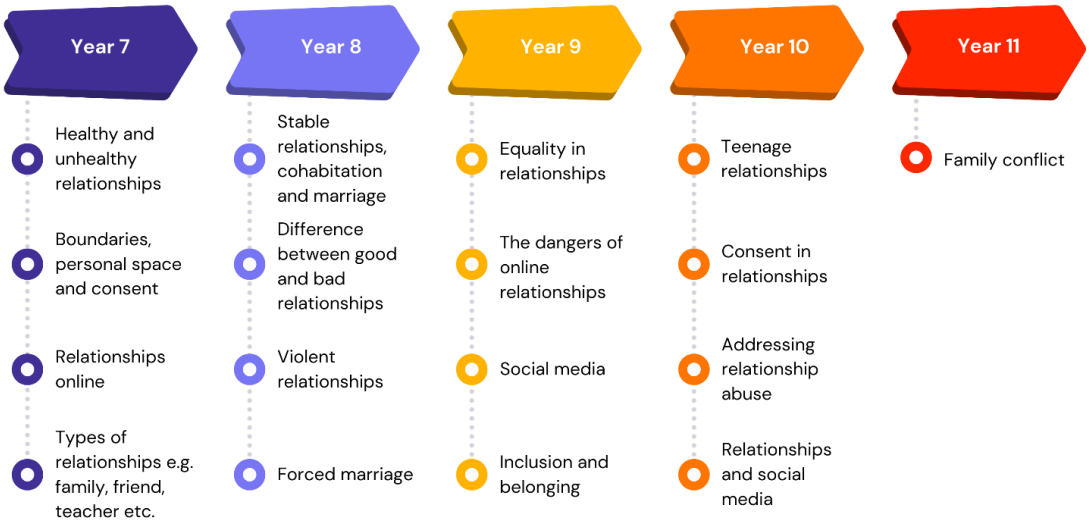
Our Life Skills curriculum (**appendix 1**) builds on the content of the primary school RSE curriculum. It is designed to ensure pupils build the knowledge and life skills required to prepare them for adult life and empower them to deal confidently with complex real-life situations. It provides guidance in the following areas:

Relationships Education (will not include topics which involve explaining different forms of sexual activity)

- different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships, marriage/civil partnerships, work-based relationships, online relationships, dealing with strangers and intimate relationships
- the role and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children
- how to recognise, understand and build healthy offline and online relationships, including self-respect and respect for others, consent, commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent and how to recognise unhealthy relationships
- the law relating to domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, emotional abuse, sexual harassment, stalking and violence, upskirting, forced marriage and honour-based violence
- how to identify what constitutes sexual harassment, including online, and empower students to know what to do if they wish to raise a concern about inappropriate behaviour towards themselves or a friend / peer in school or the community
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, for example physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing
- grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, human trafficking, county lines

- keeping safe and healthy relationships on-line, including the risks associated with AI generated harmful content and contact, and how data is generated, collected, shared and used on-line
- same sex relationships, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity/reassignment and gender questioning and non-conformity
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others
- the potential damage caused by stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, sexual identity and conformity, gender reassignment or disability
- physical and emotional damage caused by FGM, virginity testing, hymenoplasty and faith abuse, and the laws around this issue
- the importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others.
- Skills for ending relationships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings may bring.
- how stereotypes can cause damage, normalise non-consensual behaviour and lead to misogyny and other forms of prejudice.
- how inequalities of power can impact on behaviours within relationships.
- how pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviour, and give a distorted impression of intimate relationships and misogynistic behaviour
- online risks, deepfakes, illegal and upsetting content, AI generated content and risks associated with misinformation and disinformation that may pose of threat to personal safety
- laws around possessing and sharing images online under the age of 18, including the use of AI generated imagery.
- the potential risks posed by AI chatbots by creating fake intimacy and offering harmful advice.

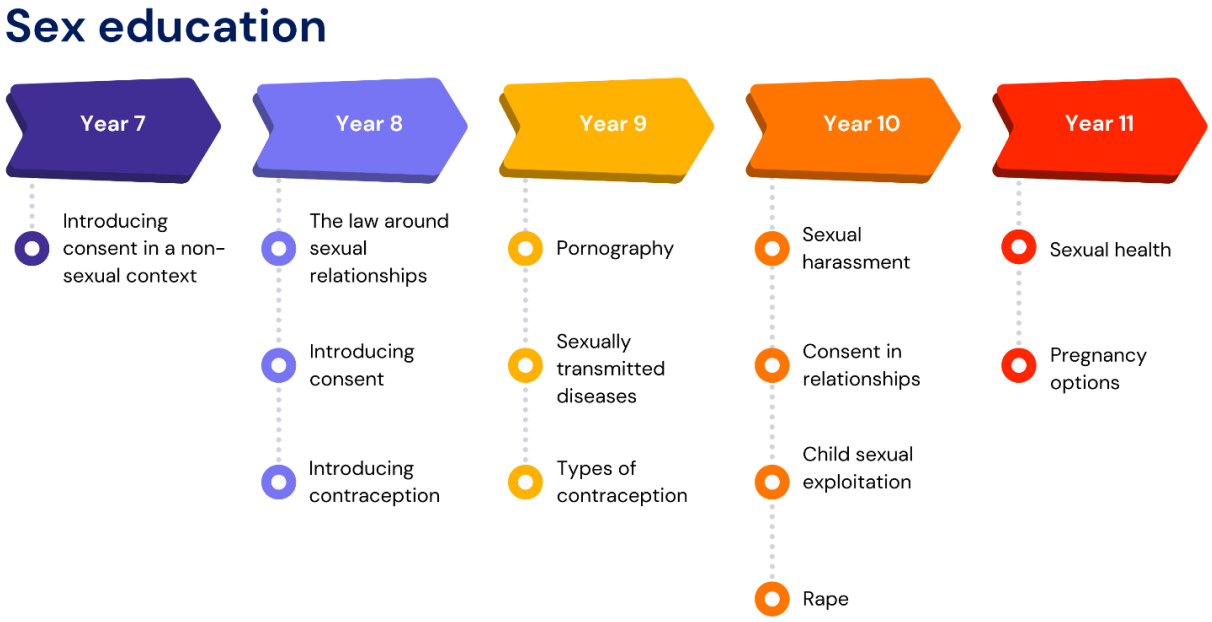
Relationships education



Sex Education

- what the law allows and does not allow in terms of sexual activity and consent (including age of consent), rape, sexual assault, harmful sexual behaviours and harassment, up skirting, pornography, sexting, and the choices permitted by law around pregnancy and abortion
- how human bodies change and equip pupils with the appropriate language to talk about their bodies, health and emotions
- how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about contraception and testing
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour
- sexual acts that are a criminal offence, including strangulation and suffocation

- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause
- the choices and facts around pregnancy including abortion and miscarriage
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex
- how to build confidence and resilience and understanding the reasons for delaying sexual activity.



We recognise that an effective RSE curriculum supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at an appropriate time.

Our Character Education curriculum contributes to the development of personal qualities essential to developing and maintaining positive relationships.

The effectiveness of RSE provision will be regularly evaluated through student voice feedback at the end of each Life Skills unit and our annual student and parent safeguarding survey. Students will also complete an assessment at the end of each module to assess their individual and cohort understanding, and specific themes may be revisited later in the year or through the form programme if the assessments highlight any misconceptions. Feedback is also gained through Student Parliament and College Prefect meetings. Feedback from staff on the delivery and appropriateness of resources is also incorporated to support future planning, along with feedback from external visitors on pupil engagement in activities they deliver in school

The quality of delivery will be evaluated through learning walks during Life Skills lessons and reference to SMSC/RSE in lesson observation feedback forms. This information will be shared with the DSL/member of staff responsible for SMSC/RSE.

Section 6 - Additional and Special Educational Needs

- Pupils identified as having special needs are often the most vulnerable members of society, who have a range of educational needs, abilities and personal and social characteristics which have direct implications on the management and organisation of the delivery of RSE.
- There are now many RSE resources specifically designed for children with physical, social, emotional, mental health and learning difficulties. This ensures teaching is differentiated and personalised to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- All students participate in a preparatory workshop at the start of each new Life Skills unit that focuses on the key concepts and terminology that will be used in lessons. All students then participate in a review

workshop after the Life Skills unit has been completed to allow form tutors to check understanding of key concepts and terminology. This is particularly useful to support students with additional and special needs to ensure they have fully understood the content of each topic.

- Key aspects of the Life Skills curriculum are delivered by our SEND team at a level that is sensitive, accessible, age and developmentally appropriate to the needs of our more vulnerable SEND pupils.
- As outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025), the SEND and pastoral teams have increased mentoring and support opportunities for pupils with SEND as national data indicates this cohort face higher risk of peer group isolation, sexual harassment, child-on-child abuse, off and online bullying, potentially linked to sexuality and orientation.

Section 7 - Equal Opportunities

- Today children are being bombarded with conflicting messages leading to confusion and uncertainty about their future roles. RSE should offer pupils the opportunity to explore attitudes and values relating to gender roles and stereotyping and to the concepts of femininity and masculinity. However, the school will endeavour to deal with this issue sensitively given the diverse nature of religious and ethnic backgrounds in the school.
- RSE needs to counterpart the influences of society, especially elements of the media i.e. videos and magazines which portray women as objects or in a negative and submissive role and men as aggressive and dominant. However, the school will endeavour to deal with this issue sensitively given the diverse nature of religious and ethnic backgrounds in the school.
- Teachers have a good understanding of students' faith backgrounds, and the school has cultivated positive relationships with local faith communities. The religious background of students is considered when planning resources to ensure the key elements of the RSE curriculum are appropriately and sensitively handled, so as to not offend any religious communities in the school.
- Teachers and parents should be aware that many young people experience a decline in self-worth during adolescence, but young women often have a lower level of self-esteem than young men. This places them at a disadvantage especially in dealing with relationships and in making decisions that affect their lives.
- Throughout the Life Skills programme activities are incorporated to build up of self-esteem and empower young women with assertiveness and decision-making skills which will enable them to:

    - resist emotional pressure that could put them into vulnerable or explosive situations;
    - resolve day-today pressures, concerns and conflicts.

- Teachers are encouraged to use language with care ensuring that they avoid sexist and heterosexual terms and images so that they include the widest range of people in their presentation and discussion, i.e. Doctors are not always "he", partners are not always of the opposite sex, families are not always presented as "male plus a female" with children.
- We recognise and embrace our responsibility, under the 2010 Equality Act, to ensure teaching is accessible to all children and young people including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and gender non-conforming. Our provision fosters good relations between all students, tackles all types of prejudice – including homophobia and transphobia – and promotes a culture of respect for all. Pupils will learn about the law relating to the protected characteristics.
- The Life Skills and wider school curriculum promotes all types of relationships and families to encourage pupils to recognise the rights, for example, same sex relationships and families.
- Wider whole school support provides appropriate guidance to pupils on issues related to sexuality, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and gender non-conformity. Students and their families are signposted to access additional external support as required.
- The school actively challenges all forms of discrimination, including online, based on gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religious belief and disability. Staff play a key role in modelling and monitoring positive behaviours.
- All sexual health information is fully inclusive and includes LGBTQ+ people in case studies, scenarios and role-plays throughout the curriculum, notably in Life Skills and form period activities

- Staff training is provided on LGBTQ+ issues to empower staff to confidently engage with pupils in meaningful conversations around the issue of sexual orientation, with specific focus on the use of inclusive language to reflect the diverse nature of pupils in the school.
- Sexual orientation and gender identity is explored in a timely, clear, sensitive and respectful manner and staff recognise that some pupils may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Teaching reflects the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that pupils clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

Section 8 - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. It is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. CSE doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen on-line involving the production of sexual (nude or semi-nude) images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. As outlined in the updated 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2025), CSE may also occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (i.e. – through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media)
- CSE can affect any child or young person under the age of 18, including 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. As children aged 12-15 years of age, particularly girls, are most at risk of CSE, our annual and mid-year refresher safeguarding training provides all staff with an extensive list of common signs which can assist professionals in identifying young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation. This training encourages all members of staff to exercise professional curiosity in their day-to-day work and reinforces the links between sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation including child trafficking, domestic abuse, gang-related and county lines activities, modern slavery and immigration-related offences.
- We acknowledge that children can be both experiencing CSE and perpetrating it at the same time. Examples might include a child who is forced to take part in the exploitation of another child under duress, or a child who is forced to introduce other children to their abuser under threats to their family's safety. Under such circumstances we will follow guidance outlined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (December 2023) to provide necessary support to address the factors that have contributed to this form of criminal behaviour.
- As part of the Life Skills and wider school curriculum, pupils are taught that consent is central to learning about healthy, equal and safe relationships. As a result, our provision endeavours to address gender-based and power inequalities and how these can lead to coercion and sexual violence.
- As part of our provision students are actively encouraged to identify behaviour in a relationship which is positive and supportive and that which is controlling and exploitative. This is part of a wider programme to educate all pupils about the nature and risk of CSE, how to access relevant support and empower them with the appropriate knowledge and skills to make safe lifestyle choices. The model below outlines the methodology used as part of the wider and Life Skills curriculum:

Models of Sexual Exploitation

Inappropriate relationship	Boyfriend	Organised Crime
• One Abuser • Power and control • Physical, emotional, financial • Believe abuser is offering genuine relationship • Often significant age gap	• Initially, one abuser, grooming and gaining trust • Apparently consensual sexual relationship starts • Relationship becomes abusive	• Involving criminal gangs trafficking victims around the UK and the world • Established networks across the UK to move victims from location to location

	• Victim threatened with violence and forced to engage in sexual activity with others • Growth in peer exploitation	• Forced or coerced into sexual activity with multiple partners • Involves the buying and selling of young people

- We acknowledge that parents and carers have a critical role to play in helping to protect children from CSE. Through information on our website, literature shared at parents evening and meetings with members of the safeguarding team, we endeavour to ensure parents/carers understand the risks of both online and offline CSE, the potential indicators of CSE and know where and how to access support. Through multi-agency work we will endeavour to provide support that is tailored to the specific circumstances and needs, for example, support that recognises their culture or faith.

Section 9 - Domestic abuse, sexual abuse/violence and harassment

Definitions

- When referring to sexual violence, the policy refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act (2003). In addition to definitions on rape and assault by penetration, the Act refers to 'sexual assault' as when a 'person intentionally touches another person without their consent'. Under this guidance consent means that a person has the 'freedom and capacity to make a choice'.
- As outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2025), we recognise that domestic violence or abuse is any incident or patterns of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, psychological abuse, physical violence, sexual, emotional or economic abuse between those aged 16 or over. In accordance with the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), we acknowledge that all children can witness and be adversely affected if they see, hear or experience domestic violence in their family home, including ex-partners and family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. They may also experience it through their own intimate relationships. The updated guidance now states, 'sexual abuse; involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence'.
- Updated DFE guidance (September 2021) defines sexual harassment as 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online or offline. Sexual harassment is likely to 'violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimated, degraded and/or create a hostile, offensive and sexualised environment'. Sexual harassment can include:

    - Sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names
    - Sexual 'jokes' or taunting
    - Physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, upskirting, interfering with someone's clothes (which may cross a line into sexual violence) and displaying pictures, photographs or drawings of a sexual nature
    - Online sexual harassment, which might include consensual and non-consensual sharing of sexual (nude and semi-nude) images and videos; inappropriate sexual comments on social media; sharing of unwanted explicit content; sexualised online bullying; unwanted sexual comments and messages; and sexual exploitation, coercion and threats.

- We have a zero tolerance approach and are committed to ensuring the school is a safe place for all pupils and systematically address the issue of violent behaviour or harassment in school, the community and online. All staff will ensure every disclosure is taken seriously and reported appropriately. We recognise that sexual violence and harassment can occur between children of any sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting a single child or group of children.
- We recognise that children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Children displaying harmful sexual behaviours have often experienced their own abuse and trauma.

- Harmful sexual behaviours are considered as part of our child protection procedures. When considering harmful sexual behaviours, our safeguarding team make judgements on a case-by-case basis and take into account the ages and stages of development of any children involved. For example, we would consider sexual behaviour between children to be potentially harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years difference in age. Our safeguarding team has been trained to use the Brook Sexual Behaviour Traffic Light Tool to help assess the nature and response required in such cases. However, some situations are statutorily clear:
    - A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
    - The age of consent is 16;
    - Sexual intercourse without consent is rape; and
    - Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal (i.e. – sexting), including children making and sharing sexual images and videos of themselves

- As outlined in our Child Protection policy, we follow the guidance in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (December 2023). In cases of actual or suspected sexual violence, if a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger, or is at risk of harm we will refer immediately to Children's Social Care. All reports of a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault with be reported directly to the police. The school may also consider a referral to Children's Social Care and/or Early Help Team appropriate depending on the nature of the incident.
- As outlined in updated DFE guidance (February 2024), there may be reports where an alleged incident (violence or harassment) is between two students attending Hillcrest School but is alleged to have taken place away from the school premise or online. The same principles and procedures outlined above will apply to such circumstances and a risk assessment will be undertaken by the DSL to take into account the needs of the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and other pupils in the school.
- All reported incidents will be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively by the school. During a disclosure of alleged sexual violence or harassment, the victim may ask for the school not to tell anyone about the incident. If the victim does not give consent to share this information, the safeguarding team may still lawfully share it, if it can be justified to be in the public interest, for example, to protect children from harm. The DSL will usually contact parents or carers unless this would put the victim at greater risk.
- As outlined in updated DFE guidance (February 2024), the DSL will not wait for the start or outcome of a Children's Social Care investigation before protecting the victim or other pupils in the school. As with cases of alleged and proved cases of sexual violence, the wishes and needs of the victim and how they want to proceed will be at the forefront of any interventions taken by the school. Victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support they will be offered internally and externally.
- In some cases of sexual harassment, for example one-off incidents, the safeguarding team may take the view that the pupils concerned are not in need of external early help or statutory intervention as it is more appropriate for the incident to be handled internally in line with our Behaviour, Equality and Diversity and Anti-Bullying policies. Internal early help interventions can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.
- As outlined in the 2010 Equality Act and updated DFE guidance (February 2024) support will be given to the victim in these situations as evidence shows that young people who have experienced sexual violence or harassment, as well as being discriminated against by the perpetrator(s), are likely to have their equality of opportunity adversely affected by the impact on their education.
- We will endeavour to provide support to victims and perpetrators of sexual violence and harassment and their families as necessary. As outlined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (December 2023) our multi-agency work is crucial to signpost victims and perpetrators to local and national specialist support, including organisations such as the NSPCC, Rape Crisis and The Survivors Trust.
- If a pupil in school is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the DSL will update the risk assessment and ensure reasonable protections are in place for the victim, perpetrator and other pupils in the school. If the perpetrator remains in school, the Headteacher/DSL may consider imposing restrictions that are reasonable and proportionate about their timetable. If a not guilty verdict is delivered or a decision is made by the police not to progress with the case, the school will discuss any decisions with the victim and perpetrator continue to offer support.

- If the victim moves to another educational institution, the DSL will make this institution aware of any on-going support needs or interventions in school or the community, as well as transferring any relevant child protection information. The same will apply to the alleged or proved perpetrators of sexual violence or harassment in the event of moving to another educational establishment.
- If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will attempt to establish if the person who made the allegation needs some other form of support as this may still be a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to Early Help and/or Children's Social Care may be appropriate. If the report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider taking appropriate action against the individual in line with our Behaviour policy.
- As part of our Life Skills curriculum external visitors deliver bespoke sessions to pupils to consider the importance of equality and respect within relationships, challenging gender stereotypes and introducing positive and diverse perspectives on gender roles, hopes and aspirations. Our curriculum reinforces the message that sexual violence and harassment can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal), is never acceptable and is not an inevitable part of growing up. For example, we challenge behaviours, which are potentially criminal in nature, such as grabbing breasts, bottoms and genitalia. In addition, our curriculum highlights that consensual image sharing, especially between older children of the same age, is still illegal even though it may not be abusive.
- Clear guidance is given to students, in all year groups, through the wider curriculum about the nature of violent and abusive relationships, as outlined below:

Emotional Abuse	**Physical Abuse**
• Constant insults and name calling • Isolation from friends and family • Controlling what someone wears or where they go • Checking up on partners all the time, i.e. – checking phone, emails, social media • Making the person feel responsible for the abuse	• Hitting, punching, pushing, biting, kicking, using weapons, etc
Sexual Abuse	**Financial Abuse**
• Forcing someone to have sex • Unwanted kissing or touching • Being made to watch pornography against your will • Pressure to not use contraception	• Taking / controlling money • Forcing people to buy them things • Forcing partners to work or not to work

- It is important to remember that some pupils may have witnessed violence in their homes or on-line and may see this as normal behaviour. Through the Life Skills curriculum and our wider support systems we feel confident in our ability to systematically and sympathetically demonstrate that harassment, violence and exploitation is always wrong and that no one is ever responsible for the violence or exploitation they experience, including online threats.

Section 10 - Child-on-Child Abuse

- In March 2013, the definition of domestic violence was revised to include young people between 16 and 18. 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2026) makes it clear that child-on-child abuse, including bullying, cyberbullying, sending misogynistic messages, physical abuse, sexual violence and harassment, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images (especially around group chats), sharing of abusive images, upskirting, sexting and initiation ceremonies, will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Our curriculum is geared to ensure students are aware that abuse and exploitation can happen in relationships, including intimate personal relationships, between peers (physically and on-line).

- As outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2026), upskirting is defined as taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or to cause the victim humiliation or distress.
- The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children.
- Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. In some cases, such activity can essentially be information gathering and experience testing.
- Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage.
- If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educative inputs may be enough to address the behaviour. However, abusive sexual activity included any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base, will be referred to the police for further guidance.
- Pupils are signposted how and where to seek support and advice from appropriate agencies.

Section 10 - Pornography

- Our Life Skills and wider curriculum explicitly reinforces that message that pornography is not the best way to learn about sex because it does not reflect real life, and can therefore be worrying, confusing or frightening for young people. We reiterate that pornography can portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it.
- We reinforce the message that some pornography, i.e. child abuse images, are illegal at any age.
- When addressing the issue of pornography, we endeavour to focus on negotiation and assertiveness skills, the importance of communication in relationships and analysing the stereotyping in media images. We also focus on the role of peer influence in young people's lives, the importance of not pressurising or coercing a partner to look at pornography or imitate behaviours in it, and the skills required to resist unwanted pressure.

Section 11 - Sharing of Nude and Semi-Nude Images

- Sexting is a term used by adults, referring to sexual content and images (nude and semi-nude) sent by any form a digital device. Young people may use their own terms, including 'selfies', 'nudes' or 'fanpics'.
- Young people are growing up in a culture where technology and social media are important and have created more opportunity for sharing personal information. As part of our wider e-safety provision in school, we actively encourage students to think about they want others to know and see about them – whether on or offline.
- Online safety is a key aspect of the new computing curriculum. Although it does not focus explicitly on the relationship's aspects of e-safety, the ICT department links with our Life Skills co-ordinator to unsure there is no unhelpful duplication or contradictory messages.
- Our Life Skills and wider curriculum covers communication skills, attitudes and values, the law, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and how to seek help. We explicitly reinforce the message that it is illegal to produce, possess and distribute an indecent image of a person under the age of 18 - even if it is a picture of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. We also reference the prevalence of deepfakes, including videos and photographs.

- Our safeguarding team will contact parents / carers if we feel that any child is putting themselves in a vulnerable position in the ways outlined above and will refer to Children's Social Care and the police as outlined in DFE guidance. We have clear procedures in place for securing relevant information from devices (see Child Protection and Online Safety policies)

Section 12 - Child Marriage (including forced marriage)

- Updated definition of Forced Marriage – 'A marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor'. As opposed to an 'Arranged Marriage' in which both parties agree and give consent to a marriage agreed by family or community members. It is also important to note that no religion endorses Forced Marriage.
- As outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2026), it has been a crime since February 2023 to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.
- Forced Marriage is defined as a form of 'Honour Based Violence' and if a young person is forced into marriage under the age of 16, this is now a form of child abuse. In addition to the 2007 Forced Marriage Act, the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (2014) states forcing a person to marry against their will is a criminal offence that can result in a prison sentence up to seven years. It is a criminal offence for a person to use violence, threats or any other form of coercion for the purpose of causing another person to enter a marriage without their free and full consent.
- Pupils are made aware of their rights to choose their partner as part of our work on healthy relationships throughout the curriculum.
- Pupils are made aware of the signs to watch out for, within their own families and communities, to empower them to be able to express their concerns to friends, teachers, police and the Forced Marriage Unit. These signs include;
  - Physical pressure, i.e. - young girl is locked up at home or beaten until she agrees
  - Emotional pressure, i.e. - young person will let the family down if she does not consent
  - Financial pressure, i.e. - involves exchange of land, money, property as part of the arrangement
  - Sexual pressure, i.e. - young girl has been raped and then forced to marry as she is no longer pure
  - Family pressure, i.e. - sent abroad to marry as part of arrangement for an overseas family member to secure UK citizenship

Section 13 - LGBTQ+ Inclusion: Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

- We are committed to ensuring that students, whatever their developing sexuality, feel our RSE provision is relevant to them, their age and sensitive to their needs.
- Students who wish to speak about their sexual identity can access support through our Safeguarding and Well-Being Co-ordinator or Pastoral Support Worker. The support is signposted in assemblies, Life Skills lessons, form period activities and on information displayed around school.
- Staff training will ensure teachers are able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation / identify or gender questioning / reassignment, answering questions appropriately and signposting support as necessary. There is no direct promotion of sexual orientation / identity or gender questioning / reassignment in our curriculum. Staff will discuss issues around the broader concept of gender identity in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner.
- Our curriculum teaches pupils about the facts and law about biological sex and gender reassignment (ie - an individual must be 18 before they can legally reassign their gender). Pupils are taught that people have legal rights by virtue of their biological sex which are different from the rights of those of the opposite sex with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Teachers are mindful of the debate around biological sex and gender reassignment and are advised not to endorse any view or teach it as fact, as well as avoiding any suggestion that social transition is a simple solution to feelings of distress or discomfort.

- LGBTQ+ content is fully integrated into our curriculum and is delivered in an age-appropriate context. For example, same-sex marriages and civil partnerships are equally discussed as part of curriculum coverage on marriage and relationships. Teaching endeavours to ensure sexual orientation, gender identities (including non-conformity) are represented across all subjects, as well as raising awareness of different forms of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in society.
- Governors, teachers and non-teaching staff, parents and students are free to hold their own religious and philosophical views about the marriage of same-sex couples, families and adoption. However, stakeholders are not allowed to publicly express these views (verbally or written) to the detriment of LGBTQ+ pupils, staff, parents or community organisations.
- Our Anti-Bullying and Equality and Diversity policies outline the strategies that will be implemented if a pupil experiences any form of homophobic/transphobic bullying or sexual harassment linked to their identity and orientation.
- We will ensure appropriate external agency support is accessed if a pupil requests any specific guidance about their sexual identity or orientation. Pupils and their families can continue to access information on support agencies on our website, i.e. - Birmingham LGBTQ Support Centre. This information is also available to all pupils on displays around school and shared in Life Skills / form period activities.

Section 14 - Sexual Health and Contraception

- Our Science and Life Skills curriculum provides students with knowledge about different types of contraceptives.
- Pupils can access full information about different types of contraceptives, including emergency contraceptives, from our School Nurse and Safeguarding and Well-Being Co-ordinator, who, along with our Pastoral Support Worker can provide additional guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling and, where necessary, treatment.
- As part of our CPD programme, staff participate in specific training sessions around sexual health and contraception, ensuring they are effectively informed and able to provide accurate and sensitive information to pupils in the classroom environment.
- We also provide information about the different Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) including HIV and the agencies involved in the treatment of these diseases. The School Nurse Service provide support and access to testing for several sexually transmitted diseases.
- We actively encourage the development of a sense of personal responsibility and responsibility for the well-being of partners.

Section 15 - Teenage Pregnancy

- It is hoped that the following procedure will ensure that pupils who are in difficulty know that they can talk to an adult in the school and that they will be supported.
- Professional information and guidance will always be sought from a health professional. The school will encourage the student to talk to their parents/carers first if they believe that they may be pregnant.
- Pupils will be asked if they wish to tell their parent(s)/carer(s) and whether they want help in doing so. If this takes place, then subsequent responsibility will then lie with the parent(s)/carer(s).
- If pupil refuses to tell their parent(s)/carers(s), the school will contact parent(s)/carer(s) unless the DSL feels this may put the pupil at significant risk of harm by their family. A referral will then be made to the Teenage Pregnancy Team by the DSL. The Teenage Pregnancy Team will then contact the parent(s)/carer(s) and liaise with the school to ensure relevant risk assessments are completed.

Section 16 - Abortion

- There are strongly held views and religious beliefs about abortion. Our Life Skills curriculum enables pupils to consider the moral and cultural dilemmas involved in this issue. Teaching encourages pupils to explore the dilemmas, enabling them to know and understand about abortion, including risks, and develop the communication skills to discuss it with parents and health professionals. The curriculum also focuses on the laws around abortion.

Section 17- Puberty and Menstruation

- Research shows that about a third of girls are not told about periods by their parents and 10% receive no preparation at all before their first period. Our Life Skills and Science curriculum provides pupils with information on preparation for menstruation and our Safeguarding and Well-Being Co-ordinator responds sensitively to requests for sanitary protection.

Section 18 - Additional Support

- Students at the Hillcrest School can access support on RSE matters from our Safeguarding and Well-Being Co-ordinator, Pastoral Support Worker and the School Nurse Service. Pupils can also access further information from the School Nurse Text Service or UMBRELLA. The Safeguarding Team can make referrals can be made to the Teenage Pregnancy Project and other sexual health agencies in the community.

Section 19 - Procedures

- Effective RSE should enable and encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having sex or contemplating doing so.
- It is desirable, although not always possible, that that person should be their parent or carer.
- The law allows health professionals to see and treat young people confidentially. Part of this process includes counselling and discussion about talking to parents.
- However, there will be cases where a teacher learns from another under-16-year-old that they are having sexual intercourse. In these circumstances, schools must ensure that:

    - wherever possible, the young person is persuaded to talk to their parent or carer
    - any child protection issues are addressed
    - the child is adequately counselled and informed about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.

Section 20 - Confidentiality

- Teachers and visitors cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality; it is our responsibility to ensure that pupils are aware of this. However, we must reassure students that their best interests will be maintained.
- If confidentiality must be broken, students will be informed first and supported as appropriate.
- Unless it puts the pupil at risk of harm, members of our safeguarding team will encourage students to talk to their parents or carers and give them support to do so if necessary.
- If there is any possibility of abuse, child protection procedures will be followed.
- Pupils will be informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the school nurse, One-Stop-Shop, local chemists, Women's Aid
- Health professionals are bound by professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality.
- Health professional, such as School Nurses can:
    - give advice one-to-one or information to a pupil on a health-related matter including contraception.
    - exercise their own professional judgement as to whether a young person has the maturity to consent to medical treatment including contraceptive treatment.

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- We also provide information about the different Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) including HIV and the agencies involved in the treatment of these diseases.
- We actively encourage the development of a sense of personal responsibility and responsibility for the well-being of partners.
- The School Nurse Service provide support and access to contraceptives and testing for several sexually transmitted diseases

Section 21 - Monitoring and Evaluation

- The policy will be reviewed annually and the views of all stakeholders, particularly staff, pupils and parents/carers, will be considered when reviewing the content of the RSE curriculum and whole school provision.
- All pupils complete an online evaluation at the end of each Life Skills unit. This feedback is used to identify the impact of provision, pupil understanding of key concepts and terminology and of the support they can access. The feedback allows the Life Skills Co-ordinator to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding which can be revisited in future Life Skills units and/or through the form programme.
- Parent feedback on the RSE policy and provision will be obtained through the Parent Forum.

Appendix 1: Life Skills Curriculum Overview 2024-25

YEAR 7 LIFE SKILLS OVERVIEW

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Staying safe	**Online safety and cyberbullying**	**Economic wellbeing**	**Healthy relationships**	**Democracy and citizenship**	**Conflict resolution**
1. Welcome to Life Skills	1. Healthy relationships	1. Money and debt	1. Types of relationships	1. UK parliament and the role of MPs	1. What is friendship?
2. Risk assessment	2. Causes & effects of online bullying	2. Budgeting	2. Healthy and unhealthy relationships	2. Current political issues	2. Conflict situations
3. Aquarius workshop - drugs inc. vaping	3. Internet safety	3. Employment	3. Protect from unhealthy relationship	3. British Values	3. Respectful behaviour
4. Road safety	4. Online safety & the law	4. Budgeting game	4. Online relationships	4. Rule of law and hate crime	4. Conflict resolution
5. How to respond in an emergency	5. How to create safe online profiles	5. Case study	5. Family	5. Protected characteristics	5. Diverse community
6. Smoking	6. Contingency		6. Emotion coaching		6. Contingency
7. Alcohol	7. Progress check		7. Emotion coaching		7. Progress check

Colour codes for each theme: Blue = Health education / Yellow = Relationships education / Pink - Community education
Orange = Careers and finance education / Green = Sex education

YEAR 8 LIFE SKILLS OVERVIEW

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Human rights and responsibilities	**The law and British Values**	**Healthy relationships**	**Mental health and wellbeing**	**Health**	**Careers and work related learning**
1. Welcome back	1. Decision making	1. Trust in relationships	1. What is mental health?	1. Disease prevention	1. The local economy
2. Societal roles and responsibilities	2. Terrorism and extremism	2. Good and bad relationships	2. Anxiety disorders	2. Using health services	2. Career stereotypes
3. Human rights and employee rights	3. Valuing diversity	3. Violent relationships	3. Addictions	Healthy body (female anatomy)	3. Employability skills
4. Discrimination	4. Understanding and preventing extremism	4. Forced marriage	4. Eating disorders	4. FGM	4. Applying for jobs
5. The law	5. Radicalisation	5. Sexual relationships and the law	5. Self harming	5. Healthy lifestyle	5. Case study: NHS
6. Sustainability	6. Review / Assessment		6. Emotion coaching		6. Progress check
7. First aid	7. Contingency		7. Emotion coaching		7. Contingency

Colour codes for each theme: Blue = Health education / Yellow = Relationships education / Pink - Community education
Orange = Careers and finance education / Green = Sex education

YEAR 9 LIFE SKILLS OVERVIEW

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Extremist radicalisation	**Drugs awareness**	**Relationships and sexual health**	**Personal health**	**Financial management**	**Online safety**
1. Welcome back	1. What is an addiction?	1. Stable relationships	1. Umbrella workshop (contraception)	1. Managing money and debt	1. Digital footprints
2. Valuing diversity	2. Drugs classification	2. Equality in relationships	2. Puberty and hygiene	2. Career paths from post-16 options	2. Sharing images online
3. Extremism	3. Drugs and the law	3. Pornography	3. Cosmetic surgery	3. Employability skills	3. Online dangers
4. Radicalisation	4. Drugs and gangs	4. Sexually transmitted diseases	4. Disease prevention	4. Media	4. Anti-social behaviour
5. Inclusion and belonging	5. Support	5. Contraception	5. Immunisation and vaccination	5. University life	5. Progress check/evaluation
6. Extremist organisations	6. Review / Assessment		6. Emotion coaching		6. Social media and online dating
7. What to do in an emergency (first aid)	7. Contingency		7. Emotion coaching		7. Contingency

Colour codes for each theme: Blue = Health education / Yellow = Relationships education / Pink - Community education
Orange = Careers and finance education / Green = Sex education

YEAR 10 LIFE SKILLS OVERVIEW

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Crime and punishment	**Sexual harassment and exploitation**	**Human rights and responsibilities**	**Drugs education**	**Careers and work related learning**	**Emotional resilience**
1. Welcome back	1. Grooming	1. Human rights and responsibilities	1. Addiction	1. Writing a CV	1. Exam stress
2. Gang culture	2. Risks of exploitation	2. Relationships and social media	2. Alcohol	2. Interview techniques	2. Resilience
3. Youth violence	3. Teenage relationships	3. Pregnancy and contraception	3. Cannabis	3. Applying for jobs	3. Stress
4. Knife crime	4. Consent in relationships	4. Forced marriage	4. Legal highs	4. Local labour markets (comp. room)	4. Progress check
5. Organised crime	5. Addressing relationship abuse	5. Honour based violence	5. Vaping	5. Work experience	5. Self harm
6. Courts and the law	6. Review / assessment		6. Emotion coaching		6. The media
7. Careers in law and crime prevention	7. Contingency		7. Emotion coaching		7. Contingency

Colour codes for each theme: Blue = Health education / Yellow = Relationships education / Pink - Community education
Orange = Careers and finance education / Green = Sex education

YEAR 11 LIFE SKILLS OVERVIEW

Term 1	Term 2
Relationships and sexual health	**Careers**
1. Family conflict	1. Job applications
2. Sexual health	2. Options after Y11
3. Pregnancy outcomes	3. Pre-requisites for career paths
4. Contraception and sexual health	

Appendix 2

Dear Parents/Carers

Relationship and Sex Education Programme

I am writing to you regarding the provision of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for Year 7 students.

We believe that promoting the health and well-being of our students is an important part of their overall education. We do this through our Personal Social Development (Life Skills) curriculum. This looks at many topics including all kinds of relationships, physical / emotional health and living in the wider world. The aim of the Life Skills curriculum is to help our students make safe and informed decisions during their school years and beyond.

Sex and Relationship Education (RSE) is an important part of the Life Skills curriculum. In Year 7 students will explore healthy relationships and the value of family life. Throughout Years 8-11 students will be encouraged to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and others, acceptance of responsibilities, sensitivity towards the needs and views of others, loyalty and fidelity. Sex education is an integral part of the discussions about all types of loving relationships. In addition, in Years 8-11 students will learn about other important issues ranging from puberty; use of contraceptives; prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; prevention of sexual abuse; FGM; body image; sexting and social media; pornography; and the importance of consent in all relationships. Students will be able to ask questions, which will be answered factually and, in an age-appropriate manner.

Right of withdrawal

Some parts of RSE are **compulsory** - these are part of the National Curriculum for Science and the Relationships Education and Health Education elements of the Life Skills curriculum. However, parents/carers can withdraw their children from the sex education element of the RSE programme, delivered in Life Skills lessons, if they wish to do so. However, we believe that the presentation of sexual images in social and other media make it important that all young people have a place to discuss pressures, check facts and dispel myths.

If you wish to withdraw your child from sex education element of the RSE programme in school, please complete the attached reply slip and return it to Mrs Thompson (Headteacher's Personal Assistant). Parents/carers are asked to indicate their reasons for withdrawal. This will allow the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher to discuss the decision and address any misunderstandings you may have about the nature and deliver of RSE in school. The practical arrangements and supervision and teaching of any such students will be organised by Miss Glendenning (Life Skills Co-ordinator).

If you have any queries about the content of the programme or resources used, please do not hesitate in contacting me at school. I have also enclosed a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document that may also address any questions or concerns you may have.

Yours sincerely

Deputy Headteacher

Sex and Relationships Education - Frequently Asked Questions

What are the aims of RSE in our school?
Depending on the age of the children and the lessons in their particular year group, we want RSE to:

- *Develop the confidence to talk, listen and think about their feelings and relationships*
- *Develop friendship/relationship skills*
- *Develop positive attitudes, values and self esteem*
- *Provide knowledge and understanding about puberty and the changes that will take place*
- *Provide knowledge and understanding about reproduction and sexuality*
- *Address concerns and correct misunderstanding that children may have gained from the media and peers*
- *Develop skills to help children protect themselves against unwanted sexual experience*
- *Know where and how to seek help*

Can you explain the school's RSE Morals and Values Framework?

RSE follows the school's agreed aims, values and moral framework which is sensitive to the needs and beliefs of students, parents / carers and other members of the school community. RSE will be delivered within the school's agreed equal opportunities framework.

RSE will support the importance of marriage or stable relationships, for family life and bringing up children. Care is taken to ensure there is no stigmatisation of children based on their different home circumstances.

Pupils will be encouraged to understand that thinking about morals and values also includes:

- *Respect for self and others*
- *Commitment, trust, and love within relationships*
- *Understanding diversity regarding religion, culture, and sexual orientation*
- *Honesty with self and others*
- *Self-awareness*
- *Exploration of rights, duties, and responsibilities*

Misunderstandings about RSE

There is sometimes concern that RSE in schools might promote sexual activity or cause confusion about an individual's sexuality. The research on quality RSE points to a more positive outlook: 87 programmes from many countries were examined by UNESCO in 2009. This led to the conclusion that if RSE has an effect it is a positive one: *"sexuality education can lead to later and more responsible sexual behaviour or may have no discernible impact on sexual behaviour"*.

In the UK the research is even more positive. Analysis by the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles team over several years consistently shows that men and women who said that lessons at school were their main source of information about sex were more likely to have started having sex at a later age than those for whom parents or other sources were their main source. Schools have an important role to play in RSE.

Reply Slip - Relationship and Sexual Education Programme

Please only complete this form if you are requesting for your child to be withdrawn from the Sex Education element of the Relationships & Sex Education programme.

Name of student .....

Form Group .....

I/we wish to withdraw ..... from the Sex Education element of the Relationships and Sex Education programme (delivered in Life Skills lessons) at the Hillcrest School.

Please identify reasons for decision to withdraw your child from this element of the programme:

A meeting will be arranged for you to discuss your reasons with the Headteacher.

Signed .....

Date .....

Please return the slip to Mrs Thompson (Headteacher's Personal Assistant)