Penrose Learning Trust



RSE Policy

Member of staff responsible:	Headteacher
Issue status:	September 2026
Review date:	September 2027
Signed:	Chair of Academy Committee

1. Policy Aims

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Hadleigh High School are to:

- Provide a safe framework for sensitive discussions.
- Prepare students for puberty and sexual development, promoting understanding of health and hygiene.
- Help students develop self-respect, confidence, empathy, and positive self-image.
- Foster a positive culture around sexuality, relationships, and diversity.
- Teach students accurate vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- Support students in understanding how relationships can affect health and wellbeing, including mental health, safety online, and healthy relationships.
- Ensure students know where and how to access trusted information and advice.
- Equip students to recognise and respond to risky or unsafe situations.
- Prepare students for life in modern Britain, including awareness of laws and personal rights.

2. Statutory Requirements

As a secondary academy, Hadleigh High School provides RSE in line with:

- Children and Social Work Act 2017, Section 34.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 – making RSE compulsory for secondary students and Health Education mandatory in academies.
- Education Act 1996, Sections 406–407.
- Equality Act 2010, Part 6, Chapter 1, and the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) – requiring elimination of discrimination and promotion of equality.

RSE at Hadleigh High School is delivered in accordance with these legal requirements, statutory guidance, and best practice.

3. Definition of RSE

- RSE addresses the emotional, social, and cultural development of students.
- It covers relationships, sexual health, diversity, healthy lifestyles, and personal identity.
- RSE combines information sharing and values exploration.
- RSE does not promote sexual activity.

4. Curriculum

- The RSE curriculum is detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 and may be adapted when necessary.
- Curriculum development considers students' age, developmental stage, needs, and experiences.
- Teachers respond to questions outside the planned curriculum in an age-appropriate manner to prevent misinformation from online sources.
- Curriculum materials are available to parents and carers upon request, and parents/carers will be proactively informed about what is being taught (see Section 8).
- Biological aspects of RSE are delivered via the science curriculum, while RE addresses related issues such as marriage and gender equality.

4.1 Core Topics

- Families and relationships.
- Respectful relationships, including friendships.
- Online safety, social media, and exposure to inappropriate content.
- Personal safety and recognising peer pressure.
- Child-on-child abuse, harassment, and sexual pressure.
- Intimate and sexual relationships, sexual health, consent, hygiene, and contraception.
- Positive male role models and healthy masculinity.
- How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours.
- How sub-cultures such as 'incels' might influence our understanding of sexual ethics.
- The prevalence of AI-generated sexual imagery and 'deepfakes'.
- The role of consent, and awareness of power dynamics in relationships.

These topics are taught in the context of family diversity, safeguarding against stigma for students with different family structures, including single parents, LGBT parents, foster parents, or looked-after children.

4.2 LGBTQ+ Inclusive Content

Hadleigh High School will ensure LGBTQ+ content is integrated throughout the RSE curriculum in accordance with statutory guidance:

We will:

- Include same-sex parents/carers when discussing families across all year groups
- Teach students the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment, including that legal rights may differ based on biological sex
- Ensure there is equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same-sex relationships
- Integrate same-sex relationships throughout RSHE programmes of study, rather than teaching them as standalone lessons

We will not:

- Use materials that use cartoons or diagrams that oversimplify gender identity or perpetuate stereotypes
- Teach as fact that all people have a gender identity

5. Delivery, Monitoring and Review

5.1 Staff Training and Development

All staff delivering RSE at Hadleigh High School receive comprehensive training to ensure they can deliver sensitive content safely and effectively.

Initial training includes:

- Understanding of statutory RSE requirements and school policy delivered by the department lead
- Safeguarding procedures and recognising disclosures training, delivered by the DSL.
- Creating safe learning environments and establishing ground rules.
- Responding to difficult questions appropriately.
- Understanding of LGBTQ+ inclusive content requirements, delivered by the DSL in annual safeguarding training and followed up the department lead.
- Strategies for challenging harmful attitudes including sexism, misogyny, and homophobia.
- Awareness of sensitive topics including consent, sexual violence, and online safety.

Ongoing training and support:

- Annual refresher training on RSE delivery and any curriculum updates
- Regular safeguarding updates and refreshers provided by the DSL.
- Access to subject-specific CPD through the National College.

- Opportunities to observe good practice and share resources
- Debrief sessions offered to staff after delivering particularly sensitive content
- Access to pastoral support for staff as needed
- Penrose Trust Cross MAT Meetings

5.2 Monitoring

Monitoring responsibilities:

The PSHE lead is responsible for overseeing the monitoring of RSE delivery and ensuring quality assurance. This includes:

- Regular workbook and lesson checks (half termly)
- Learning walks and lesson observations
- Review of planning and resources
- Analysis of staff and student voice feedback
- Tracking of any safeguarding disclosures arising from RSE lessons or whole school trends.

Quality assurance processes:

- Fortnightly review meetings between the PSHE lead and senior leadership.

Policy and curriculum review:

- This policy is reviewed annually by SLT and the PSHE lead
- The Academy Committee approves any significant changes
- Student, staff, and parent/carer feedback is actively sought and incorporated into the annual review
- The curriculum map is reviewed annually to ensure it remains current and meets statutory requirements
- Any changes to statutory guidance trigger an immediate policy review

5.3 Inclusivity

Hadleigh High School is committed to ensuring the RSE curriculum is accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- We set high expectations for all pupils.
- Lessons are adapted through differentiation, accessible resources, and reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to learning.
- We use a range of teaching methods to support quality first teaching.
- Resources are carefully selected to ensure they are accessible and appropriate for pupils to ensure inclusivity.

5.4 Supporting vulnerable pupils:

- The pastoral team works closely with the PSHE lead to identify pupils who may need additional support or adaptations
- For pupils where specific RSE content may be particularly sensitive (e.g., those who have experienced abuse, looked-after children, or those with specific anxieties), individualised approaches are developed in liaison with:
    - The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
    - Pastoral staff
    - The SENCO
    - Parents/carers where appropriate
- Pre-teaching or alternative delivery methods may be used for particularly sensitive topics
- Safe spaces and additional pastoral support are available for pupils who need it

Monitoring and review: The effectiveness of adaptations and support is regularly reviewed through student voice, staff feedback, and liaison with the pastoral team.

5.5 Use of Resources

Resources are selected to ensure:

- Alignment with statutory RSE guidance.
- Age-appropriateness and developmental suitability.
- Evidence-based, accurate content from credible sources (e.g., PSHE Association, Unifrog).
- Sensitivity to students' experiences and avoidance of distress.
- Compliance with LGBTQ+ content requirements (see Section 4.2).

5.6 Safe & Effective Practice

- Lessons occur in a safe learning environment with established ground rules.
- Sensitive issues are delivered by trained staff known to students.
- Teachers follow the approved curriculum and use only school-vetted teaching methods and resources.

5.7 Challenging Harmful Attitudes and Behaviours

All staff delivering RSE will actively challenge everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes during lessons and across the school environment.

This includes:

- Addressing harmful language and attitudes when they occur
- Promoting positive discussions about gender equality and respect
- Challenging stereotypes about relationships, gender roles, and sexuality
- Creating a culture where discrimination is not tolerated

6. External Agencies

- All external visitors or resources are carefully vetted to ensure alignment with statutory guidance, school policy, and fundamental British values.
- Checks include:
  - Online review of agency or speaker
  - Confirmation of age-appropriateness and developmental suitability
  - Safeguarding compliance and staff supervision during sessions
  - Compliance with LGBTQ+ content requirements and approach to challenging harmful attitudes
- The school does not work with agencies promoting extreme political views.
- External providers will be informed of our legal obligation to share all content with parents/carers upon request.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Academy Committee

- Approves the RSE policy and holds the headteacher accountable for implementation.

7.2 Headteacher

- Ensures RSE is delivered consistently and in accordance with statutory guidance.
- Manages requests for withdrawal from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE.
- May refuse withdrawal requests in exceptional circumstances (see Section 9).
- Ensures parents/carers are proactively consulted when developing or reviewing the RSE policy.

7.3 Staff

- Deliver RSE sensitively and model positive attitudes.

- Monitor student progress and respond to individual needs.
- Respect withdrawal requests while maintaining educational standards.
- Actively challenge everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes.

7.4 Students

- Engage fully in RSE lessons.
- Treat peers with respect and sensitivity.
- Follow PSHE ground rules and the school values: Aim High, Work Hard, Be Kind.

8. Parental Engagement and Consultation

Hadleigh High School recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers in the delivery of RSE.

8.1 Consultation Requirements

The school must proactively engage and consult parents/carers when:

- Developing the RSE policy
- Reviewing or making significant changes to the RSE policy
- Making changes to the RSE curriculum

8.1.1 Consultation Process Undertaken

In developing this RSE policy and curriculum, Hadleigh High School undertook the following consultation activities:

- Parent/Carer survey distributed in October 2025 with 8 responses received.
- Parent/carer survey distributed in September 2026. Please note, this is still within the consultation window.
- Staff consultation sessions conducted in June 2026.
- Penrose Trust Safeguarding Review conducted in October 2025.
- Student voice activities in PSHE lessons across Years 7-11.
- Academy Committee review and approval process – pending.

The school will continue to consult parents/carers when making significant changes to the RSE curriculum or policy through similar methods, ensuring parents/carers have adequate opportunity to provide feedback before changes are implemented.

8.2 Access to Curriculum Materials

- Parents/carers have the right to view all RSE curriculum materials on request
- Materials will be made available within a reasonable timeframe (typically within 5 school days)
- Parents/carers will be proactively informed about what is being taught each term through:
    - Termly curriculum overviews sent home
    - Information on the school website

8.3 External Provider Materials

Where materials are provided by external agencies:

- The school will inform providers of our legal obligation to share content with parents/carers
- All external provider materials will be reviewed and approved before use
- Materials will be made available to parents/carers in the same way as school-produced materials

9. Parents' Right to Withdraw

- Parents may withdraw students from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE up to three terms before the child turns 16. After this point (three terms before turning 16), if the pupil wishes to receive sex education rather than remain withdrawn, the school will make arrangements for them to do so. The school will arrange a meeting with the pupil to discuss their wishes and will provide the sex education content in an appropriate manner, which may include catch-up sessions or integration into the regular RSE programme.
- Requests must be made in writing to the headteacher, who will provide the official withdrawal form.
- The headteacher may refuse a withdrawal request in exceptional circumstances, such as where there are safeguarding concerns about the student.
- Where a withdrawal request is refused, the headteacher will:
    - Meet with the parent/carer to discuss the concerns
    - Explain the reasons for the refusal in writing
    - Provide information about the right to appeal to the Academy Committee

- Withdrawal requests are documented in the student's record.
- Alternative work is provided for students withdrawn from sex education.

10. Safeguarding

- RSE lessons may lead to disclosures requiring referral to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Staff follow the school's safeguarding procedures and do not promise confidentiality in these situations.
- Staff receive training in safeguarding, Prevent, online safety, and child-on-child abuse.

Appendix 1: Curriculum Map

The topics outlined in Appendix 2 are covered comprehensively throughout our schemes of work (SOW) as part of our RSE and Pastoral Curriculum for Years 7-11. Rather than providing an exhaustive list of every instance where each topic appears, we have provided representative examples below to demonstrate how these safeguarding themes are integrated across key stages in an age-appropriate and developmentally suitable manner.

Examples of Topic Coverage

Arranged Marriage

- Year 8: Why do people get married?
- Year 11: What are your rights and responsibilities within marriage?

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- Year 11: What are your rights and responsibilities within marriage?

Grooming/Coercion

- Year 9: What are harmful relationship behaviours?
- Year 10: How do you report stalking and sexual violence? What are the signs of control, coercion, and grooming?

Domestic Abuse

- Year 8: Consent: what is it and why is it essential?
- Year 9: What are harmful relationship behaviours?
- Year 10: How do you leave aggressive social situations? How do you report stalking and sexual violence? What are the signs of control, coercion, and grooming?

This approach ensures that all statutory safeguarding topics are delivered through our carefully planned, progressive curriculum whilst maintaining the flexibility to respond to emerging issues and the specific needs of our pupils. Our SOW are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain comprehensive and meet all statutory requirements for RSE and health education.

If parents/carers would like to request resources for a more comprehensive overview of our curriculum coverage, please contact support@hadleighhigh.net.

Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum Map

	7	8	9	10	11
Relationships, family, and friends	What makes a healthy relationship?	Why do people get married?	How do you deal with peer pressure?	What impact can relationships have on you?	What are your rights and responsibilities within marriage?
	How can we support those who are experiencing life changes?	How do we spot unhealthy and abusive relationships?	What does healthy conflict look like?	What are the signs of coercion and grooming?	How do you navigate conflict in relationships?
	What is good communication?	How can I overcome conflict and find forgiveness?			What do respectful relationships look like?
Sexual health, sexuality and gender	What impact does the media have on relationships?	Consent. What is it and why is it essential?	What are harmful relationship behaviours?	What is emotional abuse?	What does consent look like offline and online?
	How do we physically and mentally change?	What is sexuality and attraction?	How do you practice safe sex?	How can we build a more tolerant community?	How do you prevent and treat STI's?
	What is menstruation	What is the issue with nudes?	What is child on child abuse?	What choices do you have if you become pregnant?	How to understand menstrual health
		How do we define sexuality and gender identity?	How can pornography impact on sexual development?	How do you report stalking and sexual violence?	How to understand fertility, parenthood and pregnancy loss.
			What does consent look like online?		

Appendix 2: By the End of Secondary School Students Should Know

Topic	Students Should Know
Families	• That there are different types of committed, stable relationships including same-sex relationships • How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children • What marriage is, including their legal status, e.g., that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony • Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into • The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships • The roles and responsibilities of parents/carers with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and that families can include same-sex parents/carers • The facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment, including that legal rights may differ based on biological sex • How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed
Respectful relationships, including friendships	• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • - How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g., how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) and must be actively challenged • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs • The importance of positive male role models and healthy masculinity • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help

Topic	Students Should Know
	• That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control • What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable • How to recognise and challenge everyday sexism, misogyny, and homophobia • the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal
Online and media	• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online • Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them • What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online • The impact of viewing harmful content • How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours and that specifically sexually explicit material e.g., pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners • How sub-cultures such as 'incels' might influence our understanding of sexual ethics and the importance of rejecting harmful attitudes • The prevalence of AI-generated sexual imagery and 'deepfakes' and the risks associated with these • That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
Being safe	• The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships • How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)

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

Appendix 3: Updated Withdrawal Request Form

Important note for parents/carers: *This withdrawal applies up to three terms before your child turns 16. After this point, if your child wishes to receive sex education, the school will make arrangements for them to do so, regardless of this withdrawal request.*

Student Details:

- Student Name: _____
- Year Group: _____
- Tutor Group: _____

Parent/Carer Details:

- Parent/Carer Name: _____
- Relationship to student: _____
- Contact telephone: _____
- Contact email: _____

Withdrawal Request:

I wish to request that my child be withdrawn from the sex education elements of the RSE curriculum (excluding those topics taught as part of the science curriculum).

I understand that:

- My child will still receive relationships education and health education
- My child will still receive the biological aspects of RSE taught in science lessons
- The headteacher may refuse this request in exceptional circumstances, such as where there are safeguarding concerns
- If my request is refused, I will be provided with written reasons and information about how to appeal

Reason for withdrawal request (optional):

_____

_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

_____

For school use only:

Decision: ☐ Approved ☐ Refused

If refused, reason:

_____

_____

Meeting with parent/carer held: ☐ Yes ☐ No Date: _____

Decision communicated to parent/carer: Date: _____

Headteacher signature: _____ Date: _____