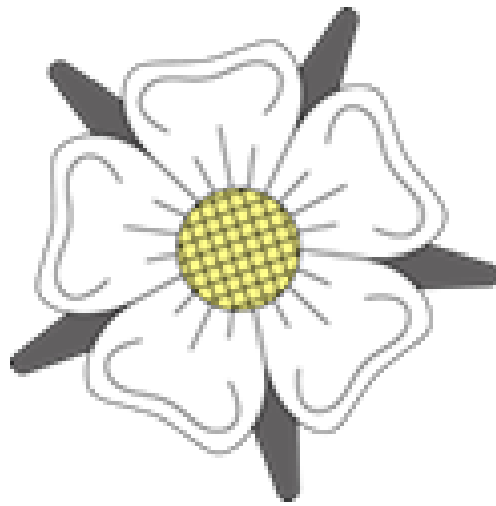




John Taylor Free School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Author	Mr M Davis
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Introduction

This policy explains how our school/Trust teaches Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. It also includes Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) which all secondary schools are required to teach.

This policy has been written using information from the Department for Education's (DfE) [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education guidance](#) (2025) and other relevant guidance document and statutory requirements.

Since 2019, the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, says that by law all schools must teach children about relationships and health.

PSHE education plays a vital role in safeguarding young people, promoting wellbeing, and preparing pupils for adult life. Our approach recognises the increasing independence of young people as they move through secondary education and supports them to navigate complex social, emotional, health and economic situations safely and responsibly.

With the support of the Pan-Staffordshire PSHCE Education Service we have created this policy to show what and how we teach in PSHCE and why it is important.

What is PSHCE?

PSHCE is a planned, developmental programme of learning through which young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to manage their lives now and in the future.

Through PSHCE, our pupils learn to:

- Maintain their physical and mental health
- Form and maintain healthy, respectful relationships
- Recognise and respond to risk, harm and exploitation
- Manage emotions, conflict and peer pressure
- Stay safe online and in the community
- Make informed choices about relationships, sex, health and wellbeing
- Recognise consent, boundaries and the law
- Develop economic wellbeing, financial capability and career readiness.

Some aspects of PSHCE are statutory, through RSHE; others, such as elements of financial education and careers learning, are non-statutory. As a school/Trust we believe these are important for our pupils to learn as essential preparation for adulthood.

Why is PSHE Important?

Our PSHCE curriculum is designed to promote the school's values of Succeed and Thrive. It is an important part of our school curriculum in ensuring that students are adequately prepared for the modern world and the subject is valued by both staff and students alike. It is a primary vehicle for equipping students with the skills to stay safe and well in the modern world in line with KCSIE and to promote Fundamental British Values, as well to fulfil our statutory obligations around the Relationships, Sex and Health Education guidance from the Department of Education. The subject also promotes Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) education and forms a vital part of our Thrive offer.

We recognise that parents, carers and families play a key role in supporting young people, however not everyone feels confident to talk to their child about the topics covered in the curriculum. PSHE education ensures that all young people receive accurate, age-appropriate and inclusive information to help them stay safe, healthy and informed.

Curriculum Planning

Our PSHCE curriculum is planned as a spiral curriculum, where learning is revisited and built upon as pupils progress from Year 7 to Year 13. This is outlined in our long-term curriculum plan which can be found here: [PSHCE LTP 26-27](#). This approach ensures that pupils deepen their understanding and develop the skills they need to thrive both in school and beyond. Our curriculum is designed to:

- Reduce vulnerabilities to harm, exploitation and unsafe relationships
- Promote healthy, respectful and equal relationships
- Build confidence, resilience and self-belief
- Support informed decision-making
- Equip young people with the skills to seek help and support
- Respond to local and national safeguarding and health trends

We know there is a proven link between pupils' health and wellbeing, and their academic progress. Crucial skills and positive attitudes developed through comprehensive PSHE education are critical to ensure our pupils are effective learners.

Our PSHE curriculum is tailored to the needs of our pupils and community and is informed by safeguarding data, pupil voice, national and local intelligence and emerging risks. PSHE is delivered through discrete lessons and reinforced through assemblies, personal tutor time and cross-curricular links (e.g. Science, Computing and Careers).

The DfE has set out guiding principles for effective RSHE delivery. These principles are utilised to inform our programme. These principles are reflected throughout this policy:

- Engagement with pupils
- Engagement and transparency with parents/carers
- Positivity

- Careful sequencing
- Relevant and responsive
- Skilled delivery of participatory education
- Whole school approach

Student Voice and a Need-Led Curriculum

Listening to the young people's voices is central to our PSHCE provision. Students' views are gathered through a range of activities including:

- Class discussions and evaluation activities
- School council and student forums
- Surveys and feedback tools

Young people are encouraged to share their views, and these are listened to, valued and respected. This feedback, alongside safeguarding and behaviour data, informs curriculum review and adaption to ensure content remains relevant, timely and responsive to the lived experiences of our students.

The Curriculum

PSHCE is taught to every year group throughout the school (Years 7-13). The curriculum is age-appropriate, inclusive and progressive, building on the young people's knowledge, and skills year on year. Our content and delivery support young people to develop a positive view of healthy relationships, being healthy and keeping safe. We work to objectives in each year group that support the outcomes outlined in the DfE's RSHE guidance.

Some aspects of PSHCE, including reproduction are taught through the Science curriculum, for example, alongside broader relationships and health, including sexual health learning in PSHCE:

Key Stage 3

- Reproduction in humans (as an example of a mammal) including the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycle (without details of hormones), gametes, fertilisation, gestation and birth, to include the effect of maternal lifestyles on the fetus through the placenta.

Below is a list of topics covered by our PSHCE programme in line with government guidance:

- Families
- Respectful relationships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
- Mental wellbeing
- Wellbeing online
- Physical health and fitness

- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping
- Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system
- Personal safety
- Basic first aid
- Developing bodies

As outlined in the RSHE guidance, it is important that our curriculum is relevant and responsive to the needs of our young people. The PSHCE Lead regularly reviews curriculum content to ensure it reflects emerging safeguarding concerns. This may mean we need to add content to our planned programme. Where this is the case, parents and carers will be informed and be able to request access to the resources that will be used.

Resources

As with other subjects, the breadth of the PSHCE curriculum means that we use a wide variety of age-appropriate and evidence-based resources to support delivery. These are provided through our schemes of work, and other quality-assured reputable sources. All resources are reviewed prior to teaching to ensure they are accurate, age-appropriate, and evidence-based. Resources are generally sourced from accredited organisations and are collated by the Lead Teacher for PSHCE.

Parents can request access to PSHCE resources by contacting the school. They are kept abreast of all topics being studied via a half-termly digest within the school newsletter.

We encourage engagement from parents and carers in our PSHCE programme. We informed parents and carers about our curriculum content through the school website, newsletters and information events. If you would like to discuss any of the resources in more detail please contact m.davis@johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk.

Sex Education

We define sex education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction, conception and birth.

In our school we take the approach that Relationships and Sex Education are best approached in an integrated way to equip young people with the information, skills and positive values to have safe, fulfilling relationships, to enjoy their sexuality and to take responsibility for their sexual health and wellbeing. In relationships education we will explore topics related to preventing sexual abuse, for example, avoiding sharing inappropriate material online and using the correct terms for different parts of the body. In health education we teach about infections and their preventions, there may be references to sexually transmitted infections and accessing different parts of the health system, including sexual health. We have highlighted lessons that contain what we define as sex education

so that parents and carers are clear on where the right to request withdrawal applies (See Right to Withdraw Section).

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

Teaching and Learning

We deliver our PSHCE Curriculum through weekly lessons, assemblies, Personal Tutor Time activities and drop-down days.

PSHCE is delivered using a range of participatory, inclusive and trauma-informed approaches, including:

- Discussion
- Scenario-based learning
- Case studies and role-play
- Reflection and self-assessment

We ensure our curriculum is a balance of knowledge, skills and attributes to enable children to make healthy, safe choices relevant to their lives incrementally.

We ensure that we follow evidence-based framework of learning and teaching PSHCE to ensure that we are in line with best practice and statutory requirements. Our staff follow this through their long, medium and short term PSHCE planning. All teaching staff, including Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and new members are supported to meet this framework through regular check-ins and shared planning.

The personal beliefs and attitudes of staff will not influence the teaching of PSHCE. A balanced and non-judgmental approach will be taken. Staff delivering or contributing to PSHCE will work to the agreed values within this policy.

Within PSHCE young people will develop confidence in talking, listening and thinking about relationships, keeping safe, sex and health. To achieve this a range of teaching strategies will be used including:

- Establishing group agreements with pupils
- Using distancing techniques e.g. case studies, scenarios
- The provision of a 'question box' during lessons where students may be nervous in asking questions in front of their peers
- Responding to children's questions in an appropriate manner
- Using interactive and participatory teaching methods, with opportunities for discussion
- Opportunities for reflection.

External Providers

Occasionally we utilise external providers to enhance our delivery of PSHCE. All external providers deliver in line with our PSHCE policy and safeguarding procedures and our Visitor Policy. Where an external provider is utilised, we will make sure that any materials used are appropriate, in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

Establishing a Safe Learning Environment

PSHCE education covers a range of topics that are close to the real-life experiences, it is essential to establish a safe learning environment, where our young people are not put at risk of emotional harm. We want our young people to feel safe and participate in our PSHCE lessons. To help every student take part, staff will make expectations clear with each class. These expectations explain how we treat each other with rights, responsibilities and respect. Everyone will follow it. The agreement will also explain the rules for asking questions.

Responding to Questions and Managing Disclosures

As with any topic, pupils will ask questions during PSHCE to further their understanding, it is important to our school that our young people feel able to ask questions and that our staff are confident in responding. We support young people to ask questions and recognise that some may feel less comfortable to do so. Staff will therefore encourage students to ask questions during sessions. Due to the sensitive topics PSHCE explores, staff will employ strategies to ensure that the questions are asked and answered in a factual, balanced and age-appropriate way. The group agreement will remind young people that questions are not to be personal but general. For example, asking about the staff member's own experiences, or directly naming themselves or other class members. Where teachers do not feel comfortable/able to answer questions directly, they should liaise with the Lead Teacher for PSHCE to ensure that all responses are appropriate and factual.

In some lessons, students will be introduced to the 'question box' where they can place their written question anonymously. This allows staff the opportunity to group questions into themes and filter any that might need to be answered on an individual basis, or in some cases, referred to parents and carers.

Due to the nature of PSHCE education, students' learning may result in them making a disclosure. All staff will be mindful of their safeguarding role and will follow the school's safeguarding policy if a question raises concerns of this nature or if a disclosure is made and will be expected to log any incidences on MyConcern. External providers are bound by our safeguarding and confidentiality policies and not their own.

Staff will use the following strategies to deal with unexpected questions:

- If a question is personal, the staff member will remind pupils of the rules set in our class expectations

- If the staff member does not know the answer to a question, the staff member will acknowledge this and will either research the question and provide an appropriate answer later if related to the topic being taught and appropriate for the age group or will speak to the Lead Teacher for PSHCE
- If the question is too explicit, outside set parameters (including if a child has been withdrawn from sex education), inappropriate in a whole class setting or raises safeguarding concerns the staff member will attend to it on an individual basis, this could include sharing the question for parents and carers to respond to.

Sometimes young people may ask questions about issues that are not part of the planned programme, this could show that the taught curriculum is not meeting their needs. This will be fed back to the PSHCE Lead as part of the evaluation and monitoring process.

Accessibility of the Curriculum

All pupils are entitled to high-quality PSHCE. It is not our school's policy to withdraw children with special educational needs from PSHCE education to catch up on other national curriculum subjects; these aspects of personal and social development are as important to all pupils as their academic achievement and contribute to it. Lesson content will be adapted and extra support provided where necessary to ensure all children are enabled to develop key skills, knowledge and attributes developed through our PSHCE curriculum.

Our staff are enabled to personalise the curriculum content to meet the needs of the children in the class and to adjust the learning content in order to meet the learning outcomes and needs of the group.

We ensure that the aspects of PSHCE are inclusive and relevant to all our children. For example, all children learn together about the physical and emotional changes that can happen during puberty. This approach helps to build empathy, understanding across the genders and reduces the risk of teasing or stigma.

We are required to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. As a school we value diversity, encourage respect for all and promote the celebration of difference. We do not discriminate against pupils because of any protected characteristic (age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation). At times, when there is an identified need, we may take positive action through our planning and delivery of PSHCE to deal with disadvantages facing those with a particular characteristic.

As a school we will deliver PSHCE in a factual, non-judgmental way ensuring that teachers do not promote one faith or cultural viewpoint but rather provide a balanced approach that acknowledges the wealth of views and opinions of our community and teaches respect.

We also recognise and respect the diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds of our community, as well as the variety of family structures our pupils may come from. Our teaching and resources reflect this diversity, promoting inclusion and helping all children feel seen, valued, and respected.

Some of our young people may also have parents/carers, family members and/or friends who identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender (LGBTQ+). They may also be exploring their own sexuality and sexual orientation or be questioning their gender. Our PSHCE education acknowledges this through scenarios, in a sensitive, honest and balanced consideration of sexuality. This helps to create a safe environment for all pupils and staff.

Under the Equality Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires schools to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in all aspects of school life, including policies and the curriculum. Schools have a legal duty to actively challenge discrimination and foster an environment where diversity is respected and valued.

To meet this responsibility as a school, we must help our young people to understand and appreciate differences, and encourage respectful relationships with others, regardless of background or identity.

For more information, please refer to our school's policies on child-on-child abuse, equality, diversity, and accessibility:

<https://johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/JTFS-Child-on-Child-Abuse-Policy-September-2024.pdf>

<https://johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Equality-Diversity-and-Accessibility-Policy-2024-6.pdf>

Staff Training

All staff delivering PSHCE are skilled and confident to do so. We undertake regular staff PSHCE training needs assessment to identify areas for development through our Professional Learning programme. We provide regular training and updates to staff around PSHCE through INSET days and staff meetings. If a staff member has additional learning and development needs these will be supported either through mentoring from a more experienced staff member in school, team-teaching, observations, or attendance at an internal or external training event.

The PSHCE lead attends regular network meetings, hosted by the Pan-Staffordshire PSHCE Education Service to keep their knowledge and practice relevant and up to date.

Assessment

Assessing and evaluating activities can support curriculum design and adaptations to the PSHCE curriculum to ensure it is relevant and engaging. We use informal baseline assessment activities to

find out students' prior knowledge. This enables our staff to adapt/review and plan the subsequent lessons accordingly.

Assessment is an ongoing process. Assessment of our children is an important aspect of PSHCE education, it is not about 'passing' or 'failing' or about behavioural outcomes. Assessment enables both staff and students to assure that key information has been properly understood. This usually involves students producing texts around the subject or completing knowledge quizzes.

Evaluation

Evaluating the PSHCE curriculum is essential to ensure it is effective, inclusive and meeting the needs of all our students within the context of their community. Our evaluation is structured around the key areas of Intent, Implementation and Impact.

A range of activities to evaluate the curriculum are used including:

- Lesson observations
- Staff feedback
- Curriculum maps and planning documents
- Student Voice
- Behaviour and safeguarding data
- Parent/Carer feedback

Engaging with Parents

We recognise that PSHCE is strongest when there is communication and collaboration between school and home.

We recognise that parents are the first teachers of their children and welcome their engagement with our PSHCE programme. We believe it is important that parents and carers fully understand the purpose and content of our PSHCE curriculum, which includes our RSHE curriculum. Open communication and opportunities to ask questions help build trust and confidence in our approach.

Examples of the resources we plan to use are available for parents and carers to view. We will also keep parents and carers informed about what will be taught and when through our school newsletter.

We encourage parents and carers to view these resources so they can support their child's learning at home. It is important that PSHCE delivered in school is explored in more detail within the context of individual families. Parents will be routinely informed about PSHCE through the school prospectus and letters/texts/emails to explain when PSHCE will take place in different year groups and what will be covered.

The policy is available to parents and carers via the school's website or by contacting the school office. We offer support and encourage discussion of topics at home by signposting to the [Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service's website page for parents and carers](#).

We will regularly consult with parents and carers on an annual basis about any needs they may have in relation to our PSHCE programme.

Any parents wanting more information about our PSHCE curriculum can contact Mr M Davis by email at m.davis@johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk.

Right to Withdraw

We will always try to work with parents and listen to their views. Parents can choose to take their child out some or all of the sex education lessons in our programme, except for the parts that are taught in science. There is no right to withdraw from any other element of the PSHCE curriculum including Relationships Education or Health Education.

From three terms before a pupil turns 16, a pupil can choose to opt back into sex education even if their parent has requested withdrawal. For example, if a pupil turns 16 during the autumn term, the pupil can opt back into sex education at any time after the start of the previous autumn term. Any child who has been withdrawn from sex education by their parents or carers will be made aware of this right through a discussion with the PSHCE Lead.

We have listed below the lessons that count as sex education. These are the only lessons you can withdraw your child from:

- Y8 Contraception
- Y10 Contraception

If you wish to withdraw your child from these lessons, please send a letter or email to the Headteacher. You will then be invited in to have a meeting with the Headteacher or another senior leader to discuss the request, your child may also be invited to this meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to understand the request and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. This will include discussing the benefits of sex education and the social and emotional impacts on the young person, including the likelihood that they will hear their peer's version on what was said, and this may not be accurate. The Headteacher can refuse the request in exceptional circumstances, for example because of a safeguarding concern or a specific vulnerability of the young person. This is in line with the [Department of Education's guidance](#).

Young people who are withdrawn from these lessons will be given other suitable work to do. This process will be documented and kept with the pupil's record via Bromcom.

Policy Links

This policy compliments the following policies:

- Safeguarding
- Equality Policy
- ICT and Internet Acceptable Use
- Positive Relationships
- Positive Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Child on Child Abuse
- Online Safety
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Creation, Consultation, Monitoring and Review of Policy

This policy was developed with support from the Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service and in consultation with the whole school community via stakeholder voice. In creating this policy, we have also considered the government's statutory guidance for RSE and Health Education (2025).

The RSE policy and curriculum will be reviewed every 2 years by the Senior Leader with responsibility for Thrive and governors. The review will be informed by the following:

- Pupil and staff evaluation of the programme
- Teacher assessment
- Changes in legislation and guidance
- Parent/Carer feedback – provide details of mechanisms e.g. annual survey

More Information

If you would like to discuss our PSHCE provision further, please contact Mr M Davis by email at m.davis@johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk. Complaints about PSHCE will be handled in line with the [JTMAT Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy](#).

Version Control

Created By	Approved Date	Changes Made	Review Date
Marc Davis	17/06/2026	New Policy	June 2028