



BENSHAM MANOR *School*

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Refresher on the RSHE changes: Relationships and sex education

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Objectives

We want to:

- Discuss our current offer and talk to you about the changes that will be implemented from September 2026.
- To let you know that based on our last parent/student consultation and the RSE guidelines the current curriculum map reflects these changes.

Please note: lessons are tailored to students abilities and levels and the curriculum map should be taken as a guide only.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education from September 2020

- From September 2020 it became **compulsory for all secondary schools** to deliver PSHCE, and to include in that provision, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.
- This guidance was reviewed again in July of this year (2025), resulting in further updates.
- This session/document will explore the necessity and relevance of this educational reform; explain the updated guidance on what schools are including in their curriculum and how Bensham Manor School will be implementing this.
- You can view the statutory guidance from the Department for Education here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-Health-education>

Why has the guidance been updated?

- The last guidance on Sex and Relationship education was published in 2000 and although it covered important elements of this education, society and the world our young people grow up in has changed rapidly since then and their education in such important matters must be able to keep up with these changes.
- Significantly, the new guidances since then places emphasis on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) indicating the significant importance of relationships education preceding sex education and that the two cannot be taught in isolation.
- Health Education ensures that students are educated about their body, healthy lifestyles and choices, mental wellbeing and the impact of these issues throughout their life.
- The 2020 guidance was informed by Government consultation with over 40,000 people including religious, youth and charitable organisations, parents, students, teachers and educational leaders; and the 2025 guidance was informed by a further formal review and public consultation conducted by the Department for Education (DfE), which invited views from schools, local authorities, health and safeguarding professionals, children and young people, parents/carers, and a wide range of sector stakeholders - generating over 14,000 responses between 16 May 2024 and 11 July 2024.
- It aims to ensure young people are given the necessary knowledge and skills required to make informed choices and live a healthy and fulfilling life.

Statutory guidance for secondary schools from September 2020: Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

- **Compulsory** in all secondary schools in England.
- **Parents can withdraw** from Sex education (not Science) but not from relationships education. A meeting should take place with the head teacher if you would like to withdraw your child. A request also needs to be made in writing.
- **A child can request** sex education **without parents consent** 3 terms before 16th birthday.
- 'The **aim of RSE** is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships.'

- Building on what students learnt in Primary school, by the **end of Secondary school students will have learned about:-**
 - **Families**
 - **Respectful relationships including friendships**
 - **Online and Media**
 - **Being safe**
 - **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health**

Statutory guidance for secondary schools from September 2020: Relationships and Sex Education

This will include lessons covering: Information about and laws relating to:

- **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**
- **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**
- **Marriage**
- **The age of consent**
- **Violence against women and girls**
- **Information and image sharing online.**
- **Gender identity**
- **Sexuality**
- **Abortion**
- **Pornography**
- **substance misuse**
- **hate crime**
- **radicalisation/extremism and exploitation (including in intimate relationships and through gang involvement).**

Lessons will be **taught at an age appropriate time and in an age appropriate way**; using resources or teaching guidance that have been produced or endorsed by reputable organisations such as the PSHE Association, NSPCC, Brook Advisory service, CEOP, to name only a few, or funded by the government in line with their statutory guidance.

When deemed necessary trained specialists will aide in the delivery of highly sensitive content. PSHCE Staff are well trained to deliver the content.

Bensham Manor School follows a 'spiral – sequenced' curriculum that enables students to build on their knowledge of important issues throughout each Key Stage.

You can view the content covered in each key stage in our curriculum map.

Statutory guidance for secondary schools from September 2020: Health Education

- Compulsory in all secondary schools in England (no opt out).
- ‘Starting point for health and wellbeing education should be a focus on enabling pupils to make well-informed, positive choices for themselves.’
- Building on what they learned in Primary school, by the **end of Secondary school students will have learned about:-**
 - **Mental well-being**
 - **Internet safety and harm**
 - **Physical health and fitness**
 - **Healthy eating**
 - **Drugs, alcohol and tobacco**
 - **Health and prevention**
 - **Basic first aid**
 - **Changing adolescent body**

Our policy

In writing our policy we have been informed by:

- Statutory guidance
- Parent views
- Students views
- Evidence based research from the Sex Education Forum
- PSHE Association
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Statutory Guidance)

The underlying principles of our policy are to:

- Educate our students to make safe, healthy and fully informed choices throughout their life.
- Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their own values and influences regarding relationships.
- Provide honest and factually accurate information.

Positive outcomes

Research evidence suggests that high quality PSHCE:

- ❖ *“When pupils receive lessons on healthy relationships, their first sexual activity occurs later and they are more likely to report abuse and exploitation.”*
- ❖ *“Reduces risk-taking behaviours such as drug or alcohol addiction and improves diet and exercise levels, in turn boosting long-term life chances.”*
- ❖ *“Can promote positive outcomes relating to emotional health while reducing stigma and helping pupils learn where to go if they have mental health concerns.”*
- ❖ *“PSHE education has been proven to remove barriers to learning and provide skills to aid success.”*
- ❖ *“Can provide school-leavers with key skills and characteristics to thrive in the world of work.”*
- ❖ *“Can positively impact on personal financial choices, an understanding of risk and responsibility, about different types of work and the influence of the media on financial choices (e.g. in relation to gambling).”*

Source: PSHE Association ‘Curriculum for life’ report 2017

Evidence about the impact of RSE

- The Sex Education Forum regularly carry out surveys of students regarding their experience of PSHCE education.
- They also work closely with other relevant research bodies with the aim to improve RSE with an evidence based approach.
- Their research shows that high quality RSE contributes to:
 - First sexual encounters happening at an older age
 - First sexual encounters more likely to be fully informed, consensual and protected
 - Earlier identification of abusive and exploitative behaviours

What does our curriculum look like now?

Year 7 topics:

- ❑ Change & Transitions – year 7
- ❑ Personal Identity
- ❑ Careers
- ❑ Healthy lifestyles / impact on physical wellbeing
- ❑ Mental health and Emotional well-being
- ❑ Puberty
- ❑ Puberty and general consent.

Year 8 topics:

- ❑ Illegal Drugs
- ❑ Legal Drugs
- ❑ Careers
- ❑ Emotional & Mental Health and Social Media (emotional wellbeing)
- ❑ Coping with emotional/mental health
- ❑ Role of the media / discrimination
- ❑ Challenging discrimination
- ❑ Basic first aid

Year 9 topics:

- ❑ Identity and Friendships
- ❑ Other relationships
- ❑ Reproduction, different relationships, consent, intimacy and online safety.
- ❑ Personal safety in the home and community Safety at home, in the community and online.
- ❑ Careers – preparation for work.

What does our curriculum look like now?

Please note this is taught in both Humanities and PSHE so

timelines may vary slightly.

Year 10 topics:

- ❑ Democracy
- ❑ Managing social relationships
- ❑ Dealing with problems
- ❑ Community action
- ❑ Healthy living – including checking your own body and breaking taboos.
- ❑ RSHE
- ❑ My identity – accepting others.
- ❑ Risks young people face.

Year 11 topics:

- ❑ Individual rights and responsibilities (human rights)
- ❑ Bullying and the role of a bystander
- ❑ Managing relationships and emotions.
- ❑ Financial literacy
- ❑ FGM, exploitation, extremism, terrorism, gangs – support available.
- ❑ RSHE.

PSHCE

- Pupils have 1 lesson a week (1 hour) of PSHCE, RSE and Health in KS3 and KS4 and at least one lesson of life skills per week.
- Many of the topics in the statutory guidance will be covered during PSHCE lessons.
- However there are some subjects that will also cover elements of PSHCE, RSE and Health Education.

These include:

- English - Media, Relationships
- Science – reproduction, healthy eating
- History - Relationships
- CDM - Online Safety
- PE - Physical well-being
- Food Tech - Healthy Eating
- Childcare (KS4) - Families, Sex Education, Relationships – alongside PSHCE
- Skills for life (KS4) - Careers, Application forms, Interview Techniques – alongside PSHCE

2025 guidance - for teaching beginning in 2026

What stays the same:

- Schools must still teach relationships education (in primary) and RSHE (in secondary) as part of PSHE.
- Parents still have the right to view RSHE teaching materials at school and to request withdrawal of their child from *sex education* (not relationships education) in the secondary phase.
- The focus remains on helping children and young people develop healthy, respectful relationships and understand physical and mental wellbeing.

What updates have been introduced in the 2025 guidance?

- **Modern online risks & digital awareness**

- The new guidance adds content about harms online such as scams, deepfakes, AI chatbots, data privacy and financial risks (e.g., gaming monetisation) which were less explicit before.
- More emphasis on recognising and managing unwanted sexual content online (e.g., sextortion) and understanding that what they see online may not be acceptable or healthy.

- **Consent, ethics and boundaries**

- Greater emphasis on consent: that children/young people should know they *can* withhold or withdraw consent, and that “yes” doesn’t always mean an ethically okay situation.
- More focus on assertiveness, communicating needs and boundaries, managing feelings like frustration and loneliness within relationships (including online).

- **Health & wellbeing – mental health, loss, physical health updated**

- The updated guidance includes topics such as bereavement, change and loss in a more formal way.
- It also addresses contemporary issues like vaping, synthetic drugs and more detailed menstrual health (in secondary) compared to the earlier version.
- On mental health: guidance encourages discussions on self-harm, suicide prevention (age-appropriately), and resilience.

What updates have been introduced in the 2025 guidance?

- **Inclusion, equality and relationships in the modern world**
 - The new version strengthens content around LGBTQ+ inclusion, different kinds of families, gender, and wider relationships beyond just “boy meets girl”.
 - Also moves away from fixed “age limits” for discussing certain topics: instead emphasises “age-appropriate and respectful of all children, including those who may have no familiarity” with the topic.
- **More transparency and partnership with parents**
 - Schools are able to share resources with parents on request.
 - Encourages early engagement with parents when the school is reviewing or designing its RSHE programme.

Implementation timeline

The new guidance was published in July 2025 and becomes statutory from 1 September 2026. Schools have the time until then to align curriculum, resources and training.

**If you have any questions please email
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