

Relationships Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

2025-2026

Reviewed by Dee Robins: 19 March 2025

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Next review: March 2026

1 Introduction

Students at MPW are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly both online and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their personal and social lives in a positive way. RSHE is not about encouraging young people to become sexually active, nor is it about promoting any particular lifestyle or relationship choice. Our RSHE curriculum aims to empower our students to understand their bodies, to reflect on their relationship values and to be able to openly discuss relationships and sex.

The topics covered within the RSHE curriculum are wide-ranging and, at times, there may be understandable and legitimate areas of contention. This policy is designed to outline the purpose and content of RSHE, whilst ensuring that all the compulsory subject content is age appropriate and differentiated to the needs of our students.

The curriculum will build on the knowledge already acquired and develop further students' understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs and alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex. Teaching about mental wellbeing is central to these subjects. We know that children and young people are increasingly experiencing challenges, and that young people are at particular risk of feeling lonely. Our RSHE curriculum aims to give them the knowledge and capability to take care of themselves and receive support if problems arise.

All this content supports the wider work at MPW in helping to foster student wellbeing and develop resilience and character that we believe are fundamental to students being happy, successful and productive members of society. The content will be delivered within our wider programme of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education. As such, this policy document should be read alongside our PSHE Policy and PSHE Curriculum documents.

2 Definition of "RSHE"

For the purposes of this policy, "Relationships, Sex and Health Education" is defined as teaching students about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip young people with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and to take responsibility for their sexual health and wellbeing.

3 Statutory Requirements

The [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education \(England\) Regulations 2019](#), made under sections 34 and 35 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#), make Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) compulsory for all students receiving secondary education. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) continues to be compulsory in independent schools.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

Governors and senior members of staff will:

- Review this policy annually and develop it in the light of changing governmental guidance and feedback from other stakeholders, namely parents (including guardians and carers), students and staff, to ensure that it meets the needs of the whole college community.
- Ensure that staff have regular training on RSHE content and how to deliver lessons on it.
- Ensure that sex education is age-relevant and appropriate across all year groups.
- Ensure that parents are aware of the college's RSHE policy and curriculum, and that any views or concerns they have will be listened to, considered and appropriately acted on.

Staff who are delivering RSHE education will:

- Ensure that they familiar with the current version of the college's RSHE policy and the latest curriculum requirements in this area.
- Attend and engage in professional development training around RSHE provision.
- Foster a positive environment in which students feel they can engage in an open dialogue on RSHE matters.
- Provide regular feedback to Rachel Sherman (VP Pastoral) and Nikki Morris (Head of Personal Development) on their experience of teaching RSHE and the students' response.
- Ensure that their personal beliefs and attitudes do not detract from providing a balanced RSHE curriculum.
- Tailor their lessons to suit all students in their class, across the whole range of abilities, including those students with special educational needs.

5 RSHE Policy and Curriculum Development and Review

We understand parental support is integral to the success of our RSHE curriculum. While we have an educational and legal obligation to provide young people with Relationships, Sex and Health Education, we respect the primary role of the parents (including guardians and carers) in educating children about these matters. All parents are given an opportunity to view the policy and curriculum via email and make recommendations for changes to it during the first term of the academic year. There is also a parental consultation meeting in the first half of the first term where it may be discussed. Further, parents are very welcome to explore our RSHE curriculum by requesting to view the scheme of work and teaching materials. Staff members and students will also be given the opportunity to comment on the policy's content and make suggestions as to how it can be improved. Staff members may contact the DSL or SLT directly or via their HoD/HoF with their thoughts. Student opinions will be sought via the Student Council or on an individual basis they may contact their DoS, email the DSL or use the 'Whisper' anonymous reporting tool.

This policy and the RSHE curriculum reflect our college's context as well as recognise that the role of educating students on these topics is a partnership between home and school. We aim to always deliver content in a sensitive, objective and balanced manner to enable students to comprehend the range of social attitudes and behaviour in modern-day society. This will empower them to consider their own attitudes and actions and make informed, reasoned and responsible decisions while they are at school, at home and in adult life.

6 RSHE Curriculum Overview

The RSHE curriculum is part of the whole school PSHE curriculum, which is planned and designed to be age appropriate, under the following themes:

- Families
- Respectful relationships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate relationships and sexual health
- The law

The PSHE Schemes of Work provide more detail on how the college delivers tuition on the above topics. They are available on the VLE. A summary of the content is provided in Appendix A. The RSHE topics fall under all of these themes and are taught within the PSHE curriculum but may also be covered across the curriculum in subjects such as science.

7 Curriculum Delivery

For all years, the RSHE curriculum will be taught as part of the PSHE curriculum. For student in Years 10, 11 and 12, the PSHE curriculum consists of weekly timetabled lessons. Lessons are **mandatory** for all students and attendance is registered. Students in Years 13 and 14 have PSHE material delivered as part of the “Next Steps” weekly lessons during the Autumn term.

The curriculum is delivered by a team of tutors, as well as by independent speakers and visitors from external agencies. We believe that external speakers can usefully supplement learning and provide different perspectives. We ensure the external agencies and contributors’ input is part of a planned programme which consolidates and grows prior learning. All visitors follow the Safeguarding policies in place when visiting MPW. Classes or groups are always supervised by a member of the teaching staff.

A variety of teaching strategies are used to develop relevant skills and knowledge through:

- Developing discussion
- Thinking through debate
- Working in groups
- Role play
- Participation
- Reflection

8 Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

MPW will comply with the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and thereby ensure the curriculum does not discriminate against students with respect to the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Further to the above, our RSHE Curriculum will:

- Ensure that BAME, LGBTQ+ and people with disabilities are positively represented; and
- Provide students with a safe environment to learn about sexual orientation and gender identity, reinforcing the importance of mutual respect and tackling LGBTQ+ misconceptions, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia and gender stereotypes.

9 Safeguarding and confidentiality

MPW provides a safe and supportive environment in which all students are made to feel comfortable seeking help on any matter of concern to them. All staff receive annual safeguarding training and sign a declaration to confirm they have read the college’s Safeguarding Policy. Confidentiality is a subject covered in both.

It may happen that students approach their RSHE tutor or another member of staff wishing to discuss RSHE matters in confidence. The member of staff should listen to their needs and provide appropriate support. If the issue is such that the member of staff feels they are not able to deal with it by themselves, they should take this concern to Rachel Sherman, the Vice Principal (Pastoral) and Nikki Morris, the Head of Personal development.

It may be the case that topics that feature in RSHE lessons lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. If this is the case, the college's Safeguarding Policy should be followed. Personal information about students who have approached a member of staff for discussion must not be shared with any other person. If there is a child protection concern, the information must only be shared with the DSL unless an emergency referral to Children's Services is needed.

If a member of staff is approached by a student under 16 who is having, or is contemplating having sexual intercourse, they should:

- Decide whether there is a child protection issue. This may be the case if the member of staff is concerned that there is coercion or abuse involved.
- Remind them that the legal age of consent is 16.
- Encourage the student to talk to their parent(s). Although students may feel that they are more comfortable discussing these matters with a trusted member of staff, it is important that (and important that our students know that) children and their parents have an open and trusting relationship as regards sex and sexual health.
- Ensure that the student is accessing all the contraceptive and sexual health advice available and understands the risks of being sexually active.

Students with special educational needs may be more vulnerable to exploitation and less able to protect themselves from harmful influences. If staff are concerned that this is the case, they should seek support from the DSL to decide what is in the best interest of the student.

10 Advice and treatment

Staff who are approached by students concerned about having contracted or possibly contracted a sexually transmitted disease should refer them immediately to the DSL and college nurse. Advice on contraception and safe sex is a key part of the college's RSHE curriculum. We also encourage parents to engage their child in open discussion about practising safe sex.

Members of staff have no right to know a student's HIV or hepatitis status, and no student will be discriminated against because of their status should it become disclosed.

The school's First Aid Policy covers protection for all school members against infection from blood-borne viruses.

11 Right to withdraw

Under the [Education Act 1993](#), parents have the right to withdraw their children from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of the statutory RSHE. Parents must state their request in writing to the Vice Principal (Pastoral), this being Rachel Sherman (rachel.sherman@mpw.ac.uk). Parents will then be invited into college to discuss the request to ensure that their wishes are fully understood. We will clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum alongside the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on their student; for example, the emotional and social effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the student hearing their peers' version of what was learned in the class rather than what was delivered by the tutor.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the college will respect the parents' request to withdraw their child. However, three terms before the student turns 16 years old, they are legally able to make their own decision as to whether they receive sex education.

There is no right to withdraw from relationship education.

12 Complaints

Parents who have complaints or concerns regarding the RSHE curriculum should contact the college and follow the school's complaints policy.

13 Monitoring, Evaluation and Assessment

The delivery of PSHE (and RSHE) across years 10-14 is monitored by Nikki Morris (Head of Personal Development).

The Head of Personal Development will monitor the planning, teaching and learning of RSHE education regularly. Planning will be monitored termly, and observations of teaching will take place in accordance with our college monitoring cycle. Feedback will be given to tutors. The schemes of work and policy will also be reviewed annually.

We solicit comments from students and parents after each topic is completed. All comments will be considered and those that are considered pertinent will inform the development of the college's RSHE policy and curriculum. Such contributions help us ensure that our curriculum is rich with the most up-to-date and contextual information so that we can best help our students to navigate life outside of the college premises.

All students in Years 10-12 attend weekly PSHE lessons. Throughout each lesson, teaching staff continually assess students existing knowledge and confidence in the areas of

- health and wellbeing;
- sex and relationships; and
- living in the wider world.

A range of assessment strategies are used within lessons, including questioning and discussion, written exercises, questionnaires and quizzes, individual reflection and delivering presentations. There are also end of term online assessments. Each student receives a termly PSHE report which outlines their progress.

This policy will be reviewed by Rachel Sherman (VP Pastoral) annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the MPW Board.

14 Linked Policies:

- PSHE Policy
- PSHE Curriculum
- Safeguarding Policy
- Remote Teaching and Learning Policy

Appendix A: Topics covered in PSHE

Families	Students should know that there are different types of committed, stable relationships and: • 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 with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting; and • 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	Students should know • 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 (eg, how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). • 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. • about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help. • 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. • 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	Students should know • 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. • that specifically sexually explicit material eg, 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. • 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	Students should know • 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).
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	Students should know • 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. • that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, eg, 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 and menopause. • that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others. • 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.
The law	It is important to know what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions. Students should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example: • marriage • consent, including the age of consent • violence against women and girls • online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.) • pornography • abortion • sexuality • gender identity • substance misuse • violence and exploitation by gangs • extremism/radicalisation • criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations) • hate crime • female genital mutilation (FGM)