

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

2026-2027

Reviewed by Adam Cross and James Bourne: 24 August
2026

Approved by the CSC: 3 September 2026

Next review: August 2027

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 and emotions, to reflect on their relationship values and to be able to openly discuss relationships, sex and sexual health.

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

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is compulsory for all students receiving secondary education under the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) also remains compulsory in independent schools and provides the wider curriculum framework through which much of the college's RSHE provision is delivered. This policy has been developed with regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance on RSHE, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2026), the Equality Act 2010 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

RSHE supports compliance with the Independent School Standards by contributing to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It helps students build self-knowledge, confidence and personal responsibility; understand healthy and respectful relationships; respect others, including those with protected characteristics; and prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

Governors and senior members of staff will:

- Review this policy annually and develop it in the light of changing statutory guidance and legislation 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 will:

- Ensure that they are 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 James Bourne (Head of PSHE) on their experience of teaching RSHE and the students' response.
- Provide regular feedback to Adam Cross (Principal and DSL) and the SLT on the 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 and/or disabilities (SEND).

5 RSHE Policy and Curriculum Development and Review

We understand that 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 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 during the first term of the academic year. There is also a parental consultation meeting in the first half of the first term where the policy and curriculum 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 HoF with their thoughts. Student opinions will be sought via the Student Council or on an individual basis they may contact their PT, email the DSL or use the 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 college. 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 college, at home and in adult life.

6 RSHE Curriculum Overview

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

- Families
- Respectful relationships

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

These headline themes then incorporate the following sub topics:

- Relationships, Respect and Consent
- Families and Caring Relationships
- Emotional and Physical Wellbeing
- Personal Safety and Risk Management
- Online Life, Media and Digital Citizenship
- Identity, Equality and Inclusion
- Sexual Health and Healthy Intimate Relationships
- Rights, Responsibilities and the Law
- Decision-Making, Character and Preparation for Adult Life

The PSHE Schemes of Work provide more detail on how the college teaches these topics. They are available on the DLE. 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 and 11 and other compulsory aged children, the PSHE curriculum consists of weekly timetabled lessons. Lessons are **mandatory** for all students and attendance is registered. Students in Years 12, 13 and 14 have PSHE lessons once a fortnight.

All students will receive emails on PSHE throughout the year that include signposting to external support, as well as questions for reflection which can be discussed with their PTs.

The curriculum is delivered by Personal 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 and Visiting Speaker policies in place when visiting MPW. Classes or groups are always supervised by a member of the teaching staff.

PSHE and RSHE are taught through a range of interactive and evidence-informed approaches that develop both knowledge and the ability to apply learning in real-life situations. These include:

- Structured discussion and respectful dialogue
- Critical thinking and reasoned debate
- Scenario-based learning and decision-making activities
- Case study analysis and problem-solving tasks
- Collaborative learning and group investigation
- Role play and exploration of real-world situations
- Reflection, self-assessment and personal target-setting
- Media literacy and evaluation of online content
- Risk recognition and risk-management activities

- Student consultation and learner voice activities
- Retrieval practice and knowledge consolidation
- Formative and summative assessment opportunities

The curriculum is designed not only to develop knowledge and understanding, but also to strengthen students' ability to exercise judgement, manage risk, think critically, make informed decisions and build healthy, respectful relationships throughout their lives.

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 people from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQ+ and people with disabilities are positively represented;
- 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; and
- Teach the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment. The college will present information objectively and in a balanced manner, enabling students to understand the law, respect differences and develop informed views. Teaching will be sensitive to the backgrounds, beliefs and experiences of students while ensuring that all statutory content is delivered.

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.

The college recognises that harmful sexual behaviour, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, online exploitation and technology-facilitated abuse may affect students both inside and outside the college environment. RSHE forms part of the college's wider preventative safeguarding curriculum and supports students in recognising abuse, understanding healthy relationships and seeking help where concerns arise.

Students may approach an RSHE tutor or another member of staff to discuss sensitive or personal matters arising from RSHE lessons. Staff should respond calmly and sensitively, listen carefully, and provide appropriate support. Staff must not promise absolute confidentiality. Students should be reassured that information will be treated with respect and shared only where necessary, on a need-to-know basis, in accordance with the college's Safeguarding Policy, confidentiality expectations and data protection requirements. Where a disclosure raises a

safeguarding or child protection concern, staff must refer the matter to the DSL, Adam Cross, or a member of the DSL team without delay, and information may need to be shared with appropriate staff or external agencies to protect the student or others from harm.

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 and/or disabilities (SEND) 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 interests of the student.

10 Advice and Treatment

Staff who are approached by students with concerns regarding sexual health should provide appropriate support and encourage access to qualified medical advice. Where there is a safeguarding concern, staff must follow the college's safeguarding procedures and seek guidance from the DSL. Students will be signposted to appropriate health professionals and services where necessary.

Advice on contraception and safer sex is a key part of the college's RSHE curriculum. We also encourage parents to engage their child in open discussion about practising safer 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 college's First Aid Policy covers protection for all college members against infection from blood-borne viruses.

11 Right to Withdraw

Parents may request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of RSHE, other than sex education that forms part of the science curriculum. Requests should be made in writing to the Head of PSHE, James Bourne (james.bourne@mpw.ac.uk). The college will discuss the request with parents to ensure that their wishes are understood, to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, and to explain the benefits of receiving this education and the possible effects of withdrawal, including the risk of students receiving incomplete or inaccurate information from peers.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the college will respect a parental request to withdraw a student from sex education within RSHE. However, from three terms before the student turns 16, the student may choose to receive sex education and the college will make arrangements for this to happen. Students will be made aware of this right in an age-appropriate way.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education, Health Education or any sex education taught as part of the science curriculum.

12 Complaints

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

13 Monitoring, Evaluation and Assessment

The delivery of PSHE, including RSHE across Years 10-14 is monitored by James Bourne, Head of PSHE. As part of the annual review process, the college will consider:

- student voice and feedback;
- parental feedback;
- staff feedback;
- safeguarding trends and concerns;
- emerging local and national safeguarding risks; and
- relevant updates to statutory guidance and legislation.

This information will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and inform future developments.

The Head of PSHE will monitor the planning, teaching and learning of RSHE provision 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 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 10-14 attend PSHE lessons. Throughout each lesson, the session leader will 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, and individual reflection. Within PSHE classes, students sit two longer assessments in addition to weekly baseline and retrieval assessments. Each student receives a termly PSHE report which outlines their progress.

This policy will be reviewed by Adam Cross (Principal) and James Bourne (Head of PSHE) annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the MPW Board.

14 Linked Policies

- Anti-bullying and Cyberbullying Policies
- Complaints Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Promoting Good Behaviour Policy
- PSHE Policy
- PSHE Curriculum
- Safeguarding Policy

- Remote Teaching and Learning Policy

Appendix A: Whole-College PSHE and RSHE Themes (Years 10-14)

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 or civil partnership is an important choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into; • the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships, that 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or right from living together or by having children; • that forced marriage and marrying under the age of 18 are illegal; • 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 (e.g., 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.

	• how pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women; • 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 (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. • 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; • That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death • 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, 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 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 and that sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive. • 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. • the use and availability of HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of and facts about regular testing and the role of stigma. • 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. • how and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms
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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.)
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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) |
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