



Secondary Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy 2026/27 (Trust Version)

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1.0	September 2026	A Finney	Trust wide policy rewritten in-line with DfE guidance Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK

Public Sector Equality Duty

This policy is written with due regard for the public sector equality duty that is placed on all schools. Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust (DMAT) will make reasonable adjustments for members of the school community with SEND and protected characteristics and guard against discriminatory practices and victimisation to ensure no-one is treated unfairly.

STATEMENT

We firmly believe that Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and health education delivered via the curriculum, the school environment and the school ethos is an essential part of a students' development. Not only does it provide information, it helps students develop their skills and form positive beliefs, values and attitudes which are in line with our Trust's values.

It is our belief that effective RSHE has a positive impact on self-esteem and enables our pupils to have a positive view of relationships, sexuality and sex and embeds a culture of both personal and mutual acceptance and respect.

Although it is important that the RSHE programme recognises that there may be different cultural or faith-based views relating to this area of the curriculum, it is essential that what is taught reflects the diverse society in which we live, which includes LGBT+, and that all children have access to age appropriate information free from stereotyping or discrimination.

AIMS

At DMAT, the aims of our Relationships and Sex Education policy are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Educate older students on sexual harassment and abuse within and external to school
- Be flexible and representative of our contextual needs to safeguard our pupils.
- Ensure that all students, including those with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities are able to access the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum in a developmentally appropriate way so that they can keep themselves safe.
- Strengthen students' resilience and coping strategies to navigate modern social and emotional challenges.
- Encourage boys to identify and emulate positive male role models and foster respectful relationships.
- Promote awareness of online grooming tactics and empower students to critically assess digital content.
- Equip students to identify and challenge misogynistic myths and harmful online content, including incel culture and deepfake pornography.

The objectives of the Relationship and Sex Education (RSHE) curriculum at our schools are to:

- To provide the knowledge and information to which all students are entitled;
- To raise students' self-esteem and confidence, especially in their relationships with others;
- To help students develop skills (language, decision making, choice, assertiveness) and make the most of their abilities;
- To clarify/reinforce existing knowledge and correct misconceptions and myths;
- To develop and use communication skills and assertiveness skills to effectively manage the influences of their peers and the media;
- To help gain access to information and support;
- To develop skills for a healthier, safer lifestyle;
- To respect and care for their bodies;

- To help students understand their sexual feelings and behaviours, so they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives;
- To be prepared for puberty and adulthood (including parenthood).
- To develop their skills of considering other points of view.
- To develop their skills of empathy.
- To help them acknowledge their own agency in situations.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

In teaching RSHE ([Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education)), we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>).

Relationships and Sex Education at secondary has always been an important part of the education we provide to our students. The DfE carried out an extensive national consultation and these, along with Health Education, became a compulsory part of the curriculum for all schools from September 2020.

At DMAT we teach RSHE as set out in this policy. We also follow the PSHE Association thematic model as a curriculum intent and implementation.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Review of RSHE curriculum content with staff involved in the delivery of RSHE (annual).
- Consultation with students through student evaluation (annual)
- Consultation with school governors
- Community and family feedback process (annual)
- Before the RSHE units in all year groups parents are informed by letter about the content and they are invited to express their views or concerns. This is subject to ongoing consultation and in future it is intended to extend consultation with families. This takes the form of a PSHE/RSHE curriculum letter which is sent in the Autumn term.
- The policy is reviewed annually by trustees, school leaders and the Local Stakeholder Board.

DEFINITION

Relationships, sex and health education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of loving, caring and consensual relationships. It is about the teaching of sex, sexuality and sexual health.

DMAT sees RSHE as a core component of our responsibility towards the well-being of our students. We aim to foster an open dialogue, grounding in the values outlined below.

RSHE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSHE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.

RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity and instead focuses on promoting healthy and positive relationships through our students being empowered through the knowledge acquired through their RSHE curriculum.

VALUES

In addition, DMAT believes that RSHE should be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adult life and that it should be an entitlement for all young people. It values the importance of family, and it is respected as a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches. It encourages students to respect each other's views and to be aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any family structure. The important values are love, respect and care for each other. We aim to generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on sexual matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment. We also recognise that parents/carers are the key people in teaching their young people about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents/carers and students, consulting them about the content of programmes. We also recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, youth and social workers.

RSHE at DMAT involves learning the importance of values, learning about the value of family life and stable and loving relationships, and encouraging responsible behaviour.

The personal and social skills which are developed through the RSHE programme are learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively, to develop self-respect and empathy for others, learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice, developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made and to empower students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances.

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

In response to the statutory RSHE guidance released in July 2025, DMAT has strengthened its Relationships and Sex Education curriculum and to address emerging societal and technological challenges. The curriculum now includes dedicated lessons on misogyny, incel culture, and the influence of harmful online content, including deepfake pornography, to help students critically evaluate digital media and its impact on sexual ethics and behaviour. Students will also explore the role of artificial intelligence in shaping perceptions of consent and respectful relationships. Health education has been expanded to cover important topics such as endometriosis, fertility, spiking, and methanol poisoning, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of physical wellbeing. Additionally, mental health education has been enhanced to include strategies for resilience, coping mechanisms, and awareness of available support services, aligning with the national commitment to improving student wellbeing.

Our curriculum has been updated with the 7 guiding principles of RSE and health education in mind:

1. Engagement with pupils, to create an inclusive and well-sequenced RSHE curriculum to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and engaging.
2. Engagement and transparency with parents, about all materials used in RSHE.
3. Positivity, there is a focus on building positive attitudes and skills, promoting healthy norms about relationships, including sexual relationships where relevant, and about health, including mental health. we avoid language which might normalise harmful behaviour among young people – for example gendered language which might normalise male violence or stigmatise boys.
4. Careful sequencing, so that pupils are supported and equipped with the knowledge to navigate different experiences in a positive way before they occur, and to prevent harms.
5. Relevant and responsive, the curriculum is age and stage appropriate and accessible to pupils in their area, where appropriate working with local partners and other bodies to understand specific local issues and ensure needs are met.
6. The curriculum is delivered by school staff who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to create a safe and supportive environment and to facilitate participative and interactive education which aims to support and not to alarm pupils. Staff are trained in safeguarding and offering support, recognising the increased possibility of disclosures.
7. Whole school approach, the curriculum is delivered as part of a whole school approach to wellbeing and positive relationships, supported by other school policies, including behaviour and safeguarding policies.

RSHE is inclusive of all students to ensure that they:

- Receive their sex education in the wider context of relationships.
- Are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.
- Develop positive attitudes to sexuality.

Children with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities

Teaching and resources will be scaffolded as appropriate to address the needs of these children in order for them to have full access to the content of sex and relationship education. To ensure that the curriculum can be accessed by all students, we have worked with our Trust primary schools to access developmentally appropriate materials as well as using the NSPCC 'Pantosaurus' literature.

Equal opportunities

Every student is entitled to receive RSHE regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, culture, disability, sexuality, language special needs, disadvantage and looked after status. It is our intention that all children can experience a programme of RSHE at a level which is appropriate for their age and physical development with differentiated provision if required.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Trustees

Trustees will review this policy annually.

The Local Stakeholder Board

The Local Stakeholder Board will hold the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory/non-science components of RSHE (see section 8).

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Planning and preparing resources and Intellectually Preparing for teaching
- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non statutory/non-science components of RSHE.

The whole school RSHE programme will be led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Staff are regularly trained and briefed so that they are prepared to deliver this content. The safeguarding and inclusion teams are involved in planning and delivery to ensure that RSHE especially meets the needs of the vulnerable and reflects any current issues of themes.

Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSHE and, when discussing issues related to RSHE, do so following the DMAT values, treating others with respect and sensitivity.

Staff are aware that teaching RSHE can lead to related disclosures from students and know that they need to follow the academy safeguarding policy should this arise. Staff are also able to consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead with regards to advice on delivering sensitive content to some student groups. A member of staff cannot promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

PARENTS/CARERS RIGHTS

Parents/Carers do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

Parents/Carers have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory / non-science components of sex education within RSHE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Principal. A member of the senior team will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the students' educational record. Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

A 'withdrawal form' can be found as an appendix to the Trust RSHE policy.

If parents/carers wish to view resources that are used in RSHE lessons, please contact the College.

TRAINING

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE as part of our continuing professional development calendar.

The College will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE.

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by Faculty Leads / Heads of Year and Senior Leaders.

Documents that inform the school's RSHE policy include:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006) of Equality Act (2010),
- Supplementary Guidance RSHE for the 21st century (2014)
- Keeping children safe in education – Statutory safeguarding guidance (2026)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (July 2025) - Statutory guidance

RSHE is monitored and evaluated regularly. As a result of this process changes will be made to the Relationships and Sex Education programmes as appropriate.

Furthermore, staff will be asked to complete surveys to ascertain their views on the RSHE provision annually to help inform future planning.

The school will assess the effectiveness of the aims, content and methods in promoting pupils' learning by lesson observation, sampling teachers planning, questionnaires to teachers and pupils and feedback from parents.

The effectiveness of the RSHE programme will be evaluated by assessing student's learning and implementing change if required.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

HCC Curriculum Content from Year 7 to 11

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Sleep relaxation and mental health Puberty - In girls and the menstrual cycle Puberty in boys' Personal hygiene	What is mental health? Positive body image	Social media and online stress	What is sexual abuse? Where to get help and support	Teenage pregnancy choices Abortion laws Parenthood for teenagers
Consent and boundaries Respect and relationships Friendships and online relationships	Relationships: Being yourself and self-love. Healthy respectful relationships What is love? Dealing with conflict	What is a penis? What is a vulva?	What are the benefits of delaying sexual activity and what do we mean by pleasure?	Testicular and prostate cancer Breast cancer and cervical screening



What makes a good friend? Friendships and online relationships What does it mean to be a man today? (new and extended topic introduction to misogyny)	Introduction to contraception Sexual orientation	Dealing with grief, loss and loneliness Mental health (including new extended content on suicide and self-harm) Sexual consent and the law (including new extended content online risks and sextortion) FGM and the law	How can we campaign against FGM? What are the dangers of sexting? Personal safety and crime including illegal online behaviour, exploitation by gangs and personal safety (new extended topic)	Love and abuse What is peer on peer abuse? What impacts fertility? (including new and extended content on menstrual and reproductive health) Why is sexual health important?
Staying safe including online (New and extended topic) Alcohol and the risks. Nicotine and smoking E cigarettes and vaping	Cyber Bullying Online grooming (new extended content on online risks) County lines Substance abuse.	Relationships and Partners (Including new extended content on incels and misogyny) Domestic abuse Why have sex? Delaying sexual activity Sexual harassment and stalking What are STIs and how can they be treated? The importance of Contraception	How can pornography damage relationships? (including new extended guidelines) How can we recognise unhealthy relationships? What is the impact of the sexualisation of the media? What is honour based violence? What is forced marriage?	What are the best forms of contraception throughout life? Respect love and relationships.