



# Willingdon

## COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION, SEX EDUCATION AND HEALTH EDUCATION (RSHE) POLICY

Date adopted by the Governing Body: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025

To be reviewed: June 2026

Staff Responsible: Head of Department for RSHE

Link Governor: Safeguarding Lead Governor

## Policy context and rationale

This relationships, sex and health education policy covers Willingdon Community School's approach to teaching relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). The core policy was provided by East Sussex County Council as an adopted model policy. This policy has been subject to thorough consultation with the whole-school community including students, parents/carers, staff, school governors and where relevant appropriate members of the wider community such as medical professionals and faith leaders. Student consultation has ensured that the needs of all students can be met through the delivery of an age and stage appropriate RSHE curriculum that addresses relevant issues, informed by analysis of public health data and student priorities. Consultation methods have included a range of student voice studies on a variety of key themes. Student consultation has been used to inform the creation of the school's RSHE curriculum and this policy where appropriate.

## Policy availability

Stakeholders can be informed about the policy through referencing in the school prospectus or accessing a copy from the school website. Should a hard-copy of the document be required, the school will be happy to provide this upon request and will also work with any stakeholders that require the policy in an alternative format to meet their individual needs, ensuring equitable accessibility for all. The policy can be obtained in an alternative format by contacting *Sam Tomlin (Headteachers PA)*.

## Policy values, aims and objectives

*Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on 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 academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.*

*These subjects represent a huge opportunity to help our children and young people develop. The knowledge and attributes gained will support their own, and others', wellbeing and attainment and help young people to become successful and happy adults who make a meaningful contribution to society.*

- Secretary of State Foreword

RSHE is underpinned by a clear set of embedded values and principles that complement the school ethos and permeate through the teaching practice, resources and classroom management of RSHE lessons. Our school values are Ambition, Respect, Compassion, Courtesy and Honesty, all of which come under the umbrella programme of Developing Personal Excellence.

## **We are Willingdon**

We are a united, vibrant community which demonstrates personal excellence in all that we do. Learning at Willingdon transforms lives by igniting curiosity and expecting the very best from staff and students alike. We value opportunities, aiming for success today to prepare for challenges and opportunities tomorrow. We are respectful, honest and courteous to empower each other on our unique learning journeys. We look after ourselves and each other, and show empathy, respect and compassion to all people and our environment along the way. We encourage tolerance, resilience and reflection, which in turn allows everyone to make progress every lesson. We work together as a harmonious community to be the very best versions of ourselves.

### **Our Ethos**

At Willingdon Community School, we aim to develop Personal Excellence in all our students. Personal Excellence comprises five key values and behaviours:

#### **Ambition**

To strive to do your best on all occasions. Take on new challenges and challenge yourself to reach the highest possible standards and be personally successful.

#### **Respect**

To respect and value all members of our community, recognising and celebrating our differences. Respect ourselves, valuing what we can each bring to our community.

#### **Compassion**

Understand the needs of others and support those who sometimes need our help. Contribute to charitable work which supports those less well-off in the world.

#### **Courtesy**

Be well mannered in all situations, displaying the basic courtesies that we all value. Greet those you work with regularly; be particularly welcoming and polite to visitors and show appreciation for those who support and work closely with you.

#### **Honesty**

Always be honest, even when it may appear difficult. Be honest to yourself - know your strengths and your weaknesses.

RSHE is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health in an age and stage appropriate manner. RSHE equips children and young people with accurate information, positive values and the skills to enjoy healthy, safe and positive relationships, to celebrate their sexuality and to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing both now and in the future. We recognise the importance of RSHE in preparing children and young people to live safe, fulfilled and healthy lives. The overarching objective of RSHE is to support children and

young people through a journey of physical, emotional and moral development via the teaching of essential knowledge, skills and values within the framework of the law and provisions of the Equality Act, 2010.

Effective RSHE can make a significant contribution to the development of personal skills needed by students to establish and maintain relationships. RSHE will ensure children and young people are encouraged to understand the importance of stable, loving relationships, respect, love, and care. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

RSHE will be approached through evidence-based, best practice principles to ensure the highest impact on improving student health, wellbeing, safeguarding and lifelong outcomes. The following principles are based on research evidence, supported by a wide range of leading organisations including the NSPCC, Barnardo's, The Children's Society and education unions.

### Principles of effective RSHE

RSHE provision at Willingdon Community School:

- Is an identifiable part of our school curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across each Key Stage.
- Is taught by staff regularly trained in RSHE (with expert visitors invited in to enhance and supplement the programme, where appropriate).
- Works in partnership with parents and carers, informing them about what their children will be learning and how they can contribute at home.
- Delivers lessons where students feel safe and encourages participation by using a variety of teaching approaches with opportunities to develop critical thinking and relationship skills.
- Is based on reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights, and distinguishes between fact and opinion.
- Promotes safe, equal, caring and enjoyable relationships and discusses real-life issues appropriate to the age and stage of students, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and safe relationships online.
- Gives a positive view of human sexuality with honest and medically accurate information so that students can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health in ways that are appropriate to their age and maturity.
- Gives students opportunities to reflect on their values and influences (such as from peers, media, faith and culture) that may shape their attitudes to relationships and sex and nurture respect for different views.
- Includes learning about how to get help and treatment from sources such as the School Health Service and other health and advice services including reliable information online.
- Fosters gender equality and LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans) equality and challenges all forms of discrimination in RSHE lessons and in everyday school life.

- Meets the needs of all students with their diverse experiences including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Seeks students views about RSHE so that teaching can be made relevant to their real lives and assessed and adapted as their needs change.
- Takes into account local and national contexts and reflects on emerging stories and reports relevant to the students personal learning.

## Entitlement and equality of opportunity

All children are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum delivered in an age and stage appropriate manner. Teachers will include a range of teaching styles and groupings to allow all children to make progress. Every child will be given opportunity to develop their skills independently and in groups, enhancing their own confidence and self-esteem.

We actively celebrate the diversity of our students, their families and the wider whole-school community. RSHE will always be taught in a non-judgemental, non-biased and fully inclusive manner through clear, impartial, scientific information as well as covering the law to ensure all students have equal access to our RSHE curriculum. We do not use RSHE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation over another.

Through consultation, continual assessment and regular reviews of the curriculum we ensure that we continually recognise and respect students' different abilities, levels of maturity, personal circumstances (including gender identity, faith or culture and that of their family, friends and the wider whole-school community) in accordance with the school's inclusion policy.

## Teaching and learning

The RSHE programme will be led by the HOD of RSHE and taught by designated teaching staff and supported by ***school nurses, visitors and outside agencies***. All staff involved in the delivery of RSHE have received specialist training to ensure that students receive clear and consistent approaches to RSHE throughout their time at Willingdon Community School. Whole staff and individual training needs will be identified through the school's self-evaluation process.

On occasions external visitors, experts and agencies may be invited to contribute to the delivery of RSHE to enhance delivery of these subjects, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with children and young people. When this happens, in accordance with Visiting Speaker's Policy, Willingdon School will:

- Check the visitor or visiting organisation's credentials.
- Ensure the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with our planned programme and our published policy.
- Discuss the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the students.

- Ask to see in advance the materials visitors will use as well as a lesson plan so that collectively we can ensure it meets the full range of student's needs (e.g. special educational needs).
- Agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with our school's policy.
- Arrange for the visitor to be supervised/supported by a member of school staff at all times.
- Monitor and evaluate the visitor input to inform future planning.

RSHE will be taught through a range of teaching methodologies, including story-telling, drama, discussions, individual private reflection, quizzes and fact finding, value spectrums, debating, independent research and artistic presentations etc. This wide range of teaching strategies promotes engagement by all students, irrespective of preferred learning styles.

## Curriculum

The majority of elements of the RSHE curriculum are a statutory requirement to teach to meet **latest government RSHE guidance**, June 2019 and The Equalities Act, 2010.

RSHE will be taught through a 'spiral curriculum'. This approach means that students will gain knowledge, develop values and acquire skills gradually by re-visiting core themes to build on prior learning. RSHE will support the school's commitment to safeguard students through an

age-appropriate curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world.

Our intended RSHE curriculum is detailed below but may vary in response to emerging issues and to reflect the rapidly changing world in which our students are living and learning. If this is the case, parent/carers will be provided with appropriate notice before the amended programme is delivered. Where appropriate the curriculum will be complemented by themed assemblies and cross curricular links.

### Secondary

<i>Relationships Education</i>	<i>Exploration of healthy and unhealthy relationships</i> <i>Nature of Families</i> <i>Respectful relationships including friendships</i> <i>Online safety and stereotyping</i> <i>Being safe and managing pressure from peers and other sources</i>
<i>Sex Education</i>	<i>Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health</i> <i>Gender identity and managing emotions</i> <i>Consent and intimate relationships</i> <i>Peer influences and sources of support</i>
<i>Health Education</i>	<i>Mental wellbeing</i> <i>Physical health and fitness</i> <i>Healthy eating and prevention of illness</i> <i>Drugs, alcohol and tobacco</i> <i>Basic first aid</i> <i>Puberty</i>

## Assessment

Students learning will be assessed to ensure that students are making sufficient progress to build on prior teaching and learning and that teaching strategies and resources remain relevant and effective. Assessment activities will be implicit, forming part of a normal teaching activity to ensure that students do not feel under pressure and will include self-assessment tasks that will confirm students understanding of the topics. The evaluation of teaching and learning assessments will be shared with students and parents as appropriate.

The quality of RSHE teaching and learning will be monitored through RSHE learning walks, team teaching and informal drop-ins conducted by the subject lead and/or members of the senior leadership team. The observations and findings of which will be used to identify and inform future staff training needs.

## Responding to students' questions

There will always be sensitive and controversial issues within the subjects of RSHE. These may be a matter of age and stage appropriateness or contrasting personal beliefs including those originating from faith perspectives and culture. We believe that children are best educated and protected from harm when they are provided with a safe and supportive space to discuss issues openly within the framework of a class working agreement. At the end of every lesson, students will be provided with an opportunity to ask questions in an open setting and will also be provided with an opportunity to raise anonymous questions through the use of an anonymous survey. Teachers will answer questions as fully as they feel age and stage appropriate based on the level of knowledge demonstrated by students during the lesson. Teachers may delay answering a student's question if they need time to consult with a colleague or the school leadership team to construct an appropriate answer. Teachers can refuse to answer a question that they feel is inappropriate and will never answer personal questions about their own body, personal circumstances or lifestyle choices. If a teacher does not answer a question, the student will have the reasons clearly explained and the teacher will work with the student to identify suitable sources of information where they can obtain an answer to their question. This may include encouraging the student to ask a parent/carer or trusted adult at home.

## Confidentiality, signposting and handling disclosures

The school's responsibility to safeguard students through a curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world will remain central to our curriculum content, teaching methodologies and supporting resources.

At the beginning of RSHE teaching the class will discuss and create a 'working agreement'. Confidentiality will be included within this agreement so students are clear of the limits of confidentiality that can be guaranteed by a teacher.

*Right to pass* – Taking part is my choice; if I feel uncomfortable, I have the right to pass.

*Share ideas* - In a group setting, not personal experiences. We will be open and honest without discussing our own or another (identified) person's personal/private life. Instead, we could say 'I know someone who' or 'person X'.

*Help and advice* – If we need help and advice about anything, we will seek it (inside or outside school). We will help our friends to get help if we think they need it.

*Everyone matters* - Non-judgemental approach, it is OK not to agree with each other's opinions, but we will challenge the opinion and not the person.

*Talk to Us* - We can ask questions 1:1, in class Q&A, or via the talk2us email. We will not ask personal questions of anyone, and no one can ask us personal questions (this includes our teacher).

*Language* – We will use the correct terms when talking about the body, sexuality, etc. If we don't know them, our teacher will tell us or find out for us.

*Keep the conversation in the room* – We will feel safe to discuss RSHE, and we know that the teacher will not repeat what we say unless they are concerned, we are at risk. We cannot guarantee other students will not talk about what we have said, so we need to think before we speak!

Distancing techniques such as the use of characters within RSHE avoids students feeling under pressure to participate or disclose information beyond that which is appropriate or feels comfortable. This strategy makes RSHE more accessible to all students including those who may have experienced unhealthy relationships and/or abuse.

Teachers will signpost students to information relevant to the topic being taught to ensure safe sources of information, advice and guidance are provided. Teachers will also work closely with the school's pastoral system to advise on topic coverage so that the school can be responsive to student's pastoral needs and safeguarding arrangements can be actioned efficiently if required.

Teachers will conduct RSHE lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved) in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the reference seriously, and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. They will immediately inform the named person for child protection issues about their concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will then deal with the matter in line with our school's safeguarding policy.

### [Involving parents and carers](#)

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children in RSHE and that RSHE is most effective when it is collaboration between school and home. We therefore wish to



build a positive and supporting relationship with parents and carers of children and young people at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation.

The vast majority of RSHE is compulsory. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents and carers are only able to request that their child is excused from Sex Education, taught outside of the national curriculum for science. If a parent wishes their child to be excused from some or all of the non-statutory Sex Education, they should discuss this with the Headteacher, making clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The head teacher will outline to parents/carers the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents/carers propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead). Once a decision has been made, parents/carers must inform the school in writing stating their reasons as to why they would like their child withdrawn.

Once these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, our school will respect a parent/carers' request to have their child excused from non-statutory sex education up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education, rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. The school will document this process.

This process is the same for students with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a student's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

If a student is excused from sex education, the school will ensure that the student receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

### [Links to other school policies and curriculum](#)

This policy complements the following policies:

- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour for learning
- Drug, alcohol and tobacco
- Equality
- FGM statement
- Inclusion & SEND
- Online Safety
- RSHE
- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Teaching and learning
- Visitor's Policy and Visiting Speakers Agreement

## Review date

The governing body monitors the impact of RSHE on an annual basis within the governor working groups. The governors give serious consideration to any comments, consultation and evidence of impact.

Consultation with students will be conducted on a regular basis to support with reviewing the curriculum to ensure it remains responsive to emerging needs and the policy updated accordingly.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if the RSHE curriculum is amended, for example in response to emerging themes, changing student needs or introduction of new legislation and guidance. The next review date of this policy is currently set for June 2027.