

## POLICY DOCUMENT

### 026b: Relationships Education & RSE and Health Policy

**Publish to:** All Staff, all students, school website

**Status:** Statutory

**Approval level:** Full Governing Body or Headteacher

Review Responsibility	Reviewed date	Valid From	Frequency Of review
Chloe Foster	29-11-2018	29-11-2018	Every second year
Chloe Foster	20-11-2020	29-11-2020	Every second year
Chloe Foster	12-10-2022	10-11-2024	Every second year
Chloe Foster	19-06-2025	19-06-2025	Every second year

#### **Purpose of policy**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the delivery of Relationships Education and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Health Education for The Polygon School. The policy was initially approved in May 2009 and has been reviewed annually. The Polygon School must provide Relationships Education and Sex and Relationships (SRE) and Health Education to all students as per the Department for Education Statutory Guidance for RSE in Secondary schools 2020.

In line with the Department for Education's 2019 guidance, Relationships and Sex Education became statutory in all secondary schools from September 2020. The Government's ambition is to ensure that all young people are equipped to stay safe and to thrive in modern Britain.

#### **What is Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education?**

*"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."* Secretary of State Forward, Statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education. Sep 2021

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education forms the foundation of our PSHE curriculum. Together, they provide students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to form healthy, respectful, and safe relationships of all kinds—both online and offline. Our PSHE curriculum teaches students how to nurture a wide range of healthy relationships, including platonic, intimate, and sexual relationships. It includes education on human sexuality and the diverse experiences of individuals in modern society. Equally important is our focus on helping students recognise the signs of unhealthy and abusive behaviours, empowering them to seek help and make safe choices.

Health Education through PSHE lessons supports students in understanding their physical and emotional development as they grow up. They explore the changes to their bodies and feelings, develop strategies for managing their mental well-being, and gain the confidence to navigate societal expectations with resilience and self-awareness. PSHE lessons align closely with our whole school ethos to ***engage, inspire, and achieve***, and plays a crucial role by equipping students with this essential knowledge and these life skills, we aim to empower them to lead healthy, happy, independent, and fulfilling lives now and into adulthood.

### **Description of the setting**

The Polygon School is a secondary special school for young people aged 11 to 16 whose social, emotional, and/or mental health (SEMH) needs make mainstream education unsuitable. All students have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and Individual Education Plans (IEPs), which are regularly reviewed in partnership with parents and carers.

We provide a nurturing and supportive environment that uses a range of teaching strategies tailored to students' diverse learning styles. Our school serves the community of Southampton City and its referrals from the Children and Young People Disability Panel who act as the admission authority for the school. In July 2016, the school joined the Southampton Cooperative Learning Trust.

Our PSHE curriculum is carefully designed to reflect the needs, interests, and aspirations of our students; while also recognising the unique challenges they may face within their communities. While qualifications are a key focus at The Polygon, equal emphasis is placed on developing students' social, emotional, and mental health well-being.

Each student follows a personalised curriculum based on their strengths and interests. For some, this may include alternative curriculum pathways that better support their individual needs and post-16 aspirations. All students, regardless of their pathway, have access to PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) which includes statutory Relationships, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education as part of their core provision.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- To ensure all students at The Polygon School leave with accurate, age-appropriate knowledge and essential life skills, empowering them to lead safe, happy, and successful lives in British society. Students will be confident in making informed, healthy choices and aware of the resources and support available to them.

- To provide high-quality Relationships Education, Sex and Relationships Education (SRE), and Health Education as a fundamental entitlement for all students, regardless of their individual curriculum pathway, recognising it as a lifelong learning journey.
- To proactively address the key challenges our students face, including exposure to age-inappropriate content and misinformation—particularly from social media and other digital platforms—through a robust and responsive PSHE curriculum.
- To underpin our whole-school commitment to safeguarding and the emotional and social development of each student. PSHE lessons are designed to nurture core values such as love, respect, equality, and care.
- To foster an inclusive, supportive, and non-judgmental learning environment where students feel safe to ask questions, engage in open discussions, and explore sensitive topics without fear of stigma or embarrassment.
- To work in meaningful partnership with parents/careers and students by actively consulting them on the content and delivery of PSHE, Relationships, and Health Education programmes, ensuring they are relevant, respectful, and responsive to students' needs.
- To recognise and value the contribution of the wider community by working collaboratively with health professionals, social workers, peer educators, mentors, and other external agencies to enrich and support our provision.

## **Equality**

PSHE lessons are grounded in strong, respectful relationships between staff and students. We are committed to valuing and treating every student fairly. Within these statutory lessons, we aim to remove barriers to learning and provide a positive educational experience for all. Through this inclusive approach, we strive to empower every student to succeed and thrive both in school and beyond.

The PSHE curriculum at The Polygon School meets the relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010. As an SEMH school reasonable adjustments are made to alleviate disadvantages when planning and additional curriculum time is given if continuous misconceptions occur. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education is accessible to **all** students through PSHE lessons. At The Polygon School, we recognise that many of our students have experienced trauma or are particularly vulnerable to issues such as exploitation, bullying, and social exclusion. These factors are carefully considered when planning and delivering our curriculum.

All content is tailored to meet the developmental and emotional needs of our students, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Lessons are delivered in a way that is age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, and always sensitive to individual circumstances. Teaching is grounded in empathy and understanding, with clear links to the law and a focus on keeping students safe, informed, and empowered. Our goal is to create a safe and supportive learning environment where all students can engage confidently with the topics that matter most to their well-being and future success.

Healthy and respectful peer to peer communication and behaviour between students is promoted and fostered. The school environment challenges everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes are not tolerated. Occurrences are identified and

tackled. The school embraces diversity as part of the everyday whole school ethos and celebrates a commitment to diversity through a calendar of celebrations including 'Diversity Day' during national diversity week. Needs of all students are appropriately met including the schools LGBT+ community and all staff and students understand the importance of equality and respect. Students are taught about LGBT+ when appropriate as part of the spiral curriculum and it is fully integrated into the planning of the curriculum.

All staff model positive behaviours and share a commitment to celebrating and promoting diversity and inclusion for all in our school community. Safeguarding and online safety policies support all students and underpin teaching of PSHE. All staff understand that females are more likely to be victims of sexual harassment or sexual violence and perpetrators are more likely to be male. They also understand that males can be victims of sexual harassment or sexual violence and that this can happen in same-sex relationships. Assumptions are not made about the behaviour of boys and young men, through school culture and teaching of PSHE they are not made to feel that this behaviour is an inevitable part of being male. The delivery of PSHE at The Polygon school helps students to understand qualities of healthy relationships, acceptable behaviour and everyone's right to equal treatment.

### **A Trauma and Attachment Aware approach**

The Polygon school adopts a Trauma informed approach and is an Attachment Aware setting. We are committed to developing a culture of Trauma Informed schools leading to a Trauma informed community. We acknowledge the impact trauma can have on individuals, groups and communities and work tirelessly to mitigate those effects.

Staff prioritise building positive, meaningful and effective relationships between pupils, staff, and the broader community and we believe that these connections are fundamental our pupils being able to make progress, not only academic but in all aspects of their lives. Our approach is based on the 6 principles of trauma informed practice: Safety, Trustworthiness, Choice, Collaboration, empowerment and Cultural Consideration.

We recognise that there are different types, reasons and risk factors associated with trauma and that trauma affects everyone differently. We also recognise that previous experiences of trauma, limited social and / or systemic support, attachment challenges and cultural contexts can result in vulnerability toward experiencing trauma. Staff respond to the needs of pupils with unmet attachment needs and those who have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences

### **Organisation of Curriculum**

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education is delivered primarily through the PSHE curriculum through a balanced combination of factual information and opportunities to explore values and beliefs through thoughtful discussion. It is important to emphasise that these lessons are **not** about promoting any sexual activity, but rather about equipping students with the knowledge and skills to make informed, respectful, healthy and safe choices.

The PSHE leader Chloe Foster is responsible for the planning and the delivery of the curriculum across the main school site. Esme Ferguson (Teacher) under Matt Harvey (SLT) is responsible for the planning and delivery approach for the school's alternative provision.

The Polygon School specifically delivers Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education through its PSHE Programme. The Polygon PSHE curriculum follows a spiral curriculum to teach Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education and is taught in 6 designated units.

1. All about me
2. Rights and Responsibilities
3. Drugs Education
4. Relationships
5. SRE
6. My Physical and Mental Wellbeing

Alongside the topics covered in the curriculum, pupils will be supported to develop essential life skills through three core areas of focus: **Attitudes and Values, Personal and Social Skills, and Knowledge and Understanding**. Students will be encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs and behaviours, developing respect for others and valuing diversity and equality. They will build the personal and social skills necessary for effective communication, empathy, resilience, decision-making, and managing healthy relationships. Through accurate and age-appropriate information, they will gain a solid understanding of their physical and emotional development, rights and responsibilities, and the wider societal influences that shape their lives.

The Polygon School believes the teaching of healthy relationships, wellbeing and health and safety are essential to our students so as well as allocating timetabled 40mins lessons weekly for students covering statutory guidance additional lessons in personal development, Healthy High Five and ASDAN are also timetabled weekly to support this imperative provision. Cross Curricular Links can be found throughout the teaching in schools through Cookery, ICT, Science, PE, Art, Maths and Literacy. Where appropriate the delivery of PSHE will use quality assured outside agencies and guest speakers (Saints Foundation, The Contextual Safeguarding Team, Yellow Door, No Limits, Life Lab).

### **Curriculum Content**

- Healthy and unhealthy relationships - respect, friendships, different types of relationships, different family units (PSHE lessons)
- Intimate relationships and the pressures that may accompany this (PSHE lessons)
- The importance of consent and how to give and withdraw it (PSHE lessons)
- Sexual health, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases (PSHE lessons)
- Misconceptions about sex (pornography) (PSHE lessons)
- Media and social media influence on self-esteem and body image (PSHE, ICT, Citizenship lessons)
- Different family structures (PSHE lessons)
- Recognising and challenging all forms of bullying including, but not limited to prejudice, stereotyping, misogyny, misandry and discrimination (PSHE and Citizenship lessons)
- How to maintain positive mental health (PSHE, HH5)

- How to maintain good hygiene (PSHE, Cookery Lessons)
- How to stay safe on and off-line (PSHE, Citizenship and ICT lessons)
- Labour market information and future career path (PSHE, Citizenship and Work Skills lessons)
- Finance health (Through Citizenship and Work Skills Lessons)
- First aid (PSHE, ASDAN, Citizenship and HH5 lessons)
- Law and governance (PSHE and Citizenship lessons)
- Child on child abuse (PSHE and Citizenship lessons)
- Criminal exploitation (PSHE and Citizenship lessons)
- Sexual exploitation (PSHE lessons)
- Radicalisation and extremism (PSHE and Citizenship lessons)
- Substance use and misuse (PSHE and Science lessons)
- Fundamental British Values and Protected characteristics are weaved throughout the curriculum in all subjects and signposted where relevant.

The PSHE department 3 I's statement and curriculum plans provides further detail on the curriculum and can be found on the school website in the curriculum PSHE folder.

Any SRE lesson may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When students ask questions we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time. This is particularly important for external agencies delivering part of the PSHE curriculum. All resources are provided by the PSHE lead and have been recommended and approved by the PSHE association or NHS.

Although we do teach the bulk of SRE during Summer term at The Polygon we feel it is important to run SRE as an integral backbone of our PSHE curriculum that is taught throughout the year and carefully weaved SRE into every element of PSHE across the academic year. This way discussing sex and relationships becomes a healthy, safe normalised subject to learn and discuss and not a feared block of lessons which intimidate students or students missed due to attendance issues or illness during this time.

### **Developing Oracy Skills Around Relationships**

A key aim of our SRE curriculum is to support students in developing the oracy skills necessary to navigate relationships safely and respectfully. This includes helping students feel confident and comfortable discussing the concept of consent, expressing their own boundaries, and recognising and respecting the boundaries of others.

We teach students how to:

- Use appropriate language to talk about their feelings and needs in relationships
- Understand the meaning and importance of consent in all contexts

- Assert their own boundaries clearly and respectfully
- Recognise verbal and non-verbal signals of consent or refusal
- Respond appropriately when others express their own boundaries
- Understand the link between communication, respect, and safety in relationships

These skills are taught through structured discussion, role-play, and real-life scenarios in a safe and supportive environment. Our aim is to empower students to build healthy, respectful relationships and to keep themselves and others safe both in and outside of school.

### **Assessment in SRE and PSHE**

Guidance from the PSHE association state *‘that assessment has to be an integral part of the teaching and learning in all subjects, including PSHE education. However, the personal nature of PSHE education means that it cannot be assessed in the same way as most other subjects and it would be inappropriate for assessment in PSHE education to imply passing or failing ‘as a person’. It is however possible to recognise and evidence progress and attainment in the knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes PSHE strives to develop’.*

With this guidance in mind The Polygon School have adopted the following approaches:

- For each new topic an initial activity is carried out that measures students starting point in terms of their existing knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. This is used to advise the teacher’s planning for that topic. Then, at the end of the topic an activity is carried out which allows students to demonstrate the progress they’ve made since doing the baseline activity. For example, students do a ‘mind-map’ of everything they know or a draw and write activity then at the end of the topic they take a different coloured pen and revisit their original mind-map, adding to it, correcting previous misconceptions, answering their original questions and so on. This will demonstrate the progress they have made and can also be used to measure attainment against a set of success criteria identified by the teacher.
- Teacher assessment is ongoing throughout each PSHE lesson and recorded on checklists in students books The learning outcomes for each unit are then traffic lighted to show students’ progress and gaps in learning. This is crucial tracking particularly with SRE units and then we can re teach gaps if students have missed lessons.
- Students and teachers complete a reflection at the end of each topic which refers to progress and attendance
- Book development checks are carried out by staff across the school. This is a clear way to see progress in PSHE across topics.

### **Whole school approach**

All school staff and pupils have the responsibility of ensuring that this policy is upheld. At the Polygon School PSHE is a feature of the hidden and actual curriculum. It pervades the entire school, and the actions of the adults working and volunteering within the establishment.



The hidden curriculum can be described as the interactions between staff and pupils. The school has a seated lunchtime meal arrangement that provides the opportunity for informal discussions. As all pupils sit with a member of staff, this provides a unique opportunity for staff to enhance the learning of pupils. Staff consistently model expected standards of language and personal interactions, and will address issues of concern as they arise.

Staff can request additional CPD to support their delivery of PSHE through performance management meetings, or during daily de-brief sessions when issue of concern may be discussed. Chloe Foster has lead whole school training on key topics like Consent and Equality and Diversity Training. Whole school Staff CPD is also undertaken by outside agencies such as the DASH drugs and alcohol team so all staff have awareness and skills to support our students.

Within our Alternative Provision of the STRETCH and Engagement programs, underpinning the delivery of our PSHE curriculum is the focus on developing excellent relationships with our pupils. This enables us to deliver many aspects of the PSHE curriculum through conversations with the individual pupils - responding to their needs and interests. In addition, a comprehensive PSHE curriculum has been put together that ensures that each pupil is exposed to the statutory elements of the curriculum, alongside those aspects which are pertinent to their needs in the moment. PSHE at Morris House is designed to align to the Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculums. The latter being delivered over two phases and the former over three phases. Each strand of delivery mirrors the delivery in the main school: All About me; Rights and Responsibilities; Drugs and Alcohol, Respectful Relationships; Intimate Sexual Relationships and Sexual Health; Physical and Mental Health. A live record is kept of the subject areas covered, and the format of delivery, by each pupil to ensure coverage of the statutory elements of the curriculum and to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the individual pupil.

### **Continuing Professional Development**

The Polygon School is an active member of the Southampton Education Forum (SEF), which hosts termly PSHE network meetings. These meetings provide valuable support to the school's PSHE department, fostering collaboration and the sharing of best practice across local schools. The school's senior leadership team is committed to ongoing professional development and ensures that the PSHE lead—and other staff involved in delivering elements of PSHE—access a wide and varied range of training opportunities. This includes specialist training on topics such as transgender and homophobic behaviour, equality and diversity within the curriculum, domestic abuse and coercive control, the impact of pornography and harmful online content, child sexual exploitation, and substance misuse.

In partnership with Southampton City Council, the school also has access to an occupational therapist who supports staff in meeting students' individual needs. Additionally, a dedicated school counsellor is employed to provide ongoing emotional and mental health support to students and staff.

### **Right of withdrawal of students from Sex Education**



Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education delivered as part of RSE that falls outside of the statutory curriculum (Education Act, 1996 and subsequent amendments) - they cannot withdraw from human reproduction as covered in the National Curriculum for Science.

Parents can withdraw up to, and until, three terms before the child turns 16, at which point the child can decide if they wish to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn. Any parents expressing concerns will be invited to speak to with Senior Leader and Subject Leader for PSHE.

Should parents exercise their right to withdraw the school will make provision for the supervision of the child. The parent will be advised that they have an obligation to provide the information at home using information available from the Department of Education.

### **Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues.**

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality to students.

In a case where a teacher learns from an under 16-year-old that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

- The young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to the parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice.
- Child protection issues will be considered, and referred if necessary to the person responsible for Safeguarding and the head teacher under the school's procedures
- The young person will be properly counselled about contraception and advise services

In any case where child protection procedures are followed, the teacher will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the school's confidentiality policy.

All members of staff should ensure that they are familiar with procedures set out in the school Safeguarding and child protection policy.

Chloe Foster has lead whole staff Inset training on Safeguarding within PSHE to the whole school. All members of staff should be aware of the school's confidentiality policy.

### **How the policy was formulated**

This policy has been developed by Chloe Foster (PSHE), Sarah Kinder (Deputy Head), Esme Ferguson (Teacher of alternative provision), Carly Sefton-Wilson (Safeguarding Link Governor), Frankie Snow (Yellow Door), Sarah Jane Burns (Parent) and Ben Penfold (Head Teacher). It will be reviewed by SLT as a collective before further consultation with governors. Guidance from the Department of Education, PSHE association, Sexual Health Forum and Public Health England alongside recommendations from Yellow Door project have all contributed to the development of this policy. Students have also been consulted through their feedback on SRE with PSHE lessons. Parents/carers have been consulted through

discussions on target review days Parent/carer support for PSHE and SRE lessons is extremely supportive.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The policy will be reviewed at least every two years, and approved by the full governing body. The delivery of the curriculum will be quality assured in-line with the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

### **Quality assurance, includes, but not exclusive of:**

- Regular departmental evaluation by the staff teaching PSHE
- Regular monitoring and evaluation by the Subject Leader as part of their on-going quality assurance cycle
- Governors Curriculum Day in charge of monitoring curriculum delivery
- Regular student voice
- Regular staff voice
- Parent Voice sessions which provide parents the opportunity to review the taught programme
- Curriculum observations made by link governor and specialist outside agencies during their visit

### **The policy was redrafted using a range of national documents including:**

#### **DFE - Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education**

Published - 25 June 2019

Last updated - 13 September 2021

#### **DFE - Relationships, sex and health education: guides for parents**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-sex-and-health-education-guides-for-schools>

#### **Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges**

Published 10 June 2021

#### **DFE - Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges**

September 2021

#### **DFE - Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

**Compulsory PSHE education.** <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculumforlife>

#### **Equality Act 2010**

#### **Education Act 2002**

#### **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023**

#### **Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools 2018**

#### **Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools 2014**

**The Relationships Education & Relationships and Sex (RSE) and Health Policy is linked to the following interrelated Policy documents:**

018 Disability Equalities and Access scheme

019 Health and Safety

009 Physical Intervention

020 SEN and inclusion

023 (a) and (b) and (c) Safeguarding and Child Protection

029 Online Safety

018a Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy