

# RSHE Statutory Content

*Curriculum mapping reference (DfE statutory guidance, July 2025 — compulsory from 1 September 2026). Companion document to “PSHE Statutory Content”.*

## How to use this document

This document lists the statutory content that must be covered by the end of primary and the end of secondary, taken directly from the DfE's RSHE statutory guidance (July 2025). It covers RSHE specifically — for the wider PSHE expectations that apply to us as an independent school under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (covering SMSC, Fundamental British Values, careers, financial education and citizenship), please see the companion document “PSHE Statutory Content”.

Read together, the two documents set out the full PSHE and RSHE entitlement at our school. There is significant overlap (respectful relationships, mental wellbeing, online safety and personal safety appear in both); this document is the authoritative reference for the RSHE-specific outcomes, particularly those subject to the parental right of withdrawal.

A few important points before mapping:

- The statutory guidance specifies content, not delivery method. Schools decide whether to teach topics discretely or weave them across other lessons.
- Sex Education content (secondary) is the area most schools choose to teach discretely, because parents have the statutory right to withdraw their child from sex education (but not from Relationships Education or Health Education). Discrete teaching makes that withdrawal right workable.
- Relationships Education and Health Education can be woven into other subjects, provided the school can evidence full coverage through a curriculum map.
- Ofsted Personal Development deep dives expect to see a curriculum map showing where each strand is introduced, revisited and assessed — “woven across” is fine if the documentation supports it.
- At primary, Sex Education itself is not compulsory, but if taught, parents have an automatic right of withdrawal (except for content covered in the science national curriculum).
- The 2025 guidance (paras 69–72) introduces a new statutory expectation that schools teach the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment, recognise both protections under the Equality Act 2010, and avoid endorsing contested views. The school's approach to this is set out in the PSHE & RSHE Policy.

## Parental right to withdraw — at a glance

This is the key driver behind which content benefits from discrete teaching:

| Strand                                                            | Right to withdraw?                                             | Implication for delivery                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Relationships Education (Primary)                                 | No                                                             | Can be woven across the curriculum.               |
| Sex Education (Primary, non-statutory)                            | Yes — automatic on request (except science curriculum content) | Best taught discretely so withdrawal is workable. |
| Relationships & Sex Education — Relationships strands (Secondary) | No (relationships content)                                     | Can be woven across the curriculum.               |

|                                            |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sex Education within RSE (Secondary)       | Yes — head teacher can refuse only in exceptional circumstances. Pupil can opt back in 3 terms before turning 16. | Should be discrete and identifiable so withdrawal is workable. Evidence should be separable. |
| Health Education                           | No                                                                                                                | Can be woven across the curriculum.                                                          |
| Science curriculum (puberty, reproduction) | No                                                                                                                | Taught within science. Cannot be withdrawn from.                                             |

*Bottom line: the only content the statutory guidance effectively requires you to identify and evidence separately is Sex Education within RSE at secondary (and any optional Sex Education at primary), because of the parental withdrawal right. Everything else is a school-policy decision.*

## Primary — content to be covered by the end of primary

### Relationships Education (statutory)

Cannot be withdrawn from. Can be woven across subjects.

#### Families and people who care for me

1. That families are important for children growing up safe and happy because they can provide love, security and stability.
2. The characteristics of safe and happy family life — commitment, protection, care, time together, sharing each other's lives.
3. That other children's families may look different, but should be respected and are also characterised by love and care.
4. That stable, caring relationships are at the heart of safe and happy families.
5. That marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal, legally recognised, intended-to-be-lifelong commitment.
6. How to recognise unhappy or unsafe family relationships, and how to seek help.

#### Caring friendships

7. How important friendships are; how people choose and make friends.
8. Healthy friendships are positive and welcoming; skills for caring, kind friendships.
9. Loneliness is normal and there is no shame in feeling or talking about it.
10. Characteristics of friendships that lead to happiness and security (mutual respect, honesty, trust, kindness, etc.).
11. Friendships have ups and downs; conflict can often be worked through.
12. How to manage conflict; resorting to violence is never right.
13. How to recognise an uncomfortable friendship and how to get support.

#### Respectful, kind relationships

14. Paying attention to needs and preferences of others; balancing different needs in relationships.
15. Setting and respecting healthy boundaries with friends, family, peers, adults.
16. Communicating effectively; managing conflict with kindness; being assertive; managing disappointment and frustration.

17. Difference between assertive and controlling; difference between kindness and neglecting your own needs.
18. Being treated with respect; respecting others (including those who are different or have different beliefs/preferences).
19. Practical steps to improve or support relationships.
20. Conventions of courtesy and manners.
21. Self-respect and how it links to happiness; building self-esteem and identity.
22. Different types of bullying including online; impact; bystander responsibilities; how to get help.
23. What stereotypes are and how to challenge them.
24. How to seek help, including when concerned about violence or harm.

## **Online safety and awareness**

25. Same principles apply online as face-to-face; resisting peer pressure; not pressuring others to share images.
26. Critically evaluating online relationships and information; recognising harmful content; reporting it.
27. The minimum age for joining social media (currently 13) and why.
28. Caution about sharing personal information online; importance of privacy and location settings.
29. Online risks — that any material shared online may be circulated and cannot be deleted everywhere.
30. The internet contains inappropriate content; where to get advice and support.

## **Being safe**

31. Appropriate boundaries in friendships with peers and others (including online).
32. The concept of privacy; that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to safety.
33. Each person's body belongs to them; appropriate vs inappropriate or unsafe contact.
34. How to respond safely to adults they may encounter (known and unknown, online and offline).
35. Recognising when a relationship is harmful; who to trust and who not to trust.
36. How to report abuse or feelings of being unsafe — and the vocabulary and confidence to do so.
37. How to ask for advice or help and to keep trying until they are heard.

## **Sex Education (Primary — non-statutory)**

Not compulsory at primary, but DfE recommends teaching in years 5/6 alongside the science curriculum (which covers conception, puberty and reproduction). If taught, parents have an automatic right of withdrawal (except for content covered in the national science curriculum). For this reason, primary sex education should be discretely identifiable.

## **Health Education (statutory)**

Cannot be withdrawn from. Can be woven across subjects.

## **General wellbeing (mental wellbeing)**

38. Benefits of physical activity, time outdoors, helping others; rest, time with family and friends, hobbies, community participation.
39. Importance of promoting general wellbeing and physical health.

- 40. Range and scale of emotions; that worrying and feeling down are normal.
- 41. Recognising feelings; varied vocabulary for own and others' feelings.
- 42. Judging whether feelings/behaviour are appropriate and proportionate.
- 43. Isolation and loneliness can affect children; benefits of seeking support.
- 44. Bullying including cyberbullying has a lasting impact; how to seek help.
- 45. Change and loss including bereavement; everyone grieves differently.
- 46. Where and how to seek support, including who to speak to in school.
- 47. It is common to experience mental health problems; early support can help.

## **Wellbeing online**

- 48. The internet is integral to most lives — positive and negative aspects.
- 49. Online vs in-person relationships; pros and cons of online connection.
- 50. Benefits of limiting time spent online; impact of content on wellbeing.
- 51. Considering the impact of own online behaviour; respectful behaviour online.
- 52. Why social media, apps, gaming and gambling sites are age-restricted.
- 53. Risks of online gaming, monetisation, scams, fraud, addiction.
- 54. Critical approach to online content; responsible decisions about what is appropriate.
- 55. Abuse, bullying and harassment can take place online; seeking support.
- 56. Understanding how online information is selected and targeted.
- 57. Rights regarding personal data, privacy, consent.
- 58. Where and how to report concerns and get support.

## **Physical health and fitness**

- 59. Characteristics and benefits of an active lifestyle.
- 60. Building regular physical activity into routines.
- 61. Risks of inactive lifestyle, including obesity.
- 62. How and when to seek support about health.

## **Healthy eating**

- 63. What constitutes a healthy diet (including calories and nutritional content).
- 64. Importance of a healthy relationship with food.
- 65. Planning and preparing healthy meals.
- 66. Characteristics of a poor diet and risks (obesity, tooth decay, etc.).

## **Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping**

- 67. Facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and risks — smoking, vaping, alcohol, drug-taking, nicotine addiction.

## **Health protection and prevention**

- 68. Recognising early signs of physical illness.
- 69. Safe vs unsafe sun exposure; reducing skin cancer risk.
- 70. Importance of good quality sleep; recommended amounts; impact of poor sleep.
- 71. Dental health and oral hygiene.
- 72. Personal hygiene, germs (bacteria, viruses), handwashing.
- 73. Facts and scientific evidence on vaccination and immunisation.

## Personal safety

- 74. Hazards (including fire risks); reducing risks.
- 75. Recognising risk and keeping safe around roads, railways (including level crossings) and water.

## Basic first aid

- 76. Making a clear and efficient call to emergency services; reporting incidents rather than filming them.
- 77. Concepts of basic first aid — common injuries and ailments, including head injuries.

## Developing bodies

- 78. Growth and bodily change, particularly during adolescence; the human lifecycle and puberty.
- 79. Correct names of body parts (penis, vulva, vagina, testicles, scrotum, nipples); these parts are private; understanding boundaries.
- 80. The menstrual cycle including physical and emotional changes; covering this before periods start.

## Secondary — content to be covered by the end of secondary

Schools should continue to develop primary topics as required, plus cover the following:

### Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

The "Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health" strand is the part most clearly understood as Sex Education and is therefore the area subject to parental withdrawal. Schools commonly teach this discretely. Other RSE strands (Families, Respectful Relationships, Online Safety, Being Safe) are not subject to withdrawal.

### Families

- 81. Different types of committed, stable relationships.
- 82. How relationships contribute to wellbeing and child-rearing.
- 83. Why marriage or civil partnership is an important choice for many couples; the legal status, rights and protections of each.
- 84. "Common-law marriage" is a myth — cohabitants do not gain marriage-like rights.
- 85. Forced marriage and marrying before 18 are illegal.
- 86. How families and relationships change over time (birth, death, separation, new relationships).
- 87. Roles and responsibilities of parents; importance of early years for brain development.
- 88. How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help.

### Respectful relationships

- 89. Characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds — consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, conflict management, ending relationships.
- 90. Evaluating impact on others; treating others with kindness and respect; legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality.
- 91. Self-esteem, independence, positive relationship with oneself.
- 92. What tolerance requires, including of others' beliefs.

93. Practical steps and skills for respectful relationships.
94. Different types of bullying (including online); impact; bystander responsibilities.
95. Skills for ending relationships with kindness; managing difficult feelings.
96. The role of consent in romantic and sexual relationships; ethical behaviour goes beyond consent.
97. How stereotypes (sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability) cause damage; recognising misogyny and prejudice.
98. How inequalities of power impact relationships, including sexual.
99. How pornography negatively influences sexual attitudes and behaviours, including towards women.
100. How sub-cultures (e.g. incels, online influencers) influence understanding of sexual ethics.

## Online safety and awareness

101. Rights, responsibilities, opportunities online; same expectations apply as offline.
102. Online risks; sharing personal information; privacy/location settings; public vs private online spaces.
103. Characteristics of social media — fake accounts, AI content, exaggerated profiles, more extreme online behaviour.
104. Not providing material to others that you would not want distributed; not passing on personal material; the law on sharing images.
105. That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if of yourself or with consent, even if AI-generated. Pupils should know how to seek support and that they will not be in trouble for asking for help.
106. What to do and how to report concerns about circulated material.
107. Prevalence of deepfakes; harms; how to identify them.
108. Internet contains inappropriate, upsetting and illegal content (including misogyny, violence, weapons); seeking advice.
109. How social media leads to escalations in conflict; avoiding escalation.
110. Identifying when tech is used in bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive control.
111. Pornography presents a distorted picture and can normalise misogynistic behaviour.
112. How information and data is generated, collected, shared, used online.
113. Websites may share personal data for commercial purposes (e.g. targeted advertising).
114. Online scams (fake websites/emails); sextortion; how to identify and seek support.
115. AI chatbots — risks of fake intimacy or harmful advice; critical thinking about new tech.

## Being safe

116. Recognising, respecting, communicating consent and boundaries — including in early romantic and early sexual relationships involving kissing or touching.
117. Strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure (including sexual pressure); not pressuring others.
118. Determining whether others are trustworthy; judging unsafe relationships; seeking help.
119. Increasing personal safety in public spaces; reporting harmful behaviour; trusting instincts.

120. What sexual harassment and sexual violence are; never the fault of the person experiencing them.
121. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language/attention/touching, taking/sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring others sexually, and upskirting.
122. Concepts and laws relating to sexual violence — rape and sexual assault.
123. Concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, including age-inappropriate sexual language.
124. Concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse — controlling/coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic, physical abuse, threatening behaviour.
125. Fixated, obsessive, unwanted, repeated behaviours can be criminal; where to get help.
126. Concepts and laws relating to exploitation — sexual, criminal, grooming, financial.
127. Concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.
128. Physical and emotional damage of FGM, virginity testing, hymenoplasty; the law and where to get support.
129. Strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences; pressure to neck or covering mouth/nose is dangerous and can cause death.
130. Pornography presents some activities as normal which many people will not engage in.
131. How to seek support for own or others' worrying or abusive behaviour, including medical attention if needed.

### **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health (Sex Education — withdrawable)**

*This is the strand most affected by the parental right of withdrawal. Recommended for discrete teaching with separately identifiable evidence.*

132. That sex, for those over the age of consent and who feel ready, can and should be enjoyable and positive.
133. The age of consent law; choice about whether to have sex; many young people wait; intimate and romantic relationships can exist without sex.
134. Sexual consent; capacity to give, withhold, remove consent at any time; kindness and care go beyond consent.
135. How sex and relationship choices affect physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health.
136. Some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
137. The full range of contraceptive choices and efficacy; male and female condoms; signposting to medically accurate information.
138. Choices in pregnancy — keeping the baby, adoption, abortion; medically and legally accurate impartial information.
139. How STIs (including HIV) are transmitted; reducing risk via safer sex including condoms; PrEP and PEP availability and access; regular testing; stigma.
140. Prevalence of STIs; short and long term impact; treatment.
141. How alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in sexual behaviour.
142. How and where to seek support for sexual relationship concerns.
143. How to counter misinformation; signposting to medically accurate information and confidential sexual and reproductive health services.

### **Health and Wellbeing (Secondary, statutory)**



Cannot be withdrawn from. Can be woven across subjects.

## **Mental wellbeing**

- 144. Talking about emotions accurately and sensitively.
- 145. Benefits of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community, volunteering, kindness.
- 146. Happiness is linked to connection; loneliness is part of life and not shameful.
- 147. Worrying and feeling down are normal; managing them.
- 148. Common types of mental ill health (anxiety, depression); factual information on more serious conditions.
- 149. Critically evaluating which activities contribute to wellbeing.
- 150. Overcoming barriers to enjoyable activities; coping strategies.
- 151. Gambling can lead to serious mental health harms.
- 152. Co-occurrence of alcohol/drug use and poor mental health is common and bi-directional.

## **Wellbeing online**

- 153. Benefits of limiting time online; impact of content on wellbeing.
- 154. Online vs physical world — body image, curated profiles, over-reliance on online relationships.
- 155. Identifying harmful behaviours online (bullying, abuse, harassment); reporting and support.
- 156. Risks of online gambling and gambling-like content in gaming.
- 157. Targeted advertising; misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories.
- 158. Risks of illegal behaviours online — drug, knife supply, illicit drug sales.
- 159. Risks of viewing content promoting self-harm, suicide, violence; safe reporting; support.

## **Physical health and fitness**

- 160. Characteristics of a healthy lifestyle; links between inactivity and ill-health, including cardiovascular.
- 161. Prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions.
- 162. Physical activity for wellbeing and stress.
- 163. Science of blood, organ and stem cell donation.

## **Healthy eating**

- 164. Maintaining healthy eating; links between poor diet and health risks.
- 165. Risks of unhealthy weight gain — cancer, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease.
- 166. Impacts of alcohol on diet and weight.

## **Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping**

- 167. Facts about illegal drugs, risks, synthetic drugs, illicit vapes, mental health links.
- 168. The law on supply and possession.
- 169. Physical and psychological risks of alcohol; low-risk consumption; legal age of sale; safety while drinking, including spiking.
- 170. Consequences of alcohol problem-use, including dependency.
- 171. Dangers of misuse of prescribed and OTC medicines.



- 172. Serious harms of smoking; benefits of quitting.
- 173. Facts about vaping, including harms to young people and role in helping adults quit.

## **Health protection, prevention and the healthcare system**

- 174. Personal hygiene, germs, infection prevention, antibiotics.
- 175. Dental health and oral hygiene.
- 176. Self-care for minor ailments; role of pharmacists.
- 177. Taking responsibility for own health; self-examination and screening.
- 178. Vaccination, immunisation, antimicrobial resistance.
- 179. Importance of sleep, screen-free time before bed, removing phones from bedrooms.
- 180. Healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy; pre-conception health, folic acid, pelvic floor; miscarriage and pregnancy loss.
- 181. Navigating the local healthcare system — GP, A&E, pharmacy, sexual health, third sector.
- 182. Gillick competence; legal age of medical consent is 16; capacity to consent.

## **Personal safety**

- 183. Identifying risk and managing personal safety in increasingly independent situations — roads, railways, water, unfamiliar settings.
- 184. Recognising and managing peer influence on risk-taking and personal safety, including online.
- 185. Developing social and emotional skills to reduce involvement in conflict and violence.
- 186. Understanding which trusted adults pupils can talk to if they are worried about violence and/or knife crime.
- 187. The law as it relates to knives and violence; content related to local context and avoiding fear-based teaching; carrying weapons is uncommon.
- 188. The risks and signs that pupils may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help.

## **Basic first aid**

- 189. Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments.
- 190. Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR (best taught after age 12).
- 191. The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.

## **Developing bodies**

- 192. The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.
- 193. The facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, including brain development.
- 194. Menstrual and gynaecological health — what is an average period; PMS; heavy menstrual bleeding; endometriosis; PCOS; when to seek help from healthcare professionals.
- 195. Reproductive health — fertility, menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.

## **Sensitive topics — not in statutory content but addressed through it**

The guidance specifically notes that schools may also choose to teach the following, but should do so with qualified support, high-quality material, and trained staff:

- Eating disorders
- Self-harm
- Suicide prevention

The guidance is clear: do not discuss instructions or methods of self-harm/suicide; avoid romanticising eating disorders; consult mental health professionals before delivering suicide prevention content; ensure staff are trained.

## Summary — what must be evidenced separately

Pulling this all together for your school's curriculum map:

- Sex Education within secondary RSE (the "Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health" strand) — discrete, identifiable, separately evidenced. This is the only strand where this is strongly implied by statute, because of the parental withdrawal right.
- Sex Education at primary if taught — discrete and identifiable for the same reason.
- Everything else — Relationships Education, secondary RSE relationships strands, Health Education — can be woven across subjects, provided your curriculum map demonstrates full coverage and inspectors can see where each statutory item is taught, revisited and assessed.

*Source: Department for Education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, July 2025 (compulsory from 1 September 2026).*