

Alderbrook School's Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Statement

At Alderbrook School, we recognise the importance of delivering a comprehensive and inclusive Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) programme. This is in line with statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE, 2020) and supports students in developing healthy, respectful relationships and making informed, safe choices about their well-being and future lives.

What is RSHE?

RSHE refers to Relationships, Sex and Health Education. It concerns the emotional, social, and cultural development of students and includes learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity, and personal identity. It combines the delivery of accurate information with opportunities to explore issues and values. RSHE is not about promoting sexual activity.

Curriculum Delivery

RSHE is primarily taught within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects are covered in Science lessons, and some elements are included in Religious Education. Students receive one PSHE lesson per fortnight, with approximately one-third of these lessons focused specifically on RSHE. The programme is further enriched through:

- Occasional year-group assemblies
- Three "Life Ready Days" per year, often involving external speakers

Other subjects and the school's pastoral system also contribute meaningfully to students' RSHE. Cross-curricular contributions have been mapped to ensure that wider learning, particularly regarding health and relationships, is clearly recognised.

Aims of RSHE at Alderbrook

- To foster kindness, care, and mutual respect for others
- To build self-esteem and self-respect in young people
- To dispel myths, increase understanding, and provide accurate information about sex-related issues
- To create a positive culture around relationships and sexuality, encouraging healthy behaviour
- To develop personal and emotional skills such as communication, risk assessment, decision-making, assertiveness, conflict management, helping others, seeking help and using services.

Values and Inclusivity

The RSHE programme is designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to be active, responsible members of society. It reflects:

- A diverse and inclusive understanding of family life
- Sensitivity to students' physical and emotional maturity
- Consideration for students with SEND or other additional needs

Teachers are supported in adapting lessons appropriately. All RSHE delivery is underpinned by the school values of ambition, bravery, and kindness.

Key Principles

Kindness

- Ground rules ensure a respectful learning environment
- Healthy relationships are built on empathy, care, and mutual respect
- Student questions are addressed with sensitivity and thoughtfulness
- Clear networks of support are identified and accessible

Rights and Responsibilities

- Students learn about the legal context of RSHE topics
- All students have the right to accurate, age-appropriate information
- Everyone shares responsibility for maintaining emotional and physical safety in relationships

Safety and Trust

- RSHE is taught within a safe, respectful environment
- Emphasis is placed on personal safety, including safe sexual practices and managing risk
- Students identify trusted adults they can turn to for support
- Staff must follow child protection procedures and cannot guarantee unconditional confidentiality
- The school nurse can offer one-to-one confidential support
- Lessons are inclusive of all family types and are sensitive to students with different care arrangements (e.g. foster care, young carers, looked-after children)

Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Alderbrook School is committed to the well-being of all students and actively signposts confidential support services. To ensure effective safeguarding:

- Staff never promise unconditional confidentiality
- Students are informed that staff may need to pass on disclosures if there is a risk of serious harm
- Disclosures of sexual activity in Years 7–11 must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- For students aged 13–15, sexual activity is not automatically criminalised, but must still be monitored for signs of harm
- It is a criminal offence for staff or adults in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with a student

Parental Right to Withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory elements of sex education that fall outside the Science National Curriculum, up until three terms before the child turns 16.

Parents wishing to discuss withdrawal are invited to contact the Headteacher in the first instance. The RSHE Coordinator is also available to discuss the programme and address any concerns.

Students who are withdrawn from RSHE lessons will be provided with alternative supervised learning. However, they cannot be withdrawn from spontaneous discussions related to relationships and sex that may arise in other curriculum areas.

For further information, please refer to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.