



Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Policy date:	September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2027
Owner:	Head of Wellbeing
Leadership Team:	Pastoral Leadership Team
Intended audience:	Pupils, parents and teaching staff
Location:	School Portal, Governor Portal and website

1. Introduction

- 1.1 To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need to be equipped with knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.
- 1.2 The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. The School has regard to the Department for Education's "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: statutory guidance (July 2025)", which applies from 1 September 2026.
- 1.3 The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help pupils understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.
- 1.4 Haileybury recognises that there will be a range of opinions regarding RSE. Government regulations require the School to have as its starting principle when teaching RSE that the applicable law should be taught in a factual way so that pupils are clear on their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 The taught RSE curriculum is under the responsibility of the Deputy Head (Pastoral), delegated to the Head of Wellbeing and taught by members of the Wellbeing department.
- 2.2 The Deputy Head (Pastoral) monitors and evaluates all elements of the RSE programme with the Deputy Head (Academic).
- 2.3 The provision of lectures and the wider elements of the RSE curriculum, including liaison with visiting speakers and parents is under the responsibility of the Deputy Head (Pastoral), working with the Head of Wellbeing.
- 2.4 The Deputy Head (Pastoral) works with the Head of Sixth Form, the Assistant Head (Pupil Progress and Behaviour), the Head of Lower School and the Head of Wellbeing so that parents are fully informed about what is being taught in each term and their rights.
- 2.5 This policy is approved annually by the Pastoral Leadership Team and the Executive Leadership Team, and there will be a section on RSE in the annual Safeguarding report to Council.
- 2.6 This policy will be updated at least annually but on an ongoing basis when needs or requirements change.

3. The RSE curriculum

- 3.1 Full curriculum outlines can be found [here](#).
- 3.2 Pupils receive RSE education as part of their Wellbeing curriculum as outlined in 3.1. They receive 1 x 40 minute lesson per week in Years 7 to 12 inclusive. Teaching is supplemented by sessions from outside agencies where appropriate and in accordance with Section 9 below.
- 3.3 The curriculum is shared with the Heads of Year, who discuss with the Head of Wellbeing complementary sessions within tutorials and assemblies.
- 3.4 Teaching is non-judgemental and factual, allowing scope for students to ask questions, whether in class or through our online Question Box, which can be anonymous and is accessible from the pupils' Google Classroom.
- 3.5 Teaching is informed by pupil voice, through an online Feedback Form, which can be anonymous and is accessible from the pupils' Google Classroom, and by meetings with pupil groups including College Prefects.
- 3.6 Required topics:
- a. **Families** - Pupils are taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult. This teaching should enable pupils to distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful. Pupils could see how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children.
 - b. **Respectful relationships, including friendships** - Pupils are taught the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect. They are taught that there are different types of committed, stable relationships. Through gaining the knowledge of what a healthy relationship is like, they should be empowered to identify when relationships are unhealthy. They are taught that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing.
 - c. **Online and media** - Internet safety is addressed. Pupils are taught the rules and principles for keeping safe online. This will include how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues. Pupils are taught how data is generated, collected, shared and used online, for example, how personal data is captured on social media or understanding the way that businesses may exploit the data available to them. Pupils are made aware of harmful behaviours online, and via other forms of media, which may normalise violent sexual behaviours. A focus on healthy relationships and broader Relationships Education can help young people better understand acceptable behaviours in relationships.
 - d. **Being safe** - Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, is addressed sensitively and clearly. The physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM) is taught. Pupils are taught where to find support and that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM or fail to protect a person for whom you are responsible from FGM.
 - e. **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health** – Haileybury's RSE programme does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It teaches young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. The aim is that the young people develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time. RSE is delivered in a non-judgemental, factual way and allows scope for young people to ask questions in a

safe environment. Knowledge gained about safer sex and sexual health will ensure that young people are equipped to make safe, informed and healthy choices as they progress through adult life. This will include teaching specifically related to the risks and dangers of consuming pornography, as well as the promotion of positive sexual relationships.

- f. **Character education** – The wider Wellbeing, pastoral and co-curricular programmes aim to cultivate resilience and character in the individual: belief in achieving goals and persevering with tasks, as well as personal attributes such as honesty, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice, underpinned by an understanding of the importance of self-respect and self-worth.
- g. **Equality Act** – Pupils are taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender reassignment in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. All pupils should feel that the content is relevant to them and their developing sexuality. Sexual orientation and the facts and law relating to biological sex and gender reassignment should be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner. Pupils will be taught that people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, as with other protected characteristics, have protection from discrimination and should be treated with respect and dignity. Beyond the facts and law relating to biological sex and gender reassignment, the School recognises that there is significant debate and will not endorse any particular view or teach contested matters as fact. There should be an equal opportunity to explore the features of stable and healthy same sex relationships. This should be integrated appropriately into lessons or lectures, rather than addressed separately or in only one lesson.

4. Parents

- 4.1 The School works with parents in developing and reviewing this policy. This policy is made available to parents. The Head of Wellbeing and the Heads of Year ensure that parents know what will be taught and when.
- 4.2 In addition to the Wellbeing curriculum being available on the portal, the Head of Wellbeing and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will contact all parents at the start of the academic year to explain how curriculum materials used to teach RSE can be viewed on request. In addition there will be parent fora for discussion and engagement.
- 4.3 Relationships Education is taught without describing the detail of different forms of sexual activity but can cover sensitive topics such as sexual violence where this is necessary to help pupils keep themselves and others safe.
- 4.4 For the purposes of this policy, Sex Education means those elements of RSE which concern sexual activity and intimate and sexual relationships.
- 4.5 Parents have the right to request that their child be excused from the sex education element within RSE only. They should contact the Deputy Head (Pastoral) on j.howorth@haileybury.com.
- 4.6 Parents do not have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education or Health Education, or from content taught as part of the science curriculum.
- 4.7 If a parent requests that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will discuss the request with the parents and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The School will document this process and ensure a record is kept. This will be held by the PA to SLT (Pastoral).
- 4.8 Once those discussions have taken place, save in exceptional circumstances, the School will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, 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 will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

- 4.9 There may also be exceptional circumstances where the Deputy Head (Pastoral) considers that a request for withdrawal should not be granted, for example because of safeguarding concerns or a pupil's specific vulnerability. Any relevant individual needs of the pupil, including needs arising from SEND, will be taken into account.
- 4.10 If a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, it is the School's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- 4.11 Where a pupil who has been withdrawn from Sex Education asks a question relating to content from which they have been withdrawn, staff will respond sensitively, with an emphasis on supporting the pupil. This may include encouraging the pupil to speak to their parents or another trusted adult and, where appropriate, signposting them to suitable sources of support or information. Any safeguarding concern arising from a question or disclosure will be dealt with in accordance with the School's safeguarding procedures.

5. Safeguarding

- 5.1 Pupils may also need support to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including 'honour-based' violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for oneself or others at risk.
- 5.2 Any safeguarding concern or disclosure arising in or as a result of RSE teaching must be acted upon immediately and reported in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including referral to the Deputy Head (Pastoral)/ Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL as appropriate.
- 5.3 Staff must not promise confidentiality to a pupil who makes a safeguarding disclosure. Pupils will be made aware, where appropriate, of the limits of confidentiality within RSE lessons and of how and where they can report concerns and seek help. Personal information will be handled with appropriate care and shared only with those who need to be involved in accordance with the School's safeguarding procedures.
- 5.4 Teachers should be mindful that for pupils who are or have experienced unhealthy or unsafe relationships at home or socially, the School may have a particularly important role in being a place of consistency and safety where they can easily speak to trusted adults, report problems and find support. Counselling is available.

6. Religion and belief

- 6.1 The religious background of all pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that the topics are appropriately handled. The School is required to comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics.
- 6.2 The School will teach about faith perspectives to allow a balanced debate to take place about issues that are seen as contentious.
- 6.3 In all schools, teaching should reflect the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.

7. Equality Act 2010

- 7.1 Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics).
- 7.2 The Head of Wellbeing and any teachers or visiting lecturers must be mindful of the following aspects when delivering RSE:
- a. The gender and age range of their pupils, and consider whether it is appropriate or necessary to put in place additional support for pupils with particular protected characteristics (which mean that they are potentially at greater risk).
 - b. The need to foster healthy and respectful child to child communication and behaviour between boys and girls, and provide an environment, which challenges perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other characteristic, including through these subjects and as part of a whole-school approach.
 - c. The need to highlight issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Staff have an important role to play in modelling positive behaviours.
 - d. The School's policies on Equal Opportunities, Countering Bullying and ICT Acceptable Use, as well as the Staff Code of Conduct and the Pupil Handbook.
 - e. The importance of making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up.
 - f. Any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be reported directly to the DSL.
 - g. It is essential that assumptions are not made about the behaviour of boys and young men and that they are not made to feel that this behaviour is an inevitable part of being male; most young men are respectful of young women and each other.
 - h. An understanding for all pupils of healthy relationships, acceptable behaviour and the right of everyone to equal treatment will help ensure that pupils treat each other well and go on to be respectful and kind adults.
 - i. The teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content at the point at which LGBT+ content must be fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson.
 - j. Reasonable adjustments are made for SEND pupils to alleviate disadvantage and to ensure that RSE teaching and materials are accessible to them and prepare them for adulthood, and staff are mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects.

8. The law

- 8.1 The RSE course at Haileybury will ensure that pupils understand what the law says about sex, relationships and young people, as well as broader safeguarding issues. This includes a range of important facts and the rules regarding sharing personal information, pictures, videos and other material using technology. This will help young people to know what is right and wrong in law, but it can also provide a good foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion about all types of relationships. There are also many different legal provisions whose purpose is to protect young people and which ensure young people take responsibility for their actions.

- 8.2 The pupils should be well informed about the full range of perspectives and, within the law, should be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs. Key aspects of the law relating to sex which should be taught include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment, and choices permitted by the law around pregnancy.
- 8.3 Pupils are made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example:
- a. marriage, including forced marriage and civil partnerships;
 - b. consent, including the age of consent;
 - c. domestic abuse, stalking, rape, sexual offences, female genital mutilation (FGM), 'virginity testing' and hymenoplasty;
 - d. sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation, including public sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour;
 - e. the Online Safety Act;
 - f. online behaviours including image and information sharing (including sexual imagery, youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc, and including AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes). Pupils should understand the law about online sexual harassment and online sexual abuse including grooming and sextortion;
 - g. pornography;
 - h. abortion;
 - i. protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation);
 - j. alcohol, smoking, vaping and nicotine products and illicit drug use;
 - k. gambling;
 - l. carrying knives and weapons;
 - m. extremism/radicalisation ;
 - n. grooming or exploiting children into criminal activity, which can include gang involvement and county lines drug running;
 - o. hate crime;
 - p. the age of criminal responsibility;
 - q. medical consent, Gillick competence and parental responsibility.

9. Visiting speakers

- 9.1 It is important that the teacher booking the speaker discusses the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils. They should ask to see the materials visitors will use as well as a lesson plan in advance, so that they can ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs (e.g. special educational needs). It is important to agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with school policy.
- 9.2 In line with school policy on visiting speakers the person booking the speaker is responsible for ensuring that they check the visitor or visiting organisation's credentials and that the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with their planned programme and their published policy.

Version history		
Date	Reviewed by	Notes
January 2021		Created
February 2021	SLT and Education Committee	Reviewed
January 2022	SLT	Reviewed
September 2022	LBP and GT	Reviewed
February 2023	Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee	Reviewed
September 2023	SLT	Reviewed
September 2024	SLT	Reviewed
August 2025	Deputy Head (Pastoral), Head of Wellbeing and SLT	Reviewed and updated
August 2025	SLT	Reviewed and approved
September 2025	Executive Leadership Team	Reviewed and approved
August 2026	Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Head of Wellbeing	Reviewed and updated
August 2026	ELT	Reviewed and approved