

Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE) Policy

Incorporating Sex & Relationships Education

Date: October 2025

CEO: Lorraine Heath
Headteacher: James Lamb

Due for review: Autumn Term 2026

School Vision

Our aim is for every child to achieve, participate and belong enabling a life of choice and opportunity.

This will be reflected in PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and SRE (Sex and Relationships Education) provision by ensuring that all students have the opportunity to access PSHE and SRE education appropriate to their need in order to equip them for adolescent and adult life in the modern world.

Rationale

Within The Castle School, relationships and sex education should contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at school and in society by preparing students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. **Effective sex and relationship education does not encourage early sexual experimentation.**

We believe SRE should not be delivered in isolation, but be firmly rooted in our Personal Development (PD) programme, supplemented by Science and other subjects within the taught curriculum. During the next academic year, SRE will take a more predominant role in assemblies and the tutor programme across all year groups.

Basic Information

The purpose of this document is to be an umbrella policy for Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). Other separate school policies should also be referred to, in particular, drug issues, anti-bullying, behaviour and CIAG.

This policy is written with the guidance provided in the Governments: 2020 Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) white paper.

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education issued under Section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

Principles

PSHE

PSHE is a basic entitlement for all students. It is embedded within the ethos of the school and is reflected in the general aims/mission statement of the school.

PSHE is about what it is to be a person. Fundamentally, this is concerned with the exploration of values and attitudes, with the development of skills, and with the acquisition of relevant knowledge and understanding. This should enable students to lead confident, healthy, responsible lives as individuals and contributing members of society.

In school, students are encouraged to take part in a wide range of activities and experiences across and beyond the curriculum, contributing fully to the life of the school and the wider community. In particular the House system and the many activities arranged within the Houses support an inclusive, participatory ethos. PSHE aims to enable students to:

- value others and feel valued
- respect others and be respected
- be independent and interdependent
- behave responsibly

- have a concern for justice and uphold the rights of others
- understand the consequences of their actions
- treat others the way they would like to be treated.

PSHE gives students opportunities to reflect on their experiences and understand how they are developing personally and socially, encompassing many of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues in their lives and that of others in society, thus allowing them to build meaningful relationships. It also promotes students' well-being and self-esteem enabling them to take responsibility for their learning and future life choices.

The intent is to ensure that all students access and build the curriculum knowledge, with a drive to secure knowledge for those who have missed input through absence and/or require additional support and practice to be able to recall the essential knowledge.

PSHE is the joint responsibility of the individual, the family, the school and the wider community. Through our PSHE programme, individual students are encouraged to show respect for our common humanity, diversity and the differences between people.

SRE

Sex and relationships education (SRE) is an integral part of PSHE and the wider curriculum. Effective SRE is essential so that young people are able to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. It will help our young people develop the skills and understanding that they need to live confident, healthy and independent lives.

The aim of sex and relationships education (SRE) is defined as:

'...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, civil partnership or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sexual intercourse (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help students 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.

Effective RSE does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It enables young people to mature, build up their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity. Effective RSE also supports people, throughout life, to develop safe, fulfilling and healthy sexual relationships, at the appropriate time.' DfE 2018.

Within the Trust we aim to provide our students with an age appropriate SRE programme that is tailored to their physical and emotional maturity. In doing this, we acknowledge the value of contributing to a spiral curriculum. It should enable them to make positive choices about their sexual and emotional health, both now and in the future. The curriculum is in line with current DfE guidance.

- It should teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others.
- It should enable young people to mature, to build up their confidence and self-esteem and understand the reasons for delaying sexual activity.
- It should build up knowledge and skills which are particularly important today because of the many different and conflicting pressures on young people.

SRE from September 2019 has covered the following aspects:

- An understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs and alcohol, as well as appropriate intimate relationships and sexual intercourse.
- Teaching on mental wellbeing, giving young people the knowledge and capability to take care of themselves and get support if problems arise.
- Fostering student wellbeing, developing resilience and ambition, and developing kindness
- The following specific issues will also be covered in a sensitive and timely manner:
- Grooming and sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- Consent and the law, including recognising when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence including)
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Criminal exploitation, cuckooing, gang involvement and County Lines
- FGM, violence against women and girls, so-called honour-based violence and forced marriage
- Internet safety and principles for keeping safe online, including how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and to whom to report issues.
- Online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- Pornography
- Abortion
- Sexuality and gender identity
- Substance misuse
- Extremism/radicalisation
- Hate crime

Appendix A details the expectation for learning regarding SRE

Appendix B details the expectation for learning regarding Physical and Mental Health

PSHE and SRE are, in line with DfE guidance, set in the context of a wider whole-school approach to supporting students to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school.

For example, the curriculum on relationships and on sex will complement, and be supported by, the Trust's wider policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, bullying and safeguarding (including handling of any reporting children and young people may make as a result of the lessons). The subjects will sit within the context of the Trust's broader ethos and approach to developing students socially, morally, spiritually and culturally; and its pastoral care system. This is also the case for teaching on mental health within health education.

The curriculum on health education should similarly complement, and be supported by, the school's wider education on healthy lifestyles through physical education, food technology, science and its sport, extra-curricular activity and school food.

The teaching will help support the development of important attributes in students, such as honesty, tolerance, resilience and self-efficacy, as well as how those attributes are also developed by other aspects of the school's provision. The curriculum should proactively address issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on children's physical, emotional and sexual development. This should be in line with student need, informed by student voice and participation in curriculum development and in response to issues as they arise in the school and wider community.

Content and Organisation

As well as specialist PSHE provision, there will be times when content is studied through the tutor programme or within other curriculum areas. Provision may be made for students in mixed age classes to be taught in separate age groups. Normally, male and female students will be taught together. However, when deemed

appropriate, there may be occasions when students are taught in separate gender groups. This will explicitly be taught in the Science, RE and the Tutor programme, and may occur in other curriculum areas.

PSHE in the school curriculum

Within The Castle School we provide many opportunities to promote students' personal and social development through the curriculum, including:

Belonging and identifying; first aid, sex and relationship education, substances education, financial education, careers education, personal health (physical and mental) and bereavement, British values, human rights and democracy and abuses including FGM.

The core knowledge we expect students to understand is detailed on the PSHE curriculum map. Outside of the main curriculum the following add value to PSHE within the wider school context:

- Core and foundation subjects
- Assemblies (Year, House and whole school)
- House activities
- House and School elections
- School & House charities
- Cross-curricular projects
- Theatre-in-Education
- School/student Council
- Peer education
- Invited visitors
- Tutorials
- Mentoring
- Buddying
- Work with vulnerable students including social skills groups, TA key workers, games clubs at lunchtimes, school counsellor
- Whole school events e.g health/industry days
- Educational visits and school trips
- Residential experiences
- Sports teams & other activities e.g Sports Leadership
- School publications
- Mini enterprise schemes
- Work experience

Success criteria for PSHE

Students have an excellent knowledge of how to live a healthy and safe lifestyle.

Students leave with high quality employability skills.

The personal development of students leads to the majority of our students being confident and articulate, showing mutual respect to each other and above all maturity across the year groups.

Students will have an education on:

- different types of relationships, including friendships, family relationships, dealing with strangers and intimate relationships;
- how to recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, including self-respect and respect for others.

- commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent, how to manage conflict, and recognise unhealthy relationships;
- how relationships may affect health and wellbeing, including mental health;
- healthy relationships and safety online.
- factual knowledge around sexual intercourse, sexual health and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships.

Quality of teaching in PSHE

Lessons will be well planned in advance with non-subject specialists receiving lesson resources well in advance, allowing for detailed sensitive planning taking into account students that may find certain issues difficult, for example vulnerable students. Key knowledge and vocab will be highlighted on curriculum maps and schemes of learning and staff drop-ins will be available, delivered by the PHSE lead, to support colleagues further with their planning. The PSHE lead will also link with the SEND team to ensure quality for all students.

This timely approach will also give the opportunity for teachers, tutors and Heads of Year to raise any sensitive issues regarding delivery of lessons. This will allow for staff to be rotated away from teaching areas they find particularly challenging or distressing. The process over the 2019/20 academic year led to consultation with parents when a particularly sensitive issue was to be covered, which may result in a policy changes or, for example a letter being placed on the school website informing parents of any sensitive issues that are due to be taught.

Same gender staffing will be used as appropriate for particular areas of the curriculum (sex education, STIs, breast & testicular cancer awareness). Lessons will foster the development of open relationships between staff and students encouraging greater participation and outstanding behaviour.

Specific Issues

Personal Beliefs

The personal beliefs and attitudes of teachers will not influence their teaching of SRE.

Language and Ground Rules in Lessons

All staff teaching SRE will set ground rules in their classes.

Students will be involved in the negotiation/setting of these rules. Distancing techniques will also help to avoid the inappropriate disclosure of information. These may include case studies, role play and speaking in the third person.

Dealing with difficult questions

We have a variety of strategies for dealing with difficult questions. For example:

- if a question is too explicit or is inappropriate, the teacher will attend to it later, on an individual basis and a decision will be taken whether or not to inform the child's parents/carers;
- if a child makes a disclosure that causes the teacher concern then they should follow the Trust's Safeguarding policy.

Contraception

Trained staff are able to give students full information about different types of contraception, including emergency contraception, and their effectiveness and appropriateness. Individual advice cannot be given to students. Trained staff can, however, give both individual students and groups of students additional information and guidance on where they can obtain confidential advice, counselling and, where necessary, treatment.

Teaching About Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Relationships

The diversity of sexual orientation found within society is also reflected in the school community. Students will need to be given information regarding access to relevant support agencies.

Confidentiality

'Schools must be absolutely clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. A clear and explicit confidentiality policy should ensure good practice throughout the school which both students and parents understand. Teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality.'

Staff teaching SRE have a duty of care and may wish to make a ground rule that opinions and ideas expressed in discussion should not be repeated outside the lesson. Again, it must be stressed that no absolute confidentiality can be promised. Clearly a lesson situation is also a significantly different context to a conversation with an individual. Students should be reminded of this difference. Through distancing techniques and ground rules students should understand that lessons are not an appropriate place to disclose personal information.

Information about local advice and support is available to students in Student Services and from Heads of Year. The Trust signposts to other support agencies.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The PSHE & SRE policy is monitored and evaluated through an annual review process in consultation with staff delivering the content and student feedback. We will also involve a parents/carers group in the development of the policy annually. PSHE is also monitored and evaluated using the quality assurance process common across other curriculum areas, which includes lesson observations, student voice and staff voice.

Appendix A – Relationships and Sex Education (RSE): Secondary

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary as required and in addition cover the following content by the end of secondary:

Families	Students should know • that there are different types of committed, stable relationships. • how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children. • what marriage and civil partnerships are, including their legal status e.g. that marriage and civil partnerships carry legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony. • why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into. • the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships. • the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to the raising of children. • how to: determine whether peers, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationships is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
Respectful relationships, including friendships	Students should know • the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (both on and offline) including: trust, respect, honesty, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship. • how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). • that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due tolerance and respect to others and others' beliefs, including people in positions of authority. • about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help. • that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control. • what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable. • the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.
Online and media	Students should know • their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply online and offline. • about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online. • not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them. • what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online. • the impact of viewing harmful content.

	• that specifically sexually explicit material often presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners. • that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is against the law. • how information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.
Being safe	Students should know • the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment and domestic abuse and how these can affect current and future relationships. • how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (on and offline).
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	Students should know • how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sexual intercourse and friendship. • that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing. • the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women. • that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others. • that they have a choice to delay sexual intercourse or to enjoy intimacy without sexual intercourse. • the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices and options available. • the facts around pregnancy including miscarriage. • that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help). • how the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sexual intercourse (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing. • how prevalence of some STIs , the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment. • how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour. • how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Appendix B – Physical health and mental wellbeing: Secondary

In secondary school, health and wellbeing education should build on primary content and should introduce new content to older students at appropriate points. This should enable students to understand how their bodies are changing, how they are feeling and why, to further develop the language that they use to talk about their bodies, health and emotions and to understand why terms associated with mental and physical health difficulties should not be used pejoratively. This knowledge should enable students to understand where normal variations in emotions and physical complaints end and health and wellbeing issues begin.

Mental wellbeing	Students should know • how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary. • that happiness is linked to being connected to others. • how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing issues. • common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression). • how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health. • the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.
Internet safety and harms	Students should know • the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online through setting unrealistic expectations for body image, how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships (including social media), how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online. • how to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or get support, if they have been affected by those behaviours
Physical health and fitness	Students should know • the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress. - the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardio-vascular ill-health. • facts about wider issues such as organ/blood donation.
Healthy eating	Students should know • how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including eating disorders and cancer.
Drugs, alcohol and tobacco	Students should know • the facts about legal substances and illegal substances, including drug-taking, and the associated risks, including the link to serious mental health conditions. • the law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances. • the physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption and what constitutes (relatively) safe alcohol consumption. • the physical and psychological consequences of addiction, including alcohol dependency. • awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.

	the facts about the harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so.
Health and prevention	Students should know - about personal hygiene, germs (including microbes), the spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics. - about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and flossing, including visits to the dentist. (late secondary) the benefits of regular self-examination (including screening and immunisation). - the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.
Basic first aid	Students should know - basic treatment for common injuries. - life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR. - the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed.
Changing adolescent body	Students should know - key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body. - the main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.