



FELIXSTOWE
INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
FRIENDSHIP THROUGH EDUCATION

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

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Signed:	Principal
Signed:	
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Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Statutory requirements	3
3. Policy development	4
4. Definition	4
5. Curriculum	4
6. Delivery of RSHE	4
7. Use of external organisations and materials	6
8. Roles and responsibilities	7
9. Parents' right to withdraw	7
10. Training	8
11. Monitoring arrangements	8
Appendix 1: Curriculum map.....	9
Appendix 2a: By the end of primary education pupils should know	10
Appendix 2b: By the end of secondary education pupils should know	12
Appendix 3: Parent/carers form: withdrawal from sex education within RSHE	15

1. Aims

The aims of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) at Felixstowe International College are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- Support pupils to develop the knowledge and skills they need to make informed, safe and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships, now and in adult life

Felixstowe International College is a co-educational independent day and boarding school with a Christian ethos, welcoming pupils of many nationalities, faiths and cultures. Our RSHE provision reflects the values of our community: providing a safe, happy and respectful environment in which every pupil is nurtured, challenged and inspired. Many of our pupils live away from home in our boarding community, and RSHE plays a particularly important role in helping them build healthy friendships, stay safe (including online), respect difference, and know how and where to seek help and support.

2. Statutory requirements

As an independent school, we must provide relationships and sex education (RSE) to all pupils receiving secondary education, and relationships education to all pupils receiving primary education, under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019.

We teach health education as part of our programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), in accordance with paragraph 2(2)(d) of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Although health education is not compulsory for independent schools under the 2019 Regulations, we have chosen to deliver it in full, in line with the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance.

In teaching RSHE, we have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State, as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE, July 2025), which schools must follow from 1 September 2026. This policy and our curriculum have been reviewed and updated to meet the requirements of the 2025 guidance.

We also have regard to our legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996 (political impartiality)
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010, and the protected characteristics defined in that Act
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the requirements relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and the active promotion of fundamental British values
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE statutory safeguarding guidance)
- The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (DfE, 2022), reflecting our responsibilities to boarders

At Felixstowe International College, we teach RSHE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed by the Senior Leadership Team. The policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – pulled together all relevant information, including national advice
2. Curriculum planning – reflecting the requirements of the current statutory guidance (see Appendix 1)

4. Definition

RSHE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSHE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values.

RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

Our RSHE curriculum is set out in example form as per Appendix 1, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

The PSHE lead has put together the curriculum to reflect the current statutory guidance, taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our pupils. Because our classes are small and pupils join us from many different countries and education systems, teachers assess pupils' prior knowledge and adapt content sensitively, while ensuring that all pupils receive the full statutory curriculum. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

We will share all curriculum materials with parents and carers on request, including making materials available electronically to parents/carers who are overseas.

For the small number of pupils in our school receiving primary education, we provide relationships education and the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum. In addition, primary-phase sex education will focus on:

- Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings
- How a baby is conceived and born

For more information about our curriculum, see our curriculum map in Appendix 1.

6. Delivery of RSHE

RSHE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE). Aspects of RSHE are also reinforced through our pastoral and boarding programmes, assemblies and tutor time.

For pupils receiving primary education, relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships

- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

For pupils receiving secondary education, RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

In line with the 2025 statutory guidance, our secondary RSHE also addresses emerging risks and issues, including misogyny and harmful online influences, the harms of pornography, sexual harassment and sexual violence, image-based abuse (including AI-generated and 'deepfake' images), personal safety, and mental health and wellbeing, all taught in an age-appropriate way.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents/carers, amongst other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children, young carers, or pupils boarding a long way from their families).

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

6.1 Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them, recognising that our pupils come from many different countries, cultures and faith backgrounds and may have received very different prior teaching on these subjects
- Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences, including those of boarders living away from home
- During lessons, makes pupils feel safe and supported, and able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in a whole-class setting, small groups or targeted sessions, 1-to-1 discussions, or digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed, including support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL)

6.2 Use of resources

We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSHE guidance

- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our pupils
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

7. Use of external organisations and materials

We will make sure that any external agency, and any materials it produces that we use, are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

The school remains responsible for what is said to pupils. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We will:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSHE is balanced, and that they and the resources they intend to use are age-appropriate, in line with pupils' developmental stage, and comply with this policy, the Teachers' Standards, the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on what they're going to say and their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use
- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people, in line with our safeguarding and child protection policy and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers
- Share all external materials with parents and carers

We won't, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body will approve the RSHE policy, and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

8.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, for sharing resources and materials with parents and carers, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from the non-science components of sex education within RSHE (see section 9).

8.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils, including boarders, pupils with SEND and pupils with EAL
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the non-science components of sex education within RSHE

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSHE are encouraged to discuss this with the Principal.

RSHE at Felixstowe International College is taught by [name(s)/role(s), e.g. the PSHE lead and form tutors], supported by science and RE teaching staff and, where appropriate, boarding staff.

8.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSHE and, when discussing issues related to RSHE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

9. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from relationships education or health education.

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from the non-science components of sex education within RSHE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

For pupils receiving primary education, parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from the non-science components of sex education within RSHE.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the Principal. Given that many of our parents/carers live overseas, requests may be submitted electronically, and discussions may take place remotely (for example, by telephone or video call), where appropriate involving the pupil's guardian in the UK.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Principal will discuss the request with parents/carers (and, as appropriate, with the pupil) to ensure that their wishes are understood, to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, and to outline the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have. The outcome of the discussion and any agreed actions will be recorded.

Alternative school work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

10. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. Training includes preparation for the requirements of the 2025 statutory guidance, safeguarding (in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education), and supporting pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The Principal will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by [name and role, e.g. the PSHE lead] through [insert details of monitoring arrangements, such as planning scrutinies, learning walks, work sampling and pupil voice].

Pupils' development in RSHE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by [name and role] annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Body.

Appendix 1: Curriculum map example (subject to change)

Relationships, sex and health education curriculum map

YEAR GROUP	TERM	TOPIC/THEME DETAILS
Year 6	Summer 2	My changing body: how boys' and girls' bodies change as we grow up, and how these changes affect us
Year 7	Autumn 1	Building positive relationships in a new community: friendships, respect
Year 8	Spring 1	Online relationships and media: staying safe online, digital footprints, harmful content and how to report concerns
Year 9	Summer 1	Respectful relationships: consent, boundaries, stereotypes, bullying and where to get help
Year 10	Autumn 2	Intimate relationships and sexual health: consent, contraception, STIs and accessing confidential advice
Year 11	Spring 2	Healthy adult relationships: recognising unsafe relationships, coercion and control, and sources of support

Appendix 2a: By the end of primary education pupils should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families and people who care about me	• That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability • The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives • That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care • That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up • That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong • How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed
Caring friendships	• How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends • The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties • That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded • That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right • How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed
Respectful relationships	• The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • The conventions of courtesy and manners • The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	• 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 respect to others, including those in positions of authority • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help • What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive • The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults
Online relationships	• That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not • That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous • The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them • How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met • How information and data is shared and used online
Being safe	• What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context) • About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe • That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact • How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know • How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult • How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard • How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so • Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources

Appendix 2b: By the end of secondary education pupils should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	• 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 is, including its legal status, e.g. that marriage carries 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/carers with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting • How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy; judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship 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	• The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • 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), including how misogynistic attitudes and online influences can affect behaviour towards women and girls • 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 respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs • 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

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	• 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	• Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online • 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 e.g. pornography 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, and those created or altered using AI) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
Being safe	• The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, 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 (in all contexts, including online)
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	• 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, sex 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 sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex • The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available • The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	• 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 sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing • About the 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 3: Parent/carers form: withdrawal from sex education within RSHE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS/CARERS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent/carers		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships, sex and health education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent/carers signature			
TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL			
Agreed actions from discussion with parents/carers <i>[Include notes from discussions with parents/carers and agreed actions taken. E.g. the pupil will take part in all relationships and health education lessons and, during the sex education lessons, will work independently on a supervised project.]</i>			