John Mason School
OPPORTUNITY | RESPECT | DETERMINATION

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE)

Applicable to	Responsible Officer	Date Adopted	Date of review
All Staff	AW/LRG	September 2026	September 2027

Status

Statutory

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Introductory statement

This policy outlines John Mason School's whole-school approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

At John Mason School, we believe that RSHE is a vital part of every student's education and personal development. High-quality RSHE supports young people to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and values they need to build positive relationships, make informed decisions and navigate the opportunities and challenges they will encounter throughout their lives.

We recognise that our students are growing up in an increasingly complex world. They are exposed to a wide range of influences, both online and offline, and require the skills to think critically, make safe choices and understand the importance of respect, empathy and responsibility.

Through our Personal Development curriculum, we aim to provide RSHE that is inclusive, evidence-informed and responsive to the needs of our students. We want every young person at John Mason School to feel valued, respected and equipped to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

RSHE plays a significant role in safeguarding. It helps students understand healthy and unhealthy relationships, recognise situations that may place them at risk, know where to seek support and understand that they have the right to feel safe and respected.

This policy has been developed through consultation with staff, students, parents/carers and governors. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it reflects current statutory guidance and continues to meet the needs of our school community.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Equality Policy, SEND Policy, Online Safety Policy and Science Curriculum documentation.

Equality, Inclusion and Social Justice:

At John Mason School, we believe that RSHE should promote equality, celebrate diversity and challenge discrimination.

Our RSHE curriculum is designed to ensure that all students feel seen, valued and included. We recognise that every young person has different experiences, backgrounds, beliefs and identities, and we seek to create an environment in which all students are treated with dignity and respect.

Our teaching aims to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- challenge prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination;
- encourage students to respect difference;
- reflect the diversity of families and communities within modern Britain;
- support students to develop empathy and compassion;
- promote inclusion for all learners, including those with SEND.

We recognise our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that RSHE is delivered in a way that is accessible and appropriate for all students.

When planning and delivering RSHE, we take account of students' age, stage of development, learning needs and individual circumstances. We also recognise and respect the religious and cultural backgrounds represented within our school community.

Definition of Relationships and Sex Education:

We define Relationships Education as learning about the social, emotional, ethical and legal aspects of relationships, including friendships, family relationships, intimate relationships and relationships online.

We define sex education as learning about the physical, social, legal and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections and sexual health.

We take the approach that Relationships and Sex Education are best taught in an integrated way, using a gender equity and human rights framework.

We will take care to highlight lessons that contain what we define as sex education so that we can respect the wishes of parents who have withdrawn their children from this content. Simultaneously, we will seek to nurture children's curiosity about the world around them, supporting their development and their respect for themselves and each other.

Our RSHE programme aims to enable students to:

- develop self-respect, confidence and self-worth;
- build positive, respectful and healthy relationships;
- understand the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships;
- recognise abuse, exploitation and harmful behaviours;
- understand the importance of consent, communication and boundaries;
- develop emotional literacy and resilience;
- understand how to maintain positive physical and mental health;

- make informed choices about sexual health and wellbeing;
- understand the law relating to relationships and sexual behaviour;
- recognise and manage risk in both online and offline contexts;
- challenge prejudice, discrimination and harmful stereotypes;
- know how and where to seek advice, help and support;
- develop as responsible, informed and compassionate citizens.

We believe that high-quality RSHE does not encourage early sexual activity. Instead, it supports young people to delay sexual activity until they feel ready, understand the importance of mutual respect and consent, and make informed choices that promote their wellbeing.

To cover the curriculum content outlined in the RSHE Guidance, we will equip our students to build positive and respectful relationships online and offline. We seek to ensure that it gives students the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will help them to:

- Realise their health (including sexual health), wellbeing and dignity.
- Build self-esteem and self-worth.

Explore and value their personal and sexual identity and the personal/sexual identities of others.

- Understand family structures, committed relationships and the legal status of different types of long-term relationships.
- Understand and make sense of the real-life issues they are experiencing in the world around them.
- Manage and explore difficult feelings and emotions.
- Consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others.
- Develop as informed and responsible citizens.
- Understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

We define Health Education as learning about physical health, mental wellbeing and the factors that contribute to leading healthy, safe and fulfilling lives.

We believe that these areas are interconnected and are most effective when taught through an integrated and developmental approach.

Our aim is not simply to provide information, but to help students develop the skills, confidence and values needed to make informed decisions and build healthy relationships throughout their lives.

<u>Subject Content:</u>

The curriculum programme is developed by the Head of Personal Development in conjunction with the views of teachers, students and parents.

John Mason School will meet the learning objectives and content outlined in the Relationships Education, Relationships & Sex Education and Health Education Guidance.

All content will be delivered in a timely way and will be age and developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of our pupils, including those pupils with SEND.

Students will learn about:

Relationships

- healthy friendships and respectful relationships;
- qualities of positive relationships;
- family life and changing family structures;
- communication and conflict resolution;
- relationship values and expectations;
- recognising unhealthy and abusive relationships;
- domestic abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour;
- harassment and stalking;
- where and how to access support.

Sex and Sexual Health

- puberty and adolescent development;
- reproduction and fertility;
- conception and pregnancy;
- contraception;
- sexually transmitted infections;
- safer sex;
- pregnancy choices;
- accessing sexual health services;
- understanding readiness and personal choice.

Consent and Boundaries

Students will learn that consent:

- must be freely given;
- can be withdrawn at any time;
- cannot be assumed;
- requires capacity and understanding;
- is based on mutual respect and communication.

Students will also explore peer pressure, coercion and strategies for maintaining personal boundaries.

Online Relationships and Safety

Students will develop the skills needed to navigate the digital world safely, including:

- maintaining healthy online relationships;
- recognising grooming and exploitation;
- responding to unwanted contact;

- image sharing and image-based abuse;
- the impact of pornography on expectations and attitudes;
- misinformation and manipulation online;
- recognising AI-generated and manipulated content;
- understanding digital footprints;
- reporting concerns and seeking support.

Health and Wellbeing

Students will learn about:

- emotional wellbeing;
- mental health and reducing stigma;
- healthy coping strategies;
- body image and self-esteem;
- healthy lifestyles;
- sleep and nutrition;
- physical activity;
- substance misuse;
- first aid;
- accessing health services.

Safety and Safeguarding

Students will develop an understanding of:

- safeguarding and protective behaviours;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- child sexual exploitation;
- county lines exploitation;
- violence against women and girls;
- misogyny and gender-based harassment;
- extremism and radicalisation;
- recognising risk and seeking help.

Subject Delivery

RSHE is delivered through Personal Development lessons, supported by assemblies, tutor activities, themed events and wider enrichment opportunities.

At John Mason School, Personal Development lessons provide students with a safe and structured environment in which they can discuss sensitive issues, ask questions and explore different viewpoints respectfully.

Teaching staff delivering RSHE receive appropriate training and support to ensure that they feel confident and knowledgeable.

Teaching will:

- be factual and evidence-informed;
- use appropriate and accurate terminology;
- encourage discussion and critical thinking;
- avoid promoting personal beliefs as fact;
- be inclusive and sensitive to the needs of all learners.

Where external visitors contribute to the programme, responsibility for the curriculum remains with the school.

Subject Delivery:

RSHE will be delivered in John Mason School as part of our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons and tutor sessions across all key stages, using a spiral curriculum approach. PHSE lessons are called 'Personal Development' at John Mason School to highlight the purpose of the lessons to students.

The Head of Personal Development will work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas (science and computing for example) to ensure a holistic and joined up approach to what is taught in RSE.

We also supplement learning through using a whole school approach and utilising time outside of the classroom, such as assemblies, off timetable days and events. We also use external agencies where appropriate to deliver aspects of Relationships and Sex Education. These may include School Health Nurses and external theatre groups for example.

The programme will be delivered in a non- judgemental, factual way, using the correct medical terms where appropriate (for example when teaching about external body parts). School staff will not express or be expected to express their personal views or beliefs when teaching RSE.

All staff who have responsibility for delivering RSHE will undergo training to ensure they are up-to-date with the RSE policy and curriculum requirements regarding RSHE.

In addition to ongoing training, CPD will also be scheduled in response to updates to our RSE scheme of work and any new development in terms of the course content.

Monitoring:

We regularly monitor our RSHE scheme of work to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, that the curriculum is meeting the new national requirements under the RSHE guidance, and that learning outcomes are reflective of pupil need.

This policy will be reviewed by the school's leadership team in conjunction with the Head of Personal Development and Governors on a regular basis. If changes are needed, members of staff,

parents/carers and pupils will be consulted and any subsequent changes made clearly communicated.

The School's Leadership Team monitors the implementation of the programme through:

- Lesson observations
- Planning scrutiny
- Looking at samples of pupils' work
- Analysing pupil attendance in lessons

Evaluation:

Evaluation of our programme is crucial to ensure that we can continue to improve on provision and teaching effectiveness. The evaluation process involves structured and informal student and staff feedback including:

- Teacher evaluation of lessons and the overall RSE programme
- Evidence from lesson observations
- Feedback and evaluation by students (for example, using student interviews, Questionnaires/ surveys and focus groups.)
- Scrutiny of student assessment
- Sampling student work and portfolios.

Student Assessment:

We use student assessment to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention. Lessons are planned to ensure that they are accessible to students of differing abilities, and that all are suitably challenged.

Students are encouraged to implement their learning in their daily lives. Students have the opportunity to reflect on their learning from real life situations – evaluating their progress throughout.

Staff will monitor student engagement in the first instance. Teachers will address non completion of tasks and ensure students are supported, and understand the expectations of the lessons.

Students will complete a mind-map assessment booklet throughout the year. This will allow students to identify what they know already about the topic at the start and then to add to this once the topic has been completed.

At the end of each module, whole class feedback will be issued. For a subject that can be very discussion based, whole class feedback on understanding of topics is of huge benefit and allows for deeper discussion where necessary.

Pupil Voice:

Student voice is central to the culture and ethos of John Mason School.

We value students' views and recognise that they are best placed to tell us whether the curriculum is relevant, engaging and responsive to their needs.

Student feedback helps us to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of our provision;
- identify emerging issues affecting young people;
- adapt and improve our curriculum;
- ensure students feel heard and respected.

We encourage students to share their opinions respectfully while recognising that views which are discriminatory, prejudicial or harmful will be challenged appropriately.

Answering Student Questions:

RSHE explores a range of issues that may provoke questions from students. We view questions as a positive sign that students are engaged with what is being taught and feel able to express natural curiosities about themselves, their bodies and relationships with others.

As much as possible, where a question is relevant to the whole class, we will answer it to the whole group. There may occasionally be the need to deal with a question outside of the classroom if it is not suitable for the entire class.

Questions will always be answered in an age and developmentally appropriate way and take into account whether a parent/carer has requested their child to be removed from sex education lessons.

School staff will not be expected to answer personal questions about themselves or to ask direct personal questions of their students that could make either party vulnerable.

We believe that an open approach to answering questions prevents students from learning inaccurate or harmful information online or from peers and older students. We believe exploring issues with the whole class helps to reduce the stigma and shame that can surround some of the issues explored in RSHE. Importantly, we believe that children are better protected from harm and abuse when they are able to discuss issues openly with trained professionals and in a safe environment.

Where a question raises a safeguarding concern, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

Working With Parents and Carers:

We believe that the successful teaching of RSHE involves parents/ carers and schools working together. We also believe that parents/ carers can play an important role in the RSHE of their children through exploring discussions at home that have taken place in school.

Our RSHE policy has been developed through consulting parents and carers.

We work with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of what we teach and when through the following methods:

- Parent Information Evenings

- Sharing copies of the policy in face-to-face meetings and/ or through emails
- Letters to parents/carers giving information about when RSHE will be delivered and when certain classes take part (including classes that involve sex education)
- Letters to parents concerning outside classroom experiences such as theatre productions and off timetable days.
- RSHE policy on school website – Schemes of Learning in the Appendices.

If parents/carers have any concerns or special circumstances the school should be aware of, or would like any further information about the curriculum, we will plan for them to come into the school or have a telephone conversation.

We may share examples of some of the key resources we use with parents/carers to reassure them of the content.

Parental right to request their child be excused from sex education (3) :

As outlined within the Statutory Guidance, parents/carers have the right to request their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSHE.

Parents/carers do not have a right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education.

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Health Education.

All children will have the right to opt into sex education three terms before they turn 16 and the school will make arrangements for this to happen. In practice, this means that when a child turns 15 they have the right to be taught sex education if they want to.

Although parents/carers have the right to request to withdraw their child from any or all of sex education as part of Relationships Education, it is our aim to encourage parents to see the value of RSE learning and its contribution to keeping children safe, developing their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and for promoting equality and social justice.

Should a parent decide that they do not wish their child to take part in any of these lessons, we would ask that they first speak to the headteacher to discuss their concerns. The headteacher will discuss the request with the parent/carer to fully understand and address any concerns/objections to the content of the curriculum.

If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record of this.

Except in exceptional circumstances, we will respect the parents' request to withdraw their 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.

We will remind parents annually that the request to withdraw is still in place and invite them to confirm whether they still want it.

The information above is based on the Relationships, RSE and Health Education guidance that became statutory from September 2020.

Working With Visitors and External Agencies:

From time-to-time John Mason School may invite external experts and visitors to deliver parts of our RSHE scheme of work.

External visitors will be selected in order to enrich and supplement our RSHE by bringing particular skills, methods and expertise to the classroom and the whole school. External visitors may include School Health Nurses, Charity workers in the PHSE field, Mental Health specialists – for example CAMHS.

A teacher will always be present throughout these lessons so as to build on the student's learning after the session/s as well as answer any questions the pupils may subsequently have.

Any external visitor will be expected to comply with this policy and other related policies, including the school's confidentiality and child protection policy.

We will also ensure that the visitor understands the cohort of children involved, including the different ability levels and diversities in identities across protected characteristics. They will also be made aware of any specific issues relating to a child.

Safeguarding and Child Protection:

John Mason School acknowledges that RSE is crucial for creating a culture of safeguarding within the school and for meeting our statutory obligations as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

RSHE helps children to understand the difference between healthy and abusive relationships and to understand how to get help if they are experiencing abuse, or have experienced, abuse.

We recognise that when discussing some of the issues RSHE covers, some students could disclose abuse or other harmful experiences. In cases of a disclosure, all staff have statutory training around child protection and will follow the schools safeguarding policy and procedures.

We also recognise that some children may be vulnerable to some of the content delivered in RSHE due to a previous safeguarding concern, ongoing concerns or changes to their personal life. For those children, additional support will be given to prevent them being affected by the scenarios or topics in their planned lessons.

Whilst John Mason School wants to create a learning space that feels safe for children and young people to disclose, we also want to protect children's privacy. We do this by using a number of teaching techniques including the use of Ground Rules, where rights respecting ground rules are created with students on what makes a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Once ground rules have been set, we will check they are in place throughout the scheme of work and actively referred to. Through the use of ground rules and sensitive teaching techniques, we believe the school can create a supportive environment for discussions that can be sensitive or difficult.

Statement by the Governing Body/Trust:

The governance board of John Mason School adopted this policy on 1st July 2026. It will review the policy in 1 year.

In adopting this policy, the Governing Body recognises its responsibility for ensuring the policy is implemented effectively, including that the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way the ensures that the school fulfils its legal obligations.

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