

## Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

Approved by Board of Trustees: Draft (awaiting approval at FTB on 29.09.26)

Review Cycle: Annually

Review Date: TBC

### Intent

The Burgate School and Sixth Form believes that all students should follow a coherent, high-quality programme of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) through a well-developed 'Learning 4 Life' tutor programme which covers Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and the school's ethos of Learning for Life.

We want every student to enjoy their learning and feel valued for who they are.

This policy underpins our Burgate Expectations:

- Be safe
- Be respectful
- Be ready to learn

The aims of Relationships ,Sex and Health Education (RSHE) at our school are to:

- Provide a safe school environment in which sensitive and open discussions can take place
- Provide a broad and balanced Learning 4 Life programme that supports young people to make safe and informed choices.
- Enable students to become more independent and reflective in order to develop greater character, challenge ignorance and increase knowledge and understanding of RSHE issues.
- Foster self-esteem and confidence, to combat exploitation and reduce guilt and anxiety.
- Encourage students to question and explore ideas and in turn evaluate and formulate their own opinions, beliefs and attitudes to make informed decisions.
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships and promote responsible behaviours and lifestyles.
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.

We have an obligation to provide students with high-quality, well-evidenced and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects. This policy outlines how the school's RSHE curriculum is organised and delivered, to ensure it meets the needs of all students.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE 'National curriculum in England: science programmes of study'
- DfE 'Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' 2026
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2026

## 2. Definitions

RSHE is about the emotional, social, and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. It involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

**"Learning 4 Life (L4L)"** is the specific name given at The Burgate School to our Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) tutor lesson programme. It also encompasses British Values and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Emotional education.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

**The Trustees and Headteacher are responsible for:**

- Ensuring RSHE is well-led, carefully planned, and effectively delivered curriculum so all students make progress, and the school meets its legal obligations.
- Ensuring teaching is accessible for all learners, including those with SEND, and that safeguarding (including online safety) is fully embedded.
- Ensuring RSHE is appropriately staffed, resourced, and timetabled, with all staff up to date on policies and guidance.
- Managing parental communication and withdrawals

**Learning 4 Life lead will be responsible for:**

- Overseeing a high-quality, inclusive and age-appropriate RSHE curriculum that demonstrates clear progression.
- Providing resources, liaising with the pastoral team, and organising CPD to support effective teaching for all learners, including SEND.
- Evaluating effectiveness, supporting staff, and leading parent engagement and communication

**The DSL will be responsible for:**

- Providing advice on safeguarding within RSHE and promoting staff awareness of key safeguarding issues.
- Acting as a point of contact for staff concerns about student welfare and ensuring safe support spaces for students.
- Ensuring teaching is sensitive, trauma-informed, and mindful of vulnerable students and potential triggers.

**The pastoral team will be responsible for:**

- Delivering RSHE sensitively, adapting teaching to meet the needs of all learners, including SEND.
- Modelling positive attitudes, monitoring student progress, and engaging in relevant training.
- Responding to student needs and reporting any concerns or disclosures to the DSL.

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 their pastoral lead.

In their pastoral role, teachers will be concerned with the safety and wellbeing of students in their care. When offering guidance to individual student's care must be taken to recognise the responsibilities of parents. If approached by an individual student for specific advice on sexual matters, staff should encourage the students to consult parents or a health professional. School staff will not seek out emergency contraception for our students.

Staff must not promise confidentiality and must report any disclosures to the DSL. If a student is at risk, the DSL will take appropriate safeguarding action, including contacting parents or relevant agencies.

#### **Students are responsible for:**

- Engaging fully in RSHE and the wider L4L curriculum and when discussing issues related to RSHE they are expected to treat others with respect, in line with our Burgate values and Expectations.

#### **4. Policy Development**

This policy was developed through consultation with staff, parents, and students, informed by national and local guidance. It includes opportunities for staff input, parent engagement, and student voice to shape the RSHE curriculum

#### **5. Curriculum Design**

Our curriculum and L4L learning journeys are set out on our school website and is reviewed annually and adapted as and when necessary.

<https://www.theburgate.com/pshe>

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with students, staff and parents taking into account the age, needs and feelings of students. If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner, so they are fully informed and do not seek answers online.

The curriculum follows a spiral model where topics are returned to on a regular basis, enabling students to embed, enhance and extend their knowledge as they move through the school. This ensures that students will have covered the statutory content required by the end of Secondary school. Students who attend our Sixth Form will also engage in a Learning 4 Life curriculum which embeds and extends the statutory RSHE content.

See Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance for statutory content

The Learning 4 Life curriculum is set out in six modules that students study during the six half terms of an academic year. These are:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Relationships, families and friends
- Physical and sexual health
- Celebrating equality and diversity
- Staying safe and managing threats (including online)
- Skills 4 Life (incl. digital literacy, money management and First Aid)

## 6. Delivery of RSHE

The main vehicles for the teaching of RSE will be through the Learning for Life curriculum including Citizenships and Enrichment days; supported by other areas of the curriculum as appropriate, in particular Science (for factual biological aspects of sexual function), and Religious Education teaching in accordance with the National Curriculum.

RSHE is delivered primarily by tutors in weekly Learning 4 Life tutor lessons. Delivery by the tutors means that the vast majority of teaching staff are involved in the teaching of RSHE and are therefore informed and up to date with this vital aspect of the school curriculum. Tutors are often best placed to build strong relationships with their tutees outside of academic teaching and this allows them to tailor and adapt sensitive and difficult topics to the needs of all students, including those with SEND. The tutor is also the first point of contact for parents in most circumstances.

RSHE 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 social media relationships
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

These topics are taught within an inclusive framework of family life, ensuring no child is stigmatised due to their home circumstances or family structure. Teaching is sensitive to the diverse support networks of students, including those with additional or differing care arrangements.

We must 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 illegal use of drugs.

Specialist staff are used to teach those aspects of the work which are sensitive, or which require particular expertise and training. Where outside speakers and agencies are used, they will be accompanied by a member of staff.

The RHSE curriculum will make full use of evidence-based resource materials, visual presentations and outside speakers, details of which are available to trustees and parents on request.

The RSHE programme will encompass sexual function and behaviour as one of several equally important aspects of individual development such as principles of consent, self-awareness, moral integrity, personal hygiene and health – and the factors which may influence decisions such as alcohol and drugs.

The aim of RSHE is to provide balanced factual information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious and moral dimensions of sexual health (for example, consent, Female Genital Mutilation and contraception), in order to prepare students for their adult life.

## **Personal and Social Skills**

Through the RSHE and L4L programmes students will be encouraged to:

- Learn to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively.
- Develop self-respect and empathy for others
- Learn to make choices with an absence of prejudice
- Develop an appreciation of the consequences of choices made (for example, consent, safer social networking, the issues of revenge pornography, sexting and greater self-respect and respect for others)
- Manage conflict
- Introduce students to the skills required to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances
- Discuss all types of relationships including LGBT+ and signposting students to the relevant support agencies.

## **Knowledge and Understanding**

Through the RSHE and L4L programmes students will be encourage to:

- Learn and understand physical development at appropriate stages
- Understand human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships
- Learn about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services
- Learn the value of delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay
- Know where to find/seek support within school/home and outside agencies.

## **7. Working with external agencies**

External agencies may be used to enhance RSHE with specialist knowledge and engaging teaching methods, in line with school policy. All input from external experts must be age-appropriate, inclusive, and aligned with the school's curriculum, expectations and values. A teacher must be present, credentials checked, and safeguarding and confidentiality procedures followed at all times.

## **8. Working with parents**

The school recognises the important role parents play and keeps them informed about RSHE and its importance. Parents are regularly given opportunities to understand the curriculum and share their views. While their feedback is considered, the school makes the final decisions on content and delivery.

## **9. Parents' right to withdraw**

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE 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.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the headteacher.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. **See appendix 1**

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

## **10. Staff Training**

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development.

The pastoral lead for student wellbeing 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 as appropriate.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **12. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Relationships Policy
- SEND Policy

### Appendix 1: Parent withdrawal form from sex education within RSHE

| TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS                                                       |  |             |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------|--|
| Name of child                                                                    |  | Tutor group |  |
| Name of parent                                                                   |  | Date        |  |
| Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education |  |             |  |
|                                                                                  |  |             |  |
| Any other information you would like the school to consider                      |  |             |  |
|                                                                                  |  |             |  |
| Parent signature                                                                 |  |             |  |

| TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL               |  |
|---------------------------------------------|--|
| Agreed actions from discussion with parents |  |