International School of London

RSHE (Relationship, Sex Education & Health Education) Policy

Date reviewed: August 2025

To be reviewed: August 2026

1. Mission statement

Since 1972, we have established a welcoming and inclusive community. Our diverse cultures and languages drive all our learning experiences. We nurture creativity and curiosity to stimulate deep thinking. We foster insight, compassion and resilience to enable us to play a meaningful part in a changing world.

2. Vision statement

We celebrate our stories, our worth and our purpose to make a difference in a shared world. At the International School of London, we believe in: Empowering students to maximise their learning opportunities and to fulfil their potential. Actively integrating cultural diversity in the curriculum. Creating inclusive, vibrant and innovative learning communities. Offering a diverse and extensive international programme that supports personal, social and professional growth.

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3. Relevant policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality and Inclusion Policy
- School Learning and Support

Please see below a useful document produced by the government, which provides answers to frequently asked questions: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs

4. Aims

RSHE falls within the Personal, Social, and Health Education curriculum (PSHE). Through our RSHE and PSHE programme, we aim to provide children with the knowledge, skills and understanding students need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active and responsible citizens.

RSHE is lifelong learning about personal, physical, moral and emotional development. It should teach children and young people to develop and form positive values, attitudes, personal and social skills, and increase their knowledge and understanding of how to make informed decisions and life choices.

In providing children with an understanding of healthy and respectful relationships and appropriate boundaries, we consider effective RSHE to be a fundamental part of our approach to supporting pupils to grow into confident, caring, responsible and respectful young citizens.

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

- Provide a consistent standard of relations, sex and health education across the school
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Promote responsible behaviour
- Create a positive culture of communication around issues of relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies
- 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
- Give pupils an understanding of reproduction and sexual development
- Ensure that all pupils, by the time they reach secondary school age, are well equipped and on an equal footing, to deal with the secondary RSHE curriculum.
- To provide all pupils with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to make positive and healthy choices concerning relationships as they grow up and deal with risk.
- Combat exploitation.

5. Statutory requirements

As a maintained primary school, we must provide relationships education to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.

This policy has been written in accordance with the statutory guidance document "Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education" (DfE, 2019).

Department for Education guidance states that by the summer term 2021, all primary schools must teach Relationships and Health Education. The teaching of Sex Education in primary schools remains non-statutory, with the exception of the elements of sex education contained in the science national curriculum: including knowledge of the main external body parts; the changes as humans develop to old age and reproduction in some plants and animals. Other related topics that fall within the statutory requirements for Health Education, such as puberty and menstrual wellbeing, will be included within PSHE education lessons.

Within the statutory guidance document for RSE and Health Education, the DfE also encourages schools to deliver age-appropriate sex education if they feel their pupils need this information:

"It will be for primary schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. Many primary schools already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so, although it is not a requirement…

"It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department continues to recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science – how a baby is conceived and born."

Should you like to see the guidance from the government please visit: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education__Relationships_and_Sex_Education__RSE__and_Health_Education.pdf

6. Definitions

Within this policy, as in the DfE guidance, **Relationships Education** is defined as teaching about the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to respectful friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults, including online.

For the purpose of this policy, **Health Education** is defined as teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing, focusing on recognising the link between the two and being able to make healthy lifestyle choices

Sex Education is defined as teaching children how human reproduction occurs, including how a baby is conceived and born. This draws on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in our Programme of Inquiry for science in Grade 5. For the purposes of this policy, we specifically

identify any non-statutory Sex Education that falls outside of Science and those related elements (the physical changes associated with puberty) within statutory Health Education.

RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

7. Curriculum

7.1 Primary Years Programme

Statutory RSHE Curriculum Content

Our RSHE curriculum is embedded within our PSHE curriculum, however, this will be adapted when necessary.

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

Key objectives of the statutory Relationships Education curriculum are outlined below:

Families and people who care for me

Children should know:

- 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.
- 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

Children should know:

- 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 physically or verbally aggressive behaviour 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

Children should know:

- 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.
- 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 granting in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

Online relationships

Children should know:

- 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

Children should know:

- 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 and others.
- 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.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to ensure 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, 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 or young carers).

Non-Statutory Sex Education

As part of our PYP Programme of Inquiry, children are taught in an age-appropriate way about puberty and the associated physical and emotional changes from Grade 5 onwards. As part of the science curriculum, children learn in Kindergarten that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults. In Grade 4, students learn about how reproduction occurs in some plants and animals. In Grade 5, they describe the changes as humans develop to old age.

Alongside this, children in Grade 5 are taught to recognise the signs and changes that may occur during the onset of puberty, in preparation for further lessons on this subject which also focus on emotional changes and menstruation in Grade 5.

Science Curriculum Content (Early Childhood- Grade 5)

Early Years Foundation Stage children learn:

- About life cycles, for example, by observing caterpillars metamorphosise into butterflies.
- To develop skills to form relationships and think about relationships with others through ongoing personal, social and emotional development.

In Kindergarten-Grade 2, children learn:

- To identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is to do with each sense
- To notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults
- To find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)
- To describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food, and hygiene

In Grade 3-Grade 5, children learn:

- To identify that animals, including humans, need the right types and amount of nutrition, and that they cannot make their own food; they get nutrition from what they eat

- To describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals
- To describe the changes, as humans develop to old age
- To recognise the impact of healthy and unhealthy choices on the way their bodies function

7.2 Middle Years Programme (Grades 6-10 Middle Years)

We teach relationships and sex education (RSE) under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, in line with the terms set out in statutory guidance

In MYP RSHE is taught through a dedicated tutorial session each week. This provision is delivered across a range of other curriculum subjects, including Science and PE Grades

What We Teach

As stated above, we cover the content for relationships and sex education, and health education, as set out in the statutory guidance (linked to above).

Refer to our relationships and sex education scope and sequence document for details about what we teach, and how we decide on what to teach, in this subject. This document can be found on the ISL school website.

The curriculum focuses on providing pupils with the life skills necessary to develop positive relationships, promote physical and mental health and wellbeing, reflect on themselves as well as their strengths and weakness, and develop a greater understanding of the wider world.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with our community, 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 that students are fully informed.

Grades 6-10 middle years school:

Relationships and sex education 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

Key topics of the statutory Relationships Education curriculum are outlined below:

Choices and influences

Students should know about:

- Drugs and alcohol
- Vaping and tobacco
- Diet and exercise
- Personal safety
- Healthy coping strategies
- Peer pressure

- Introduction to contraception
- The Equality Act and Protected characteristics
- Prejudice and discrimination
- LGBT and inclusivity
- Online safety

Autonomy and advocacy

Students should know about:

- Assertive communication
- Healthy relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Maintaining sexual health
- Gangs and violent crime
- Nature of committed relationships
- Forced marriage.
- Extremism and the Prevent Programme
- Rights in the community
- British Values, Democracy and the Election System

Independence and aspirations

Students should know about:

- Managing Change
- Aspiration for the future
- Career choices
- Financial decisions
- Gambling, financial choices and debt
- Employability skills
- Online reputation
- Families and Parenting
- Fertility, adoption, abortion
- Managing grief and loss

7.3 Diploma College (Grade 11-12)

We teach relationship and sex education (RSE), career and finance, health education and wellbeing as part of our PRSHE curriculum. The statutory requirements do not apply for DP College students although we follow the DfE recommendation to provide support to students by offering this subject. Attendance to these sessions is compulsory.

In DP, RSHE is taught through a Tutor Program session each week, including tutor led sessions, assemblies led by the Head of Student Wellbeing and conferences led by external guest speakers.

8. Delivery of RSHE

<u>Primary Years Programme (Early Childhood-Grade 5):</u>

As part of the International School of London's Primary Years Programme, RSHE is taught within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. In addition, some aspects of the RSHE programme will be covered through:

- Second Steps
- Morning Meetings
- Science curriculum
- Digital Citizenship
- Assemblies
- Stories and discussion
- PE in the context of health and hygiene

We aim to provide a learning atmosphere where children feel safe and relaxed, and where they feel confident to engage in discussions around potentially sensitive subjects and themes.

Ground rules in class and across the school are essential when discussing sensitive subject matter and teaching RSHE. Clear ground rules are established in partnership with the class, then reinforced at the start of each relevant lesson. As a minimum, ground rules are likely to include the following basic guidelines:

- Listen politely to each other
- Everyone gets a turn to speak, if they want to
- Everyone has a right not to speak
- Everyone's contribution is respected
- We don't ask or have to answer any personal questions
- We use anatomically correct language when we have learnt it

Delivery methods will be adjusted should the need for remote learning continue or extend.

Dealing with sensitive issues and difficult questions

Pupil's questions will be dealt with honestly and sensitively and in an age-appropriate way.

Our Relationships, Sex and Health Education programme will be delivered in an age appropriate and sensitive manner by class teachers. Teaching is normally taught in mixed gender groups, though some content is covered in single sex groups, e.g. in Grade 5 when menstrual hygiene, single sex question sessions, etc., is discussed.

To support the discussion of Sex Education in the related Grade 5 unit, a questions box will be available for pupils to ask anonymous questions.

If staff are faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, techniques such as distancing, the use of a question box, or creating a time to talk to a child individually will be used. Children may also be signposted back to parents/carers and the teacher will contact the parents/carers to give a context to the conversations that have been held in class.

If any questions raise safeguarding concerns, teachers will refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Since RSHE incorporates the development of self-esteem and relationships, pupils' learning does not just take place through the taught curriculum but through all aspects of school life including the playground. It is important then that all staff understand they have a responsibility to implement this policy and promote the aims of the school at any time they are dealing with children.

Middle Years Programme (Grades 6-10 Middle Years)

RSHE is delivered by form tutors during timetabled RSHE lessons, and in designated tutorial sessions. Some Biological aspects of RSE are integrated within the Science and PE curriculum and supported by RSHE sessions. Our teaching of RSE is supported further by assemblies and visiting speakers.

Its consistent integration into routine pastoral and tutorial time supports the pastoral care and personal development of each pupil as they learn about health and wellbeing, relationships, and living in the wider world. In addition, as all tutors are subject teachers within the MYP, the delivery of RSE through tutorial time ensures its high profile within the school and importance to staff as well as pupils.

Areas of learning are taught within the context of family life and an intercultural world taking care to ensure 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, 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 or young carers).

Tutors have sessions with parents integrated into the teacher parent conferences every term. This allows for discussion of the RSHE curriculum teaching and learning, as well as larger pastoral discussions.

RSHE does not form part of any formal assessments within the MYP, however progress is monitored by tutors using regular knowledge checks and other formative assessment techniques. Progress is further communicated to parents through semesterly tutor comments in the students MYP report document.

Diploma College (Grade 11-12)

RSHE at the DP focuses on careers and finance, health education, wellbeing and RSE.

RSHE is delivered through the Tutor Time program and include a range of interventions. Students are invited to access materials and discuss amongst themselves and with professionals.

Its consistent integration into routine pastoral and tutorial time supports the pastoral care and personal development of each pupil as they learn about health and wellbeing, relationships, and living in the wider world. In addition, as all tutors are subject teachers within the DP College, the delivery of RSE through tutorial time ensures its high profile within the school and importance to staff as well as pupils.

RSHE does not form part of any formal assessments within the DP College, however progress is monitored by tutors and the Head of Wellbeing. Progress is further communicated to parents through semesterly tutor comments in the students DP report document.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 Heads of Section
The Head of Primary and Head of Secondary are responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSHE.

The Head of Primary and Head of Secondary also:

- Ensure that members of staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity
- Monitor this policy on a regular basis and reports to governors on the effectiveness of the policy

9.2 Staff
All staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSHE
- Monitoring progress

Class teachers are responsible for teaching RSHE at ISL.

Teachers will reply to, and answer, children's questions sensitively and openly. They will ensure that balanced information is provided which will take into account the different faiths' views and avoid any negative impressions. Teachers will need to answer questions that may arise through the direct teaching of sex education, as well as those that may be asked at other times. All questions will be handled sensitively and set within a general context.

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 Head of Primary. Questions which teachers feel

uncertain about answering should be discussed with a senior member of staff and answered at a later date. Consideration should be given to religious or cultural factors, and to parents' wishes before questions are answered.

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

9.4 Parents
The school is well aware that the primary role in children's RSHE lies with parents and carers. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we:

- Will carry out our statutory duty to consult with parents and governors on the contents of this policy
- Inform parents about the school's RSHE policy and practice; this includes informing parents by letter or email before beginning to teach a unit of RSHE related to Sex Education.
- Answer any questions that parents may have about the RSHE of their child
- Take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSHE in the school
- Acknowledge parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSHE. However, this rarely happens as, by working in partnership with parents, they recognise the importance of this aspect of their child's education
- Keep a register of any pupils who are removed from lessons and distributed to all teachers involved.

10. Parents' right to withdraw

As previously stated the RSHE curriculum consists of both statutory and non-statutory elements:

- Parents do have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSHE.
- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from statutory relationships education, health education or the science curriculum, as per British Education Law.

Parents wanting to withdraw their children are invited to speak to the class teacher. The class teacher will explore the concern of the parents and the possibility of adjusting the programme or approach and will discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. He/she will talk with the parents about the possible negative experiences or feelings that may result from withdrawal of the child and the ways in which these may be minimised.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sections of the RSHE components of sex education. They do not have the right to remove students from any academic subject-related curriculum, e.g., Science. If the parent still wishes to withdraw the child, requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the Head of Primary/Head of Secondary. Parents should expect to be asked to complete an RSE Parent Withdrawal Form. Once a child has been withdrawn, they cannot take part in sex education until the request for withdrawal has been removed. The right to remove students from RSE is only valid up to 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. The Secondary Principal will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education and that child will go to another class for the duration of the lesson.

For students with SEND, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Secondary Principal may want to take a student's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision.

Copies of any withdrawal request will be kept by the school as part of a child's educational record.

11. Confidentiality

Teachers conduct sex education lessons in a sensitive manner. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved, or likely to be involved in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the matter seriously and deal with it as outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse or exploitation. If the teacher has concerns, they will draw these to the attention of the designated person responsible for child protection or the headteacher as a matter of urgency. Disclosure of female genital mutilation must be reported to the police (either by the teacher to whom it is disclosed or by the DSL).

Legally, the school cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. We aim to ensure that pupils' best interests are maintained and try to encourage pupils to talk to their parents or carers to provide support. If confidentiality has to be broken, pupils are informed first and then supported by the designated teacher throughout the whole process.

12. Special Educational Needs

Pupils with special educational needs will be given the opportunity to fully participate in RSHE lessons, and a differentiated program will be provided where necessary, to ensure that all pupils gain a full understanding.

13. Equalities and Diversity

Schools, like all public institutions, have specific responsibilities in relation to equality and protected characteristics. Planning and resources are reviewed to ensure they comply with equalities legislation and the school's equal opportunities policy. All RSHE is taught without bias and in line with legal responsibilities such as those contained within the Equality Act (2010). Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect others that may have different opinions.

The personal beliefs and attitudes of staff delivering RSHE will not influence the teaching of the subject in school. In our school we seek to recognise and embrace the diverse nature of our community. We aim to value and celebrate religious, ethnic and cultural diversity as part of

modern Britain. We will explore different cultural beliefs and values and encourage activities that challenge stereotypes and discrimination and present children with accurate information based on the law. We will use a range of teaching materials and resources that reflect the diversity of our community and encourage a sense of inclusiveness. We do not use RSHE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation.

14. Complaints Procedure

Any complaints or concerns about the Relationships and Sex Education programme should be made to the class teacher in the first instance. Parents may also direct any concerns to the Head of Primary or Head of Secondary

15. Monitoring Arrangements

Primary Years Programme:

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by the Primary Leadership Team through, for example, drop ins and lesson observations.

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

Middle Years Programme and DP College:

The delivery of PSHE is monitored by the Heads of Year through the oversight and annual review of this policy and the curricula.

Students' developing understanding of RSE will be monitored by teachers and tutors, and Heads of Year conduct drop in lesson observations, as a part of the school's professional development programme, to monitor the delivery of lessons.

Students are given regular opportunities to engage in student voice discussions to ensure that the content of the lessons is relevant and timely.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Heads of Year. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Secondary Principal.

16. The School Environment

The school will ensure that the whole school environment reflects the values of respect for themselves and others. It will:

- Ensure that posters and displays use positive images and celebrate difference and diversity.
- Use anonymous question boxes or similar items enabling children to have questions and concerns answered privately where needed.
- Ensure that communication between staff and pupils is welcomed and encouraged, and children know how to access members of staff.
- Provide provisions for pubertal girls, including sanitary ware and free sanitary towels.
- Ensure that discriminatory behaviour is always challenged in any context.

17. Equal Opportunities

ISL is committed to equality of opportunity in all aspects of school life. In RSHE this will include:

- Examining and challenging gender stereotyping,
- Celebrating difference and diversity
- Ensuring a programme of Relationships Education that is relevant to all pupils

At ISL London, Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.