



Great Torrington School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy 2026

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1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school 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

Great Torrington School values the holistic education of its pupils, having a thorough and comprehensive RSE policy which fits alongside the full delivery of PSHE is essential for the rounded education of its young people and their progression into adulthood

2. Statutory requirements

As a secondary academy school we must provide RSE to all pupils as per section 34 of the [Children and Social work act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

At Great Torrington School we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
4. Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

4. Definition

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

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

RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

RSE is about promoting safe and happy lives.

5. Curriculum

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 the resources used are always reviewed to ensure that they are current and meet statutory or contextual content.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, pupils and staff, 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 appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't have to resort to only seeking answers online.

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

6. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Some biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE). During the delivery of RSE children's individual needs will be given careful thought, vulnerable students will be considered carefully whilst lessons are planned. In cases where it is deemed appropriate, we may organise alternative provision for pupils with SEND needs or personal experiences / ACEs which may be triggered by the content of the lesson(s).

PSHE lessons are designed to:

1. To begin with a 'Do Now' activity to establish baseline knowledge and understanding;
2. To frequently refer to and revisit agreed ground rules, (see below - subject to change);
3. To use distancing techniques to maintain a 'safe space' and appropriate neutrality;
4. To allow pupils the 'right to pass', when necessary;
5. To signpost support available by the end of the lesson.

Example Ground Rules

We will **Respect** each other, by

- Listening carefully,
- Being open minded and non-judgemental,
- Not disrupting the flow of learning.

We will take part thoughtfully and fairly.

- Be discreet – e.g. if talking about someone you know, or your own life, try to use anonymous language such as "someone I know" or "In the case of this person" etc.
- Communicate with your friends, parents and teachers if you have any concerns.

Taking part is important, but you have the right to pass if you need to.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing and safe relationships of all kinds including:

- › Families
- › Friendships Online and media relationships
- › Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2.

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).

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

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

Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

Charis Furness, subject lead for PSHE and Citizenship, has lead responsibility for the delivery of PSHE (RSE) in school.

7.4 Pupils

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

8. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory 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 using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the headteacher.

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

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

9. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE when they join the team.

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

10. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by Charis Furness, subject lead for PSHE and Citizenship, through:

Work scrutiny, Learning walks, curriculum planning, pupil and staff voice, pupil, staff and parent surveys.

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

This policy will be reviewed by Charis Furness annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body and head teacher.

KS3 Overview (SRE content emphasised in bold)

	Autumn 1 7wks	Autumn 2 7wks	Spring 1 wks	6	Spring 2 6wks	Summer 1 6wks	Summer 2 7wks
7	Health and Wellbeing How to manage friendships and understanding physical health (diet, exercise, caffeine, tobacco, alcohol).		Health and Wellbeing Puberty Understanding the social, emotional and physical changes associated with puberty.		Exploring	Relationships Understanding self, what makes healthy relationships (consent) and how to manage unhealthy relationships.	
8	Health and Wellbeing Understanding physical health (caffeine, smoking /vaping, alcohol). Adolescent brain, hormones & sleep.		Mental health Attitudes, misconceptions, resilience, setbacks, digital resilience, self-harm, eating disorders, change-loss-grief, healthy & unhealthy coping strategies.			Relationships Revisiting healthy / unhealthy relationships. Exploring gender and sexual identity. Safe sex: introduction to contraceptives, STIs and the impact of pornography.	
9	Health and Wellbeing Peer influence, risk taking, substances (alcohol, cannabis, vaping) and gangs.		Mental health Thinking about mental health, brain and body, positive emotions, engagement, relationships , meaning and accomplishment.			Relationships Healthy intimate relationships, consent & safe sex. The impact of pornography and the risks of sending nudes.	

10	<p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Topic 1</p> <p>Positive psychology, character strengths, sleep, substance use, addiction and dependency.</p>	<p>Relationships</p> <p>Topic 2</p> <p>Intimate relationships (pornography, consent, managing conflict, abusive relationships and rape.)</p>	<p>Mental Health</p> <p>Topic 3</p> <p>Reframing negative thinking, common issues and signs of mental illness, change-loss-grief and promoting wellbeing.</p>	<p>Approaching Adulthood</p> <p>Understanding serious health risks – cancer, mental health (suicide). Managing risk (gambling). Living independently.</p>
11	<p>Relationships</p> <p>Topic 1</p> <p>Negotiating relationship conflict, commitment, unplanned pregnancy, parenting, abortion, consent and the law.</p>	<p>Mental Health</p> <p>Topic 2</p> <p>Positive psychology, critical thinking, brain development, sleep, change / loss, personal confidence and character strengths.</p>	<p>Financial Literacy</p> <p>Topic 3</p> <p>Saving, borrowing, budgeting, managing financial risk, avoiding scams and fraud, driving theory.</p>	<p>Revision for GCSEs</p>

Appendix 2: By the end of secondary school pupils should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 their 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 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) • 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 • 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

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail • How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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 form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
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	