Relationships and Sex Education Policy

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

1. Introduction

At The Hollyfield School we recognise that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is a lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the importance of stable and loving relationships, including different types of families, and about supporting students to learn to love, respect and care for themselves and others.

RSE provides pupils with factual knowledge and an understanding of the influences on young people, ensuring they are equipped to make informed, safe and healthy choices as they progress to adult life. It encourages the development of personal and interpersonal skills, the awareness and respect of self and others, and encourages reflection and responsibility.

2. Aims

The aims of RSE at school are to:

2.1 Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place and opportunities for pupils to ask questions in a safe environment are created

2.2 Prepare pupils for puberty and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene

2.3 Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence, resilience and empathy

2.4 Help students learn and understand the principles of consent, in line with the school's safeguarding responsibilities

2.5 Support pupils to learn and understand what a healthy and respectful relationship is and what constitutes harmful sexual behaviour

2.6 Create a positive and open culture around issues of sexuality and relationships

2.7 Ensure that students are confident in understanding how to stay safe online and confident in avoiding risks associated with being online, including the risks of AI.

2.8 Support pupils to learn and use the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.

2.9 Support and promote the ethos and values of the school, in particular:

- diversity and inclusion.
- a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- pupil wellbeing.
- the development of positive personal attributes, including kindness, respect, integrity and generosity.

3. Statutory requirements

As a secondary school, Hollyfield must provide RSE to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. In teaching RSE, the school is required by our funding agreement to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996. The current statutory guidance *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* was published in June 2019 and its provisions came into effect on 1 September 2020; The Hollyfield School teaches RSE as set out in this policy.

The school will ensure compliance with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010. In particular, due consideration will be given to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND (with adjustments made as needed) and different religious backgrounds.

We will not discriminate against students based on:

● Age ● Sex ● Race ● Disability ● Religion or belief ● Gender reassignment ● Pregnancy or maternity ● Marriage or civil partnership ● Sexual orientation.

4. Policy development

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

4.1 The former policy for Sex and Relationships Education was reviewed carefully and adapted, taking into consideration new statutory guidance that came into force from September 2020 and 2025; this will be consistently reviewed.

4.2 **Staff consultation:**
All staff, including senior leaders, will continue to be consulted on the content of the RSE curriculum and policy. Staff were invited to share their own views of the policy following its development.

4.3 **Parent/stakeholder consultation:**
Parents have been invited to provide feedback and comments on the RSE programme and policy; they will be consulted during future opportunities.

4.4 **Pupil consultation:**
The school has investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE programme, alongside the development of the school's PSHE curriculum, as part of a pupil workshop; the school will continue to consult students.

4.5 **Ratification:**
Once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified; they will continue to be consulted.

Following the introduction of the new curriculum at the start of an academic year knowledge checks are completed on a continuous basis at the end of each unit.

In addition, parent and pupil views are sought more generally on the school's wider curriculum (including Relationships and Sex Education) via surveys.

Responses identified the content which pupils and their families feel is most relevant to pupils' life experience and that best supports their wellbeing and personal development. Again, this feedback has been used to inform curriculum planning and this policy.

5. Definition of Relationships and Sex Education

5.1 Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is an educational framework designed for students to learn about:

5.1.1 **Relationships**: Understanding the emotional, social and ethical aspects of relationships, including friendships, family dynamics, and romantic partnerships

5.1.2 **Sex Education**: Providing information about human biology, reproduction, consent and sexual health, ensuring students understand both the physical and emotional aspects of sexual relationships

5.2 The goal of RSE is to:

5.2.1 equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to form healthy relationships.

5.2.2 make informed decisions about their bodies and sexual health throughout their lives.

5.2.3 promote respect, empathy, and understanding of diverse perspectives and experiences.

5.3 RSE does not promote sexual activity.

6. Curriculum

The curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 and is indicative of the school's general planned approach to delivering RSE. The school reserves the right to rearrange aspects of this curriculum but will always write to parents at the start of each academic year to notify them in advance of what will be taught, when and of any subsequent changes. The school has 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 by providing factual information and/or directing pupils to further sources of information/advice so they are fully informed and don't seek answers from inappropriate sources.

Appendix 2 outlines the statutory content that will be delivered as part of the curriculum. This indicates the content that pupils will have learnt by the end of secondary education (the end of Year 11).

7. Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE).

- Pupils at Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9) have a discrete lesson of PSHE each week and topics are arranged in a cyclical manner so that pupils have the opportunity to revisit subject content at age-appropriate stages.

- Pupils at Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11) will have RSE delivered via PSHE form tutor sessions and dedicated talks and events.

Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum. Pupils also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional through Your Healthcare, a local NHS community healthcare provider.

When discussing themes around family life, staff take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families include single parent families, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) 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 (e.g. looked after children or young carers).

When students learn about safeguarding related issues, such as harmful sexual behaviours and online safety, the school recognises that a 'one size fits all' approach may not be appropriate and that a more personalised approach might be needed for more vulnerable pupils e.g. The health care nurse delivers follow-up sessions with students who attend the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP).

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The role of the Governing Board

Our Governing Board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

8.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that high quality RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from the components of sex education within RSE (see section 9).

8.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way that is accessible to all pupils.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE.
- Monitoring progress and feedback.
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils.
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the sex education components of RSE (see section 9).

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

The PSHE Curriculum Lead is the key member of staff responsible for delivering RSE provision. Their work is overseen and supported by a designated Deputy Headteacher.

8.4 Pupils

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

9. Parents' right to withdraw

9.1 Parents have the right to withdraw their children from some, or all, of the sex education components within RSE, up to and until three terms before their child turns 16. After this point, if a pupil wishes to receive sex education, rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange for sex education to be provided during one of those terms.

There is no right to withdraw from any component which forms part of the national science curriculum or from any other component of relationships education or health education, and a child cannot be withdrawn from PSHE.

9.2 Requests for withdrawal

Any request for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the Headteacher. A PDF version of this form can be downloaded from the Policies section on the school website and sent to the Headteacher and The PSHE Curriculum Lead. They will discuss the request with the parents (and where appropriate the pupil) to:

- ensure that their wishes are understood
- clarify the nature, purpose and benefits of the sex education curriculum
- consider any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher will respect the parents' request to withdraw their child.
A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record and alternative work will be given to those pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

The school does have the right to refuse a request to withdraw a pupil from sex education in exceptional circumstances such as because of safeguarding concerns.

10. Training and support

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as appropriate to their role. Designated senior staff responsible for leading RSE provision also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE. All staff are trained to a level two in safeguarding and therefore have received training on handling disclosures.

Ongoing CPD: The PSHE Curriculum Lead will coordinate annual training for staff delivering RSE. This covers:

- Handling "distancing techniques" to keep discussions objective.
- Managing spontaneous, sensitive questions.
- Identifying and responding to safeguarding disclosures.

Specialist Support: Where topics require clinical or legal expertise (e.g., sexual health), the school will bring in external professionals, such as the school nurse to co-deliver or lead sessions, or staff will have received external training.

Support for Parents and Carers: We aim to work in partnership with parents to ensure a consistent message between home and school.

- **Curriculum Transparency:** Parents can access the curriculum overview and information on the website.
- **Signposting:** The school website will maintain a list of external support organisations (e.g., Childline, NSPCC, Brook) for families to access further guidance.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for Pastoral care through collaborative planning scrutinies, learning walks and formal lesson observations (two cycles per year).

Pupils' development and the effectiveness of the curriculum in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems, knowledge checks are completed at the end of each unit and pupil feedback sought on the content. Outcomes and pupil voice are then used to review and shape the curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed by the PSHE curriculum lead and the Deputy Headteacher, working with parents and taking into account feedback from staff and pupils.

The policy will initially be reviewed annually. At every review, the policy will be reviewed by governors of the Quality of Education Committee in the first instance and a recommendation made to the Full Governing Board if required.

Appendix 1: SOW

	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
	Living in the wider world	**Futures**	**Relationships**	**Citizenship and Community**	**Healthy Living**	**Emotional Health and Wellbeing**
Year 7	Transition to Secondary School	Decision making about Finances and Futures	Managing relationships and new feelings	Values	Healthy Living	Personal Safety
Year 8	Discrimination, Prejudice and Challenges	Finance and Career Skills	Romantic Relationships and Managing Conflict	Prejudice, Values and Extremism	Looking after our Health	My Goals, Behaviour and Emotions
Year 9	Rights and Responsibilities	Careers and Enterprise	Healthy Relationships with ourselves and Others	Place in Local Community	Our Health and Personal Safety	Achieving Good Mental Health
	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
KS4	**Living in the wider world**	**Futures**	**Relationship**	**Citizenship and Community**	**Healthy Living**	**Emotional Health and Wellbeing**
Year 10	Self-management	Preparing for the workplace	Relationships	Society	Sexual Health	Choices
Year 11	The Wider World	Preparation for the future	Relationships	Risks		

Appendix 2: By the end of Secondary Education, pupils should know:

Topics	Pupils should know
Families	1. That there are different types of committed, stable relationships. 2. How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children. 3. Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony. 4. That 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children. 5. That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal. 6. How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships. 7. The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development. 8. How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.
Respectful relationships	1. The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. 2. How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal. 3. The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others. 4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs. 5. The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict. 6. The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help.

	7. Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration. 8. The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok. 9. How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice. 10. How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others. 11. How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others. 12. Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called "involuntary celibates" (incels) or online influencers.
Online and Media	1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online. 2. Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues. 3. The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online. 4. Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images.

	5. That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime. 6. What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online. 7. About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them. 8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong. 9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice. 10. How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns. 11. That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it. 12. How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online. 13. That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising). 14. That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion. 15. That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and

	that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk.
Being safe	1. How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent. 2. That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others. 3. How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed. 4. How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions. 5. What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it. 6. That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting. 7. The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault. 8. The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language. 9. The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.* 10. That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed. 11. The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation. 12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage. 13. The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female

	genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible. 14.That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death. 15. That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful. 16. How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault. *The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognised children who see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse, and are related to either the victim of the abusive behaviour, or the perpetrator, as victims of domestic abuse in their own right (part 1 section 3). The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory guidance is designed to support statutory and non-statutory bodies working with victims of domestic abuse, including children.
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	1. That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive. 2. The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex. 3. Sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent. 4. 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. 5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful. 6. The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decision making. 7. That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help.

	8. How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma. 9. The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment. 10. How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour. 11. How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms. 12. How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice.

Appendix 3: Withdrawal from sex education within RSE template

To be completed by the Parent			
Name of Child		**Name of Parent**	
Year Group		**Date**	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education **Which aspect(s) of the curriculum do you wish to withdraw your child from?**			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			
To be completed by the school			
Agreed actions from discussion with parents			
Headteacher signature		**Date**	