



A S H L A W N  
S C H O O L

# **Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy (RSHE)**

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<b>Owner:</b>	<b>Lorna Pountney</b>
<b>Status:</b>	<b>Under review</b>

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**Date approved by Local Governing Boards:**

**The Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy for Ashlawn School**

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## 1. Introduction

Ashlawn School is aware that young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also challenges and risks. In this environment, young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.

## 2. Aims

The aim of RSHE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage, civil partnership or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships is. This will help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

Ashlawn's RSHE Policy will provide clear progression from what is taught in primary schools.

We will build on the foundation of Relationships Education and, as students grow up, at the appropriate time extend teaching to include intimate relationships. Alongside being taught intimate relationships, students will also be taught about family relationships, friendships and other kinds of relationships that are an equally important part of becoming a successful and happy adult.

This includes an awareness of the many different relationships including same-sex relationships as part of our fundamental British Values of mutual respect and tolerance.

Traditionally relationship education acknowledges the Christian nature of marriage as part of the heritage of the UK, today acknowledging civil partnerships and now gay marriage.

Teaching of RSHE in Ashlawn School will enable students:

- To distinguish between content and experiences that exemplify healthy relationships and those that are distorted or harmful
- To understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their mental wellbeing and self-respect and to understand that unhealthy relationships can have a lasting, negative impact on mental wellbeing

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- To believe they can achieve goals and that in order to achieve those goals they must stick at the tasks despite the challenges they may face
- To be taught the facts and the law about sex, sexuality, sexual health and gender identity in an age-appropriate and inclusive way
- To recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence including honour-based violence and forced marriage) and strategies to manage this or access support for themselves or others at risk
- To recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how and when to report issues to keep them safe online
- To, within the law, be well equipped to make decisions for themselves about how to live their own lives in the future, whilst respecting the right of others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs.

### **3. Statutory Guidance**

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 made under Sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. The regulations also make Health Education compulsory in schools.

This policy was developed in response to:

- Statutory guidance on RSHE and health education
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024: for Schools and Colleges
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: Guidance for Principals and Staff
- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Alternative provision
- Mental health and behaviour in schools
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- Cyber Bullying: Advice for Principals and School Staff
- Advice for parents and carers on cyber bullying
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools

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- National Citizen Service: guidance for schools and colleges

## **4. Links with other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Ashlawn School policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Equality Information

## **5. Delivery of the programme**

Ashlawn School acknowledges that high-quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching can help pupils prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life as well as promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils both at school and in society.

RSHE will be set in the context of a wider whole-school approach to supporting pupils to be safe, happy and prepared for life beyond school. The curriculum on relationships, sex and health education will complement and be supported by Ashlawn School's wider policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, anti-bullying and safeguarding. RSHE will sit within the context of the school's broader ethos and approach to developing pupils socially, morally, spiritually and culturally, and its pastoral care system.

The curriculum on health education will similarly complement, and be supported by, the school's education on healthy lifestyles through physical education, food technology, science and its sport, extra-curricular activity and school food.

Ashlawn School will deliver the content set out in Appendix 1 in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. Effective teaching will ensure that core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to pupils, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme of lessons. Teaching will include sufficient well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to practice applying and embedding new knowledge so that it can be used skillfully and confidently in real life situations.

The lead teacher in each department will work closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure Relationships Education, RSHE and Health Education programmes complement each other and do not duplicate content covered in national curriculum subjects such as citizenship, science, computing and PE.

## **6. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

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Relationships education, RSHE and health education will be accessible for all pupils. High quality teaching is differentiated and personalised, this is the starting point to ensure accessibility for all pupils. The school will also be mindful of preparing pupils for adulthood, outcomes as set out in the SEND code of practice, when preparing these subjects for pupils with SEND.

Ashlawn School is aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships education can also be a priority for some pupils, for example some with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities.

For some pupils there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meeting the specific needs of children at different development stages.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1 The Trust**

The Trustees will:

- monitor the implementation of the policy across all Academies within the Trust
- monitor pupil progress to ensure that pupils achieve expected outcomes
- ensure that Academies are resourced in such a way that the Trust fulfills its legal obligations.

### **7.2 Ashlawn School**

The school will ensure:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes
- the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned
- that the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- that the subjects are resourced in a way that ensures the Academy can fulfill its legal obligations.

### **7.3 Principal/Vice Principal/ Assistant Principal responsible for Personal Development**

The Principal/Vice Principal/ Assistant Principal will ensure that:

- all staff are informed of the policy and the responsibilities included within the policy
- all teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support subjects

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- the subjects are staffed and timetabled in a way to ensure the school fulfills their legal obligations
- the teaching of RSHE is monitored to ensure that it is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND
- the school works with parents/carers when planning and delivering RSHE to pupils
- clear information is provided to parents/carers on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.

## **7.4 Staff**

All staff will ensure that:

- ground rules are negotiated with the group before embarking on lessons of a sensitive nature so that both the staff and pupils can work together in a supportive atmosphere in which all members can speak with confidence and without fear of embarrassment, anxiety or breach of confidentiality
- all students are offered the opportunity to explore ideas, situations and feelings in an atmosphere of confidence and support
- at all times teaching will take place in the context of an explicit moral framework
- all points of view they may express during the course of teaching RSHE are unbiased
- the teaching of RSHE is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND
- the emphasis of teaching RSHE will always be the importance and understanding of personal relationships and the right of the individual to make informed choices
- issues of stereotyping, sexual equality, harassment, rights and legislation underpin the teaching of RSHE
- where appropriate, they direct pupils to seek advice and support from an appropriate agency or individual. It is inappropriate for staff to give students personal advice on matters such as contraception. Where a student has embarked on a course of action likely to place them at risk, the member of staff will ensure that the student is aware of the implications of their behaviour. The member of staff should refer any potential concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **7.5 Parents/Carers**

Ashlawn School acknowledges the key role that parents/carers play in the development of their children's understanding about relationships. Parents are the first educators of

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their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow and mature and to form healthy relationships.

All parents/carers will be:

- given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships Education and RSHE
- encouraged to participate in the development of Relationships Education and RSHE
- able to discuss any concerns directly with the school.

## **8. Working with external agencies**

Ashlawn School is aware that working with external partners will enhance the delivery of RSHE and will bring in specialist knowledge and implement different ways of engaging with young people.

Where Ashlawn School uses external agencies, they will check the credentials of the visiting organisation and any visitors linked to the agency. The school will also ensure that the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with the planned programme and the published policy.

Schools will work with external agencies to ensure that the content delivered is age-appropriate and accessible for all pupils. Any materials that are used as part of the delivery must be approved by the academy in advance of the session.

The school will ensure that the visitor is aware of aspects of confidentiality and understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

## **9. Safeguarding, reports of abuse and confidentiality**

Ashlawn School recognises that at the heart of RSHE, the focus is on keeping children safe, and acknowledges the significant role academies have in preventative education.

In our school, we will allow children an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children will be made aware of the processes to enable them to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled.

This will also include processes when they have a concern about a peer or friend.

In line with the document Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (KCSIE), all staff are aware of what to do if a child tells them that they are being abused or neglected. Staff



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are also aware of the need to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those that need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and children's social care.

A member of staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this is not in the best interests of the child.

The involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) will ensure that trusted, high quality local resources are engaged, links to the police and other agencies are utilised and the knowledge of any particular local issues it may be appropriate to address in lessons.

## **10. Relationships and Sex Education Content**

Pupils are able at an early age to understand and assimilate basic facts about human reproduction and sexual behaviour. The school intends to build on the statutory work done in KS2, to ensure that by the end of KS3 all pupils will have been given a clear and straight forward account of not just human reproduction, but the role that different types of sex may play in adult life, and the inherent risks involved – as well as the nature of building positive relationships and developing emotional and behavioural maturity.

During the period of adolescence it is the aim of the programme to present knowledge and guidance in an objective and balanced manner to enable pupils to comprehend the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society, to know what is and what is not legal, that they are given clear guidance on the law pertaining to consent and to consider their own attitudes in order to make informed, reasoned and responsible decisions about their own behaviour, both while they are at school and in adulthood. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the values of stable and considerate relationships and of the responsibility of parenthood. Pupils are also taught techniques which resist the negative influence of peer pressure and assumptions regarding sexual behaviours and promiscuity.

RSE at Ashlawn School will always be inclusive and promote acceptance and respect. It is recognised there are likely to be many pupils who may not be heterosexual and RSE must cater for their needs and questions as well. RSE will explore issues of sexuality, and while it is acknowledged that the majority of pupils will be heterosexual and that programmes of learning will need to reflect this, balanced and responsible teaching must respond to the needs of all pupils, irrespective of sexuality or gender identity.

There are many opportunities within the curriculum as a whole to consider how sexual relationships can vary from those that give happiness and fulfillment to those that are wholly inappropriate.

Pupils should know:

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- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships and will be taught 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;
- that 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**

Pupils should know:

- 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 acceptance 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.

## **Online and media**

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Pupils should know:

- 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.

## **Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health**

Pupils should know:

- 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;
- 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);
- 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 and menopause;
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressuring 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

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- 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.

Pupils will also be taught the law and implications of breaking the law in the following areas:

- marriage;
- consent, including the age of consent;
- violence against others;
- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting',
- youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.);
- pornography;
- abortion;
- sexuality;
- gender identity;
- substance misuse;
- violence and exploitation by gangs;
- extremism/radicalisation;
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines'
- drugs operations);
- hate crime;
- female genital mutilation (FGM).

## **11. Structure and delivery**

RSE at Ashlawn School is co-ordinated and planned by the Vice Principal Behaviour and PSHE lead. Delivery is through the Personal, Health, Relationships and Sex Education (PHRSE) team, with support from external agencies where appropriate. Other subjects also play a part

(e.g. RE, ICT and Science) to deliver certain elements of well-rounded RSE, e.g. sexual ethics, anatomy/development and online safety. All staff who have been timetabled to deliver RSE can be provided with CPD as appropriate, and all staff must be provided with opportunities to ensure that they not only have the factual knowledge necessary, but also that they are comfortable with the attitudes and teaching methodologies that underpin each aspect of the programme. It is acknowledged that, due to staffing constraints, PHRSE will often be delivered by non-specialists.

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A range of delivery methods are encouraged. These include class discussion, pair work, guest speakers, ICT, drama, use of written resources, DVDs, presentations and internet resources.

A detailed scheme of learning will be in place to ensure the statutory requirements for RSE are embedded into the PHSE curriculum. Where lessons are embedded through other curriculum areas such as Science, RS or ICT these links will be clearly made across schemes of learning and taught by subject specialists where possible. Controversial issues will be dealt with by adopting a policy of suitability and appropriateness for the age being taught. Classes will always be mixed as it is important that both genders learn about and can empathise with situations, emotions and physical development which involve each gender, given the emphasis on sexual activity as part of consensual, respectful and loving relationships.

## **12. Equal Opportunities**

All lessons in school must follow the school's Equal Opportunities Policy. Great care must be taken by the class teacher to ensure that the perceptions of male and female pupils are sensitively handled, likewise those from differing cultural and / or religious backgrounds.

Members of staff and outside speakers should be aware of the nature of Equal Opportunities and its application to RSE.

All pupils will be taught the RSE curriculum and adjustments will be made for pupils with SEND to ensure that the content is accessible and understood. This may involve, where appropriate, small group or 1:1 interventions with the SEN department or from pastoral leaders on work around healthy relationships, social interaction and/or protective behaviours where it is deemed appropriate.

## **13. Curriculum Entitlement**

The school has the legal duty to ensure all pupils are free from discrimination and to ensure that all subjects are taught without bias or judgment of any kind, including political or religious bias. All parents/carers have the legal right to request to withdraw their child from the specific sex education lessons contained in the RSE curriculum which will be authorised only by the Principal or Vice Principal. Pupils withdrawn from these areas will be given meaningful time to study other curriculum areas either as part of another group or in an individual setting. Parents/carers will need to discuss how the key statutory requirements of RSE will be covered at home if a child is not accessing this provision at school.

The school and Governing Body very much hope that the programme here described will be acceptable to all families and there will not be a need for any children to be withdrawn. Indeed, we believe that the very fact of withdrawal can of itself be damaging to a child: it is very much hoped that parents with specific

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concerns will discuss with the school how these may be met so that the programme may perhaps be modified to accommodate their wishes.

The programme is reviewed regularly and can involve consultation with external agencies, e.g. sexual health professionals, other PHRSE coordinators, faculty staff /pastoral leaders /leadership team / SEND staff / parents/carers and pupils. A range of resources are used and it is the aim to keep these as relevant and up to date as possible. All resources should be appropriate to the age and ability of the group using them, and staff are encouraged to use programmes / resources as they see fit.

Ashlawn School will work collaboratively with both secondary and primary schools across the Trust to ensure that cooperative development of RSE resources and methodologies are shared.

## **14. Working with Parents/Carers**

Parents should be informed through school documentation/websites/ newsletters that RSE will play a part in their child's education during their time at Ashlawn School. Information about RSE given to parents should be evaluated and renewed to ensure it is up to date. The school must be sensitive to the views of parents about the RSE curriculum which their children receive, and should be encouraged to discuss and explain the manner in which sensitive and controversial issues are to be raised. This will be done through various mechanisms (i.e. parent forums, voice etc.) and parents/carers will be contacted at appropriate intervals as RSE teaching changes and develops.

## **15. Specific Issues**

Members of staff are not to give any advice to individual pupils' regards contraception, but are to direct pupils to those suitably qualified health professionals, e.g. service advertised on <http://www.besavvy.org.uk/>, GPs, etc. In the context of a sex education lesson, knowledge about contraception should be given to the group, e.g. methods of operation, suitability, availability.

Staff and pupils need to be aware within lessons of the need to be confidential and not to mention names of pupils or adults within the context of topics within RSE. Pupils should be made aware of the need for child protection and safeguarding and visual reminders of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and safeguarding procedures on site should be present across the school site. Pupils who may make individual disclosures need to know that staff may need to act upon the pupil's information and refer it as appropriate.

Groups or individuals with particular causes or beliefs who may seek to influence the RSE policy will not be allowed to do so. This does not preclude parents/carers individual right to withdraw their children from aspects of the programme.

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## **16. Dissemination**

The policy can / will be made available to:

- any present or prospective parent/carer or pupil of the school;
- any visitor with an input to the RSE programme;
- any member of staff involved in the delivery of RSE at the school; and all pastoral staff, Subject Leaders and Leadership Team.

## **17. Responsibility**

The Ashlawn School RSE policy has been produced in line with the statutory guidance on RSE.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Vice Principal for Behaviour and Attitudes. Regular consultation with parent/carers, pupils and outside agencies will ensure the policy is fit for purpose.

The Principal will designate a named person on the staff who will coordinate the design and delivery of the programme and arrange / deliver appropriate CPD for staff. See table below.

The Governing Body has reviewed the school's RSE policy to make sure that it complies with the requirements of the law. The Vice Principal for Behaviour and Attitudes has overall responsibility for ensuring the programme to be devised is in accordance with this policy; for presenting it to the Governing Body; and for ensuring it to be reviewed annually.

The policy will be approved by the schools Governors and ratified annually.

## **18. New RSE Guidance Update (September 2024)**

In 2020, Relationships and Sex Education was made compulsory for all secondary school pupils in England and Health Education compulsory for all pupils in state-funded schools.

Last year, the Prime Minister and Education Secretary brought forward the first review of the curriculum following reports of pupils being taught inappropriate content in RSHE in some schools.

The review was informed by the advice of an independent panel of experts. The results of the review and updated guidance for consultation has now been published.

### **What is new in the updated curriculum?**

Following the panel's advice, the DFE are introducing age limits, to ensure children aren't being taught about sensitive and complex subjects before they are ready to fully understand them.

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They are also making clear that the concept of gender identity – the sense a person may have of their own gender, whether male, female or a number of other categories – is highly contested and should not be taught. This is in line with the cautious approach taken in the guidance on gender questioning children.

Along with other factors, teaching this theory in the classroom could prompt some children to start to question their gender when they may not have done so otherwise, and is a complex theory for children to understand.

The facts about biological sex and gender reassignment will still be taught.

The guidance for schools also contains a new section on transparency with parents, making it absolutely clear that parents have a legal right to know what their children are being taught in RSHE and can request to see teaching materials.

In addition, the DFE are seeking views on adding several new subjects to the curriculum, and more detail on others. These include:

Suicide prevention

Sexual harassment and sexual violence

Loneliness

The prevalence of 'deepfakes'

Healthy behaviours during pregnancy, as well as miscarriage

Illegal online behaviours including drug and knife supply

The dangers of vaping

Menstrual and gynecological health including endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and heavy menstrual bleeding.

## **What are the age limits?**

In primary school, the DFE has stated that subjects such as the risks of online gaming, social media and scams should not be taught before year 3.

Puberty shouldn't be taught before year 4, whilst sex education shouldn't be taught before year 5, in line with what pupils learn about conception and birth as part of the national curriculum for science.

In secondary school, issues regarding sexual harassment shouldn't be taught before year 7, direct references to suicide before year 8 and any explicit discussion of sexual activity before year 9.

Ashlawn schools will be able to use the guidance as soon as it is approved and published later this year.



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Appendix 1:

Please click the link to view the curriculum journey for PSHE from Year 7 to Year 13

[PSHE Curriculum Journey 2024-2025](#)