

Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) Policy

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Version history

- ****1.0**** (Sept 2020) – New policy.
- ****1.1**** (Aug 2021) – Incorporation of additional DfE guidance including KCSIE Sept 2021.
- ****1.2**** (June 2022) – Incorporation of additional DfE guidance including KCSIE Sept 2022; updating of staff titles.
- **1.3** (Sept 2025) – Interim update reflecting DfE RSHE guidance published July 2025; early adoption ahead of statutory commencement on 1 September 2026; strengthened online safety/ AI and parent engagement provisions.

Introduction

Relationships and sex education is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It promotes understanding of loving, caring and respectful relationships and addresses sex, sexuality and sexual health. It does not promote sexual activity or any sexual orientation. All pupils will be made aware of key features of this policy, with particular attention to how these apply in the boarding environment.

Research indicates that comprehensive RSHE does not encourage earlier sexual activity; instead, it equips young people to make informed, safer choices.

Policy Aims

Bradfield's RSHE programme is framed by statutory guidance and good practice. It reflects the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance (2020) and is fully aligned with the Department for Education's RSHE guidance 2025, which is in force from 1 September 2025.

- Provide age-appropriate, accurate knowledge to which all pupils are entitled.

- Build self-esteem, confidence and respectful, safe relationships - including explicit teaching on consent.
- Develop communication and assertiveness skills to resist pressure (including online), assess risk and seek help.
- Ensure pupils know how to access confidential advice and support, and understand legal protections.
- Embed a whole-school approach to wellbeing and positive relationships, linked to safeguarding, online safety and behaviour policies.

Values Framework

Teaching reflects the importance of marriage (including same-sex marriage), stable relationships and family life, without stigmatising pupils based on home circumstances. We promote respect for difference (religion, culture, sexual orientation, disability, and social background) and the rights of individuals to make informed choices, with consent central to all sexual activity. Personal beliefs of staff will not influence RSHE teaching.

Curriculum Principles

In line with the DfE's 2025 guidance, our RSHE curriculum is developed and delivered according to seven guiding principles: engagement with pupils, engagement with parents, positivity, careful sequencing, relevance and responsiveness, skilled delivery, and a whole-school approach. These underpin curriculum planning, delivery, and evaluation.

- We will proactively consult pupils and respond to pupil voice to ensure RSHE meets real needs.
- We will consult parents, be transparent about content and resources, and publish our policy online.
- We will sequence learning to prepare pupils before they encounter risks.
- We will use skilled and trained staff, and vetted external providers and remain responsible for content and delivery.
- We will align RSHE with our safeguarding, digital safety and mobile devices policies, behaviour and assemblies programmes.

Curriculum Content

Across Falkners:

- Physical and emotional changes at puberty; looking after your body.
- Different types of relationships: friendships/romantic —on- and offline; assessing and resisting pressure.
- Respect, responsibility and consent in relationships (including online).
- Media influence (including social media) on expectations and self-perception.
- Digital safety and technology: public vs private online spaces; permanence/uncontrollability of shared content; glamorisation of harmful behaviours, scamming and trolling.

Across Shell and Fifth Form:

- Committed relationships (including marriage) and parenthood.
- Importance of consent in relationships.

- Prejudice/discrimination linked to characteristics.
- Accessing help/advice; consent and the law; STIs (incl. HIV); contraception including emergency contraception; alcohol/drugs and sexual decision-making.
- Understanding the impact of screen time and importance of managing it.
- Impact of isolation and loneliness on someone's emotions, feelings, and mental health.
- Mental health; including what it is, the broad spectrum it covers, and the common types of mental ill health such as anxiety and depression, including how to overcome anxiety and barriers to good mental health.
- Safely addressing issues such as eating disorders, self-harm and suicide prevention through mental Wellbeing curriculum.
- Types of abuse, including: harassment, sexual violence, manipulation, and coercive control.

Sixth Form

- Healthy relationships, love and care; consent and responsibilities in sexual activity/parenthood.
- Contraception and access to services; delaying sexual activity; abortion (informed, balanced discussion).
- Self-esteem, pornography literacy and legal issues (e.g. 'revenge porn').
- Sexual identity/complexity; peer pressure and risk-taking. Safer sex and STI awareness.
- Adult content & misogyny: how sexually explicit content can distort norms, disempower women and normalise harmful behaviour; recognising misogyny and links to violence against women and girls; discussing online 'incel' sub-cultures and influencers—challenge the belief, not the pupil.
- In accordance with our Safeguarding Policy, issues such as FGM and child sexual exploitation are addressed at appropriate points in the programme.
- Pregnancy related health such as fertility, miscarriages, pregnancy loss, and abortion.
- Prejudice/discrimination linked to sexual identity and orientation; body image and self-esteem.

Advice on Sexual Health

Specific personal sexual-health advice will not be offered in RSHE lessons. The Medical Centre is the primary source of confidential advice. There, pupils aged 16+ are seen confidentially; those under 16 may also be seen confidentially if deemed Gillick competent by health professionals. Referrals to external clinics may be arranged by Medical Centre staff; any transport organised by Matrons is treated as medically confidential and not shared with HsMs/tutors/parents unless there is a safeguarding concern. Pupils cannot self-request Matron transport without prior Medical Centre assessment.

Organisation and Delivery

RSHE is overseen by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), coordinated by the Head of Wellbeing, and delivered principally through the Wellbeing programme. Biological aspects of human reproduction and sexual health are taught within the Science curriculum. Whole-school moral and spiritual education is provided through Chapel and assemblies, with our core values reinforced by House staff and embedded in our 'Education for Life' principles. Teachers use accurate, age-appropriate,

anatomically correct language, while acknowledging commonly used terms to ensure clarity and inclusivity.

Teaching methods will include discussion, small-group work, case studies, media analysis (including social media), drama and role-play, with clear ground rules and distancing techniques to ensure a safe environment. Staff will answer questions professionally and may signpost further support where appropriate.

External contributors and due diligence: We may invite health professionals or vetted external organisations to contribute to lessons. The College retains responsibility for content and delivery; it will ensure external resources are accurate, age/stage-appropriate and unbiased, and external contributors will understand and follow our safeguarding policy and escalation routes, recognising the increased likelihood of disclosures following RSHE sessions.

Boarding context: The College is committed to preventative education that minimises risks of sexual harassment/violence within the boarding environment and promotes healthy relationships in Houses.

Support and Training

We will appoint staff with appropriate skills and provide ongoing training to ensure confident, expert delivery of RSHE. Staff with specific RSHE responsibilities identify and receive targeted CPD through INSET. Awareness-raising on RSHE and whole-school implications will be available to all staff. In line with 2025 guidance, we will ensure those delivering RSHE (including externals) have the knowledge, skills and confidence to create a safe, supportive environment and are briefed on our safeguarding obligations before sessions.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

We recognise that much RSHE occurs informally within families and seek to complement that learning. We will proactively consult parents on our curriculum, publish the RSHE policy online and respond positively to requests to view materials (including from external providers). Parents do not have a veto over curriculum content.

Withdrawal: Parents may request withdrawal from elements of sex education within RSHE (not from statutory Science). Parents wishing to withdraw should write to the Head Master. The Head will meet parents (and the pupil where appropriate) to explore concerns, explain benefits and potential detriments of withdrawal, and note that pupils may hear partial accounts from peers. Accurate records will be kept and the Head may refuse only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. safeguarding or specific vulnerabilities). From three terms before a pupil turns 16, the pupil may opt back in. Those withdrawing will be advised to provide appropriate home learning using DfE information. Annual reminders of approach and rights will be issued.

Equal Opportunities Statement

We provide RSHE to all pupils, with differentiation as appropriate to age and development, and responsiveness to culture, faith and family background. Objective discussion of diversity in relationships is integral, and prejudiced views - including those related to LGBTQ+ issues - will be challenged. Bullying related to sexual behaviour or perceived sexual orientation will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Contested views and impartiality: We will teach the facts and law about biological sex and gender reassignment and will not endorse any contested view as fact (e.g. we will not teach as fact that all people have a gender identity). We will not suggest that social transition is a simple solution to distress based on gender questioning. External materials that perpetuate stereotypes or advance partisan positions on contested topics will not be used. Respectful discussion is expected.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

Young people are entitled to confidentiality; however, staff cannot promise confidentiality where a safeguarding concern arises. Effective RSHE may lead to disclosures; staff will follow the College's safeguarding procedures and consult the DSL promptly (on a no-names basis if needed). The DSL will consider legal/safeguarding implications (including possible coercive control) and liaise with health professionals as appropriate.

The legal age of consent is 16. Sexual activity involving under-16s raises safeguarding/legal considerations; the justice system always responds where a child under 13 is involved. Staff must consult the DSL if they become aware that a pupil under 16 is (or is contemplating) sexual activity.

Online safety and filtering/monitoring: In line with KCSIE, our filtering and monitoring systems must be fit-for-purpose to protect pupils from harmful/inappropriate content on school systems and networks. The College uses the Securly system to filter and monitor pupils' digital activity during term time.

AI and youth-produced sexual imagery: Pupils will be taught that creating or sharing indecent images of children (including AI-generated imagery) is a criminal offence; deepfakes can be used maliciously and cause significant harm. Pupils will be taught risks and reporting routes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Policy and classroom delivery will be monitored as part of our regular self-review cycle, including:

- Lesson observations by Deputy Head Pastoral and Head of Wellbeing.
- Pupil evaluations of sessions and the programme (learning outcomes and delivery).
- Departmental evaluation linked to teacher feedback.

Evaluation also considers the seven guiding principles, responsiveness to emerging risks (including online/AI), and alignment with the whole-school approach to wellbeing and positive relationships.

Links to Other Policies and Documentation

- Equal Opportunities
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Confidentiality
- Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying
- Online Safety and Filtering/Monitoring
- Mobile Device Policy

Appendix

Under-16s' entitlement to confidential health advice and treatment

School nurses and health professionals may provide confidential advice/treatment to pupils under 16 if it is in the young person's best interests; they will strongly encourage parental involvement and only breach confidentiality where there is abuse, criminality or serious risk of harm, following local safeguarding procedures. In one-to-one work, Medical Centre staff follow professional guidelines; in lessons they follow the same guidelines as teachers. RSHE informs pupils about accessing confidential help (inside and outside school).

Safeguarding – legal reminders and online harms

- Age of consent: 16. Under-13s: justice system will always respond. Staff must refer concerns to the DSL.
- Pupils are taught key legal concepts and responsibilities (including the Online Safety Act, age of criminal responsibility, and Gillick competence) and routes to report harm. The College will use carefully vetted external expertise to support delivery.
- Where appropriate, pupils will be signposted to reputable resources that inform about sexual offences involving children and young people, including youth-produced sexual imagery.

Student support services available in school

The Medical Centre offers confidential health advice and support and works with Matrons, HsMs, House staff, the Deputy Head Pastoral and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, sharing information only where safeguarding requires it.