HANFORD PREP

Relationships and Sex Education Policy



Executive Summary

This policy outlines Hanford Prep's approach to the statutory requirements for teaching Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education. It also includes details of the right to withdraw from non-statutory components of RSE.

The appendices to this policy outline where RSE is taught within the Curriculum at Hanford Prep.

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Introduction

Hanford Prep ('Hanford' or 'the School') is a boarding and day school for girls aged 7 to 13. Our curriculum is in accordance with the School's aims, having regard to the academic capabilities and requirements of each pupil. There is a focus upon enhancement and extension - of working outside and beyond the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) syllabus - to enable each pupil to fulfil their potential.

Aims of the School

The aims of the School, as set out in the website, are:

- **Fulfilling potential** – to recognise the breadth of academic capabilities and requirements and enable each girl to do the very best that she can,

- **Nurturing talent** – to provide the opportunity, encouragement and support for each girl to pursue and expand her interests both within and beyond the classroom.
- **Valuing individuality** – to recognise that each girl develops at her own speed, with her own interests, abilities and needs; and to maintain the flexibility to respond accordingly
- **Encouraging respect** – to help the girls to look beyond themselves, to learn about living with others, being part of a wider group and taking care of each other's needs.
- **Cherishing childhood** – to provide the time, the opportunities and the environment for free play.

The teaching of RSE is fundamental to the School's achievement of its aims. The majority of the RSE teaching forms part of the PSHE curriculum as well as being studied during the broader syllabus within Art Appreciation, Biology, History and Religious Studies lessons.

As part of our commitment to cherishing childhood, it is always taught in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner.

Statutory Requirements

This policy reflects the Department for Education's statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, published in July 2025 and effective from 1 September 2026.

As an independent school, Hanford has regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State under Section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and Section 403 of the Education Act 1996, alongside its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Relationships Education is statutory for primary-aged pupils, while Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is statutory for secondary-aged pupils. At Hanford, RSE is delivered through our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programme, with relevant aspects also taught through the Science curriculum.

Hanford's RSE provision is fully aligned with the revised statutory guidance introduced in September 2026. Parents have been informed of the updated requirements and the school's approach to delivering age-appropriate RSE. They have been invited to attend a PSHE Parent Seminar to explain our approach and the requirements.

Definition of RSE

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is an important part of pupils' personal, social, health and economic education. It helps children and young people develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and values they need to form positive relationships, make informed decisions and keep themselves and others safe.

At Hanford, RSE is taught in a sensitive, inclusive and age-appropriate manner, reflecting the needs and maturity of the girls. It supports their emotional, physical, social and moral development and encourages self-respect, kindness, confidence and responsibility.

For pupils of primary age, Relationships Education focuses on the foundations of positive relationships, including friendships, family relationships, respect, kindness, personal boundaries and keeping safe, both online and offline.

For pupils of secondary age, RSE builds upon these foundations, developing a deeper understanding of healthy relationships, consent, personal responsibility, managing pressure, sexual health and making informed choices.

RSE plays a fundamental role in supporting the personal development and wellbeing of every girl at Hanford.

RSE includes:

- Learning about different types of relationships, including friendships, families and respectful, healthy relationships.
- Understanding how to build and maintain positive, supportive relationships and resolve disagreements appropriately.
- Recognising the importance of healthy relationships for emotional wellbeing, self-esteem and self-respect.
- Developing personal values, including kindness, honesty, respect, integrity, tolerance and consideration for others.
- Understanding equality, diversity and the importance of treating everyone with dignity and respect.
- Recognising that bullying, prejudice, discrimination and harassment are unacceptable.
- Understanding personal boundaries, consent and the right to feel safe and respected.
- Receiving accurate, age-appropriate information about physical and emotional development, puberty, reproduction and sexual health.
- Understanding how to recognise unhealthy relationships, inappropriate behaviour, pressure and abuse.
- Learning how to stay safe, including online, and how to seek help, report concerns and identify trusted adults.

Through RSE, Hanford aims to equip girls with the knowledge, confidence and skills to develop healthy relationships, make responsible decisions and approach the opportunities and challenges of growing up with resilience and self-respect.

Content

The content of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Hanford is delivered through our PSHE programme, with relevant aspects also taught within the Science curriculum.

Teaching is carefully planned and sequenced to ensure that it is age-appropriate and reflects the developmental needs and maturity of the girls.

Further details of the curriculum content, including the topics taught in each year group and their progression, are outlined in the school's PSHE curriculum overview, which accompanies this policy as an addendum.

Delivery of RSE

RSE forms an integral part of the PSHE curriculum at Hanford and reflects the core values and ethos of our school community. Its main aims are to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding, encourage informed opinions and positive attitudes, and nurture the values and skills needed to make responsible decisions and develop healthy relationships.

RSE is delivered in an age-appropriate, sensitive and inclusive manner. The curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced to ensure that knowledge and understanding develop progressively as the girls mature.

Years 3–6

In Years 3–6, the focus is on developing the foundations of positive and respectful relationships. Girls learn about friendships, family relationships, kindness, respect, personal boundaries and the importance of treating others with consideration. They explore emotions, managing disagreements, recognising inappropriate behaviour and knowing when and how to seek help.

Teaching also includes personal safety, online safety, healthy lifestyles, personal hygiene and the physical and emotional changes associated with growing up, including puberty and menstruation. Girls are encouraged to develop confidence, self-respect and an understanding of their right to feel safe and respected.

Years 7–8

In Years 7 and 8, RSE builds upon the foundations established in the younger years, with a greater focus on healthy relationships, consent, personal responsibility and making informed choices.

Girls develop their understanding of different types of relationships, including friendships and intimate relationships. They learn to recognise healthy and unhealthy behaviours, manage peer pressure and respect personal boundaries. Teaching also explores sexual orientation, developing feelings, sexual health and human reproduction, with an emphasis on age-appropriate understanding, personal safety, mutual respect and informed decision-making.

Online relationships, digital influences, harmful content and the importance of seeking support are also addressed in an age-appropriate manner.

The Wider School Curriculum

At Hanford, we recognise that:

- Questions relating to RSE may arise at any time and in any lesson or outside of lessons, and should be answered accurately, sensitively and in a manner appropriate to the age and understanding of the pupil.
- Children develop at different rates and may respond differently to discussions about sensitive or personal subjects.
- A supportive and respectful learning environment is essential, allowing girls to ask questions and develop their understanding without feeling pressured to share personal experiences.

For these reasons, Hanford adopts a holistic approach to PSHE and RSE, reflecting the values and ethos of the school, with staff encouraged to answer questions and discuss issues raised by girls as and when they arise, rather than being solely address during PSHE lessons.

Alongside dedicated PSHE lessons, relevant aspects of RSE are reinforced through other curriculum subjects, including Science, English, History, Religious Studies and Art Appreciation in particular.

This cross-curricular approach enables pupils to:

- Develop the knowledge, understanding and practical skills needed to make healthy, safe and informed choices, appreciating that they are not skills specific to PSHE lessons.
- Understand the importance of positive relationships, mutual respect, equality and kindness.
- Develop confidence, resilience and the ability to respond appropriately to personal, social and moral challenges.

- The RSE programme is further enriched through Chapel, Tutor Time, school trips, visiting speakers and the school's annual PSHE focus morning, which supports pupils' wellbeing.

Together, these opportunities help ensure that the principles of RSE are embedded throughout school life and contribute to the personal development and wellbeing of every girl at Hanford.

Inclusion, SEND and Individual Needs

At Hanford, we recognise that every girl is an individual, with her own learning needs, experiences and circumstances. We are committed to ensuring that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is accessible, inclusive and sensitive to the needs of all pupils.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and with regard to the SEND Code of Practice, the school ensures that pupils are not unlawfully discriminated against because of their protected characteristics. Teaching staff review the curriculum annually and ensure that appropriate adaptations and support are in place for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Lessons are adapted to meet individual learning needs, with teachers using appropriate resources, visual materials and differentiated activities. Staff recognise that some pupils with SEND may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation, bullying or abuse, and ensure that teaching provides them with the knowledge and skills needed to recognise risks, establish boundaries and seek help.

Hanford also recognises that pupils bring a wide range of personal experiences and circumstances to their learning. Some girls may have experienced bereavement, family separation, abuse, domestic violence, trauma or other challenging situations. Others may come from different family structures or backgrounds, and these experiences may influence how they respond to particular topics.

Staff approach sensitive subjects with care, empathy and an awareness of individual circumstances. Teaching is planned to be respectful and supportive, recognising that some topics may be particularly sensitive for individual pupils. No girl is expected to disclose personal experiences or discuss private family circumstances during lessons.

Where necessary, teachers work closely with the pastoral and safeguarding teams to provide appropriate support and adapt their approach to individual pupils. Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures are managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Through this inclusive and sensitive approach, Hanford aims to ensure that every girl feels safe, respected and supported, and has access to the knowledge and understanding needed to develop healthy relationships and make informed choices.

Managing difficult questions

At Hanford, we recognise that pupils may ask questions about relationships, growing up and other sensitive matters, both during RSE lessons and at other times throughout the school day. We aim to create a safe, supportive and respectful environment in which girls feel comfortable asking questions and seeking information.

Staff respond to questions honestly, sensitively and in an age-appropriate manner, taking into account the developmental stage, understanding and individual circumstances of the pupils.

We recognise that some questions may not be appropriate for discussion in a whole-class setting. In these circumstances, staff will explain that the question can be addressed separately and arrange for an appropriate member of staff to speak with the pupil individually.

Clear ground rules are established during RSE lessons to encourage respectful discussion and protect pupils' privacy. Girls are not expected to share personal experiences or disclose information about themselves or others.

Where a question or discussion raises a safeguarding concern, staff will follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL as appropriate.

Our approach ensures that pupils receive accurate, appropriate information while feeling safe, respected and supported.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for approving the RSE Policy and holding the Head accountable for its effective implementation.

The Governors will ensure that:

- The school meets its statutory responsibilities for Relationships and Sex Education.
- Pupils make progress towards the intended educational outcomes.
- RSE is effectively led, managed, planned and delivered.
- The quality of provision is regularly monitored and evaluated.
- Teaching is accessible to all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Parents are provided with clear information about the curriculum, teaching resources and their rights regarding withdrawal from Sex Education, where applicable.
- RSE is appropriately resourced, staffed and timetabled to ensure effective delivery.

The Head

The Head is responsible for ensuring that the RSE Policy is implemented effectively throughout the school and that provision meets statutory requirements.

The Head will support the PSHE/RSE Lead in ensuring that the curriculum is appropriately planned, delivered and reviewed, and that parents are informed about the school's approach to RSE.

The PSHE/RSE Lead

The PSHE/RSE Lead is responsible for overseeing the planning, delivery and development of the RSE curriculum across the school.

This includes:

- Ensuring that the curriculum reflects current statutory guidance and is appropriate to the age and needs of pupils.
- Supporting teaching staff with suitable resources and guidance.
- Monitoring and reviewing the quality and consistency of RSE provision.
- Ensuring that the curriculum is inclusive, sensitive and accessible to all pupils.
- Liaising with the Head, pastoral team and safeguarding staff where appropriate.

- Supporting communication with parents about RSE provision and curriculum content.

Teaching Staff

Staff responsible for delivering RSE are expected to:

- Deliver lessons in accordance with the school's RSE Policy and agreed curriculum.
- Create a safe, respectful and supportive learning environment.
- Adapt teaching to meet the individual needs and developmental stages of pupils.
- Respond to questions sensitively, accurately and appropriately.
- Respect pupils' privacy and maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Follow the school's safeguarding procedures where concerns or disclosures arise.
- Seek guidance from the PSHE/RSE Lead when necessary.

All staff contribute to promoting the values of respect, kindness, equality and healthy relationships through their interactions with pupils and their wider responsibilities within school life.

Parents' Right to Withdraw

At Hanford, Relationships Education is compulsory for all pupils, while Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is statutory for pupils of secondary age.

Parents have the right to request that their daughter be withdrawn from some or all of the Sex Education delivered as part of RSE. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or from content taught as part of the Science curriculum, including relevant teaching about puberty and reproduction.

For pupils in Years 3–6, requests to withdraw from Sex Education outside the Science curriculum will be granted.

For pupils in Years 7–8, parents may request withdrawal from some or all of the Sex Education elements of RSE. Such requests will normally be granted, although the Head may decline a request in exceptional circumstances, taking into account the individual needs and safeguarding considerations of the pupil.

Parents are provided with information about the RSE curriculum through the school's PSHE curriculum overview, which accompanies this policy as an addendum, and through communications from the school. Parents are also given opportunities to view teaching materials and discuss the curriculum with staff.

Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Head. The Head will arrange to discuss the request with parents, explaining the content and purpose of the teaching and considering any concerns raised. A record of the request, discussion and outcome will be retained in the pupil's educational record.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from Sex Education, the school will ensure that appropriate, purposeful alternative education is provided during the relevant lessons.

Consultation

Hanford recognises the importance of involving governors, staff, parents and pupils in the development and review of its Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy and curriculum.

The school is committed to maintaining open communication with parents, ensuring that they are informed about the RSE curriculum and have opportunities to view resources, ask questions and provide feedback.

Pupil voice is also valued, with girls encouraged to share their views and experiences of PSHE and RSE through age-appropriate discussions and feedback opportunities.

Staff and governors contribute to the ongoing review of the policy and curriculum, ensuring that provision remains appropriate, inclusive and in line with statutory guidance.

Feedback from the school community is considered when reviewing and developing RSE provision.

Training

Hanford recognises the importance of ensuring that staff delivering RSE have the knowledge, confidence and resources needed to teach the curriculum effectively.

Staff are supported through access to appropriate teaching resources, guidance and professional development opportunities. Additional training and support are provided where necessary, particularly in response to changes in statutory guidance or curriculum requirements.

Monitoring and Review

The delivery of RSE is overseen by the Head of PSHE and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The quality and effectiveness of provision are monitored through curriculum reviews, lesson observations where appropriate, staff feedback and pupil voice.

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in statutory guidance or the needs of the school community.

The views of governors, staff, parents and pupils are considered as part of the review process, and any proposed changes are made in accordance with statutory requirements.

Appendix 1: Summary of changes in Issue 2

- Updated reference to the latest statutory guidance (2025).
- Additional detail added on the sequencing of the curriculum, the way difficult questions are managed, and the opportunities for parents to discuss the content of the RSE curriculum.
- Minor rewording for clarity throughout.

Appendix 2: Letter to Parents – RSE in PSHE

Relationships Education is compulsory for all primary age pupils and Relationships and Sex Education is compulsory for all secondary age pupils (our Years 7 and 8). Parents in Years 7 and 8 are entitled to remove their daughter from the Sex Education component of the PSHE syllabus, but not if it forms part of the Science Curriculum. If you wish to remove your daughter from these PSHE lessons, please inform the Head of PSHE in writing.

We will be delivering the Relationships element of the curriculum throughout the school year and the sex education elements during the spring and summer term in an age appropriate, inclusive and sensitive manner. For Years 3 to 6, the emphasis will be on building and maintaining healthy and respectful relationships, including being and feeling in charge of your own body. In Years 7 and 8, there will be a focus on nurturing and developing healthy and stable relationships, and on an introduction to identity, sexuality and consent.

If you have any concerns or questions, please do get in touch with our Head of PSHE/Assistant Head Pastoral Similarly, if you have any comments on the attached policy, please contact the Deputy Head.

PSHE Curriculum Overview Years 3-8

Year	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 3/4	**Mental health and wellbeing** Self-regulation strategies and factors supporting wellbeing	**Exploring ways to manage risk** Assessing and managing risks, including peer influence and personal safety.	**Forming respectful relationships** Responding to conflict and bullying; understanding respect.	**Money matters and news literacy** Money choices and influences; interpreting news critically.	**Me, my body and growing up** Introduction to puberty-hygiene, privacy and personal safety.	**Families and growing together** Diverse family structures, changing families and committed relationships.
Year 5	**Friendships, stereotypes and bullying** Respectful friendships, bullying, stereotypes and prejudice.	**Mental health and wellbeing** Strategies for managing thoughts, emotions and supporting wellbeing.	**Positively engaging with our world** News literacy and the effects of climate change on emotions and wellbeing.	**Respecting boundaries** Personal boundaries, consent, permission and appropriate touch.	**Safe connections online** Puberty, Safe online socialising, online risk and cybercrime.	**Embedding healthy habits and learning first aid** Healthy habits, exercise, sun safety, goals and basic first aid.
Year 6	**Mental health and wellbeing** Self-regulation and wellbeing strategies, including coping with change, uncertainty and new situations.	**Managing money and online spending** Financial wellbeing, advertising, online spending and gambling-related risks.	**Changes in puberty** Puberty, increasing independence, relationships, sleep	**Drug education: assessing risk and managing influences** Legal and illegal drugs, risks, effects and media influences.	**Developing our understanding of AI** Generative AI, opportunities, rights, risks and manipulated images.	**Looking to the future** Career pathways, future opportunities, increasing responsibilities and preparing for transitions.

Year	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 7	**Emotional wellbeing: managing change and transition** Setting goals, developing social and emotional skills, managing stress and responding positively to change.	**Friendship and bullying** Healthy and unhealthy friendships, bullying and peer influence.	**Families and changing relationships** Family roles, caring relationships, separation, loss and change.	**Puberty, reproduction and keeping safe** Puberty, menstrual wellbeing, body health, human reproduction (including conception, pregnancy and birth), recognising and reporting abuse, and keeping safe.	**Influences on relationships** Media and online influences on relationships, conflict and consent.	**Financial decisions** Budgeting, spending decisions, financial risks and consumer choices.
Year 8	**Health and wellbeing** Healthy choices about food, physical activity, sleep and wider wellbeing.	**Personal safety and managing risk** Road and water safety, first aid, drugs, alcohol and nicotine.	**Belonging and community** Bias, stereotypes, discrimination, protected characteristics and inclusion. Respect for different relationships and sexual orientations.	**The online world** Algorithms, targeted content, financial harms and online manipulation.	**Healthy and unhealthy relationships** Healthy relationships, consent, harassment, image-sharing and gender-based violence; pornography and harmful online content; introductory contraception and sexual health, including where to seek advice.	**Managing money** Bank accounts, savings, borrowing and financial decision-making.

Appendix 3: RSE in Science

Topics covered in Science

IIIrd Form (Years 3-4)	IVth Form (Year 5)	Vth Form (Year 6)	LVI (Year 7)	UVI (Year 8)
	Human life cycle (Autumn)	Human egg cell to us How this relates to periods, as simply as possible.	Human reproduction taught with the context of loving relationships (Spring) The physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence (Spring) Family planning mentioned (Spring)	Discussion on sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS

Other opportunities to promote RSE

- During form times with form tutors' pupils have the opportunities to discuss many elements of the RSE curriculum as and when they occur which is relevant to them at that specific time.
- The nurses and boarding staff are always available to address the concerns or queries of pupils about sex and relationships.