Moorlands Learning Trust

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy for Primary Schools

	Position/Committee	Date
Prepared by	Executive Director	May 2026
Approved by	CEO	May 2026
To be Reviewed	CEO	July 2027 (to be reviewed earlier if there is a change in DfE guidance)

RATIONALE

This is the Trust's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Policy for primary schools, updated to reflect DfE Statutory Guidance published July 2025 (statutory from 1 September 2026). For information on secondary school provision, please see the Trust's separate RSHE policy for secondary schools.

At Moorlands Learning Trust, we are committed to delivering a high-quality, age-appropriate and evidence-based relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education curriculum that supports pupils' wellbeing, safety and personal development. Teaching is carefully sequenced and designed to meet pupils' developmental needs, preparing them for later learning while respecting childhood.

'Children and young people need knowledge and skills that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships. High quality, evidence-based teaching of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) can help prepare pupils for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life, and can promote their moral, social, mental and physical development. Effective teaching will support young people to cultivate positive characteristics including resilience, self-worth, self-respect, honesty, integrity, courage, kindness, and trustworthiness. Effective teaching will support prevention of harms by helping young people understand and identify when things are not right.' (DFE 2025)

RSHE supports pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to form positive relationships, keep themselves safe and understand how to seek help when needed.

Statutory Requirements

All Moorlands Learning Trust primary schools must provide relationships education and health education to all pupils and science-based sex education as part of the National Curriculum. Sex education beyond the science curriculum is not compulsory in primary schools and parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from this aspect. (See 'Right to withdraw' section below.) Schools clearly distinguish between statutory relationships and health education and any non-statutory sex education, including those elements from which parents have the right to request withdrawal.

In delivering RSHE, schools have regard to the Education Act 2002 (as amended), Children and Social Work Act 2017, Equality Act 2010, and DfE statutory RSHE guidance.

Aims of RSHE

The aims of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) at Moorlands Learning Trust primary schools are to:

- provide pupils with accurate, age-appropriate and evidence-based information
- support pupils' wellbeing, dignity and personal safety
- equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and confidence to form respectful, healthy relationships
- support pupils to understand and manage risk, seek help and keep themselves and others safe
- promote equality, respect and inclusion in line with the Equality Act 2010

Safeguarding and Prevention

This policy should be read alongside the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which is reviewed annually in line with the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). Together, these policies ensure that Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is a core element of the Trust's whole-school approach to safeguarding and child protection.

Relationships Education forms a key part of the Trust's safeguarding and prevention strategy. Through high-quality, age-appropriate teaching, pupils are supported to understand personal boundaries, recognise behaviours and situations that may make them feel unsafe or uncomfortable, and know how and where to seek help. This applies across all contexts, including online environments.

RSHE teaching encourages pupils to keep telling until they are heard and supports the prevention and identification of child-on-child abuse, including harmful sexual behaviour, in ways that are developmentally appropriate. This helps pupils to recognise behaviours that are not safe or appropriate, including in their interactions with others.

Any disclosures made by pupils are handled in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Detailed procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns, including child-on-child abuse, are set out in safeguarding and behaviour policies.

Policy Development
This policy has been developed in consultation with MLT staff and should be read in conjunction with each individual school's 'Handbook/Curriculum and Implementation Plan', and will be meaningfully consulted on with pupils, parents/carers and other key stakeholders.

Curriculum Intent
The primary RSHE curriculum focuses on the **foundations of healthy, respectful relationships**, including:

- friendships and family relationships
- respect, kindness and empathy
- personal boundaries and safety
- online awareness and digital safety
- physical and mental wellbeing

Teaching is factual, balanced and age-appropriate. RSHE does not promote sexual activity and supports pupils' moral, social, emotional and physical development. Online relationships are taught alongside face-to-face relationships, reinforcing that the same principles of respect, safety and responsibility apply in all contexts.
Building children's understanding and skills at primary, age-appropriately, is essential for preparing them for more complex content at secondary. Teaching recognises that children may encounter such content earlier than anticipated and supports pupils to respond safely.

Curriculum Content
By the end of primary school, pupils will have covered the following content:

Relationships Education

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful, kind relationships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe

Health Education

- General wellbeing
- Wellbeing online
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping
- Health protection and prevention
- Personal safety
- Basic first aid
- Developing bodies, including puberty and menstruation

Teaching will cover:

- understanding **healthy relationships**, including friendships, families and relationships with others; recognising kindness, respect, honesty and trust, and that families can take different forms
- recognising and maintaining **positive friendships**, including managing conflict and seeking support
- understanding **boundaries, privacy and personal safety**, including appropriate contact, recognising unsafe situations and knowing how to seek help and report concerns
- understanding how **relationships apply online**, including appropriate behaviour, sharing information and images, and basic privacy and safety
- recognising how **online activity and relationships affect wellbeing**, and developing safe and balanced use of technology
- understanding **emotions and wellbeing**, including recognising feelings, how relationships affect wellbeing, and developing resilience

- understanding the importance of **physical health**, including exercise, healthy eating, hygiene and routines that support wellbeing
- recognising **health risks**, including the harmful effects of substances such as drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping
- understanding **personal safety and risk management** in everyday contexts
- knowing how to respond in **basic first aid situations** and how to seek help
- understanding how bodies **grow and change**, including puberty and menstruation, in an age-appropriate way
- developing **confidence, resilience and independence**, including preparing for transition to secondary school

This content is delivered through a carefully sequenced curriculum. Schools are individually responsible for: setting out the subject content, how and when it will be taught, who is responsible for teaching it and any external providers or curriculum materials that will be used. Schools will proactively share a representative sample of RSHE resources with parents in advance of delivery to ensure full transparency.

Teaching and Learning Approach

Teaching will:

- Be inclusive, sensitive and developmentally appropriate
- Use a range of methods (discussion, stories, videos, practical activities)
- Encourage pupil voice and respectful dialogue
- Be adapted to meet pupils' individual needs, including SEND

Teachers will respond to questions honestly and sensitively, within the scope of the curriculum, and guide pupils to trusted adults where appropriate.

Across all key stages, pupils will be supported to develop the following skills as appropriate to their age:

- Communication skills
- Forming positive relationships including self-respect as well as respect and empathy for others
- Recognising and assessing potential risks
- Assertiveness and managing conflict and difficult emotions

MLT schools will make sure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of manageable size
- The required content is communicated to pupils clearly, in a carefully sequenced way and within a planned scheme of work
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge, so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations

Use of resources

Schools will consider whether any resources they plan to use:

- are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- are age-appropriate, given the age and maturity of the pupils
- are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- fit into our curriculum plan
- are from credible sources
- are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- are sensitive to pupils' experiences

Where external organisations or speakers are used to support RSHE, schools retain responsibility for the content delivered. They will ensure that any materials are appropriate and shared in advance and teachers will remain present during such sessions.

Parents and carers may view materials on request.

Sex Education in Primary

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, and there is no requirement for schools to have a separate sex education programme. Where taught (recommended in Year 5 and/or 6), any additional sex education (beyond the science curriculum) focuses on preparing pupils for puberty and understanding how a baby is conceived and born, taught in an age-appropriate and factual way. Statutory sex education content is delivered through the science curriculum.

Roles
The **local governing board** is responsible for holding the headteacher to account for this policy's implementation.

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, governing boards should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes
- teaching is accessible to all pupils with SEND
- curriculum content and teaching materials are aligned with this statutory guidance
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content, teaching materials and external providers, and on the right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education

The **Headteacher** is responsible for making sure that RSE is taught consistently across the school, for sharing all resources and materials with parents and carers, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory sex education.

Staff
Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a way that is sensitive, high-quality and appropriate for each year group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSHE
- Modelling positive behaviour and avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and being conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

Staff Training
Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE as part of their induction and it is included in the schools' continuing professional development calendars.

The headteacher (or other staff as authorised by them) may invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE.

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

Working with Parents/Carers

<u>The role of parents</u>

The MLT schools are aware that the primary role in a child's relationship, sex and health education lies with parents and carers. We pride ourselves on having a positive and supporting relationship with all parents as a result of thorough mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective, we:

- proactively engage parents
- inform parents about the schools' policy, practices and curriculum content
- communicate with parents about how we teach RSHE education in school. By doing this the aim is that we support each other in delivering the key messages that children need to be aware of
- answer any questions that parents may have about the RSHE education of their child
- take seriously any issue that parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy or the arrangements for RSHE education in the school

At the point of delivery of each new year group's curriculum, the school will consult parents and carers, and their views will be taken into account. This process should include offering parents support in talking to their children about sex education and how to link this with what is being taught in school.

Right to withdraw

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from all or part of sex education provided at school except for those elements which are part of the statutory National Curriculum (science). Those parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited in to see the Headteacher, who will explore any concerns and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. Once a child has been withdrawn, they cannot take part in the sex education programme until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

Children cannot be withdrawn from the relationships and health parts of the RHSE education programme as this is statutory.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the head teacher. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's file so that a parent's wishes are on record. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from lessons (or parts of lessons) at parent's request.

Dealing with difficult questions

Ground rules are essential to provide an agreed structure to answering sensitive or difficult questions.
Any difficult questions which staff feel are more appropriate for discussion at home are addressed by encouraging the children to discuss these with their parents. There is clear communication with parents about any unanswered questions in school so these can be answered as parents feel is appropriate.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality within the classroom is an important component of relationships, sex and health education, and teachers are expected to respect the confidentiality of their pupils as far as is possible. Teachers will, however, alert the Headteacher/ Designated Safeguarding Leader about any suspicions of inappropriate behaviour or potential abuse as per the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Equality, Inclusion and SEND

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, with teaching that is inclusive, non-stigmatising and sensitive to the diverse home circumstances and support networks of pupils within the Trust. Teaching promotes equality, dignity and respect for all, in line with the Equality Act 2010, and challenges discrimination and stereotyping.

Schools make reasonable adjustments to ensure accessibility for pupils with SEND and recognise that some pupils may require more explicit teaching, additional support or alternative approaches to learning. RSHE is inclusive of all pupils and seeks to support their understanding, safety and wellbeing. Schools recognise that pupils with SEND and other additional needs may be more vulnerable and ensure that teaching is sufficiently explicit and reinforced to support their safety and understanding.

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences
- During lessons, makes pupils feel:
  - Safe and supported
  - Able to engage with the key messages

We will also:

- Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in:
  - A whole-class setting
  - Small groups or targeted sessions
  - 1-to-1 discussions
  - Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of adaptation needed

Links with other policies
This policy is linked with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Equality
- Online Safety
- Behaviour
- SEND

Monitoring and review
The effectiveness of the RSHE programme of study will be evaluated by assessing children's learning and implementing change if required.

Each school's Local Governing Body will monitor the implementation of this policy regularly. The Governors give serious consideration to any comments from parents about the sex education programme and make a record of all such comments in the event of there being any comments raised.

Consultation
Each school is required to consult with parents on this policy each time they consult on their RSHE curriculum content. There is no statutory timeframe for review and as such schools should ensure that they consult with parents (including this policy) whenever there is a major change to proposed RSHE curriculum content or approach.