Educate U

Relationship, Sex & Health Education (RSHE) Policy

Approved by: Susan Evans Director of Education	**Date:** 01/04/2021
Last reviewed on: 10/08/2021, 01/09/22, 01/09/2023 (Sarah Paoletti) , 19/03/24 (Sarah Paoletti) , 12/03/25 (Sarah Paoletti) 04/09/2025 (M. Reeves), 11/03/26 (Sarah Paoletti), 01/11/26 (Sarah Paoletti, Executive Headteacher)	
Next review date: 01/11/27	

RSHE Policy

Introduction

This RSHE policy has been shaped in alignment with Educate U's distinct vision, values, and curriculum policy.

Our RSHE curriculum is designed to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to lead safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives. This provision is firmly rooted in Educate U's values, which guide both the content and delivery of lessons, ensuring that learning takes place in a supportive and purposeful environment.

- **Safety** – Lessons are delivered in a secure and supportive space, allowing pupils to explore sensitive topics with confidence, knowing their wellbeing is prioritised.
- **Trust** – Respectful relationships between staff and pupils create the conditions for honest discussion, active listening, and mutual understanding.
- **Choice** – Pupils are encouraged to express their views, consider different perspectives, and develop informed decision-making skills.
- **Collaboration** – Learning activities promote teamwork and empathy, encouraging pupils to learn with and from one another in a spirit of shared responsibility.
- **Empowerment** – Pupils build the knowledge, confidence, and resilience to apply their learning meaningfully in their everyday lives and future relationships.

By embedding Educate U's values into RSHE, our curriculum not only meets statutory requirements but also reflects our commitment to nurturing thoughtful, respectful, and well-prepared young people.

The policy has been updated in line with the DfE Relationships, Sex and Health Education Statutory Guidance (July 2025), which replaces the 2019 guidance and becomes mandatory from September 2026. It incorporates the seven guiding principles introduced in 2025: engagement with pupils, engagement with parents, positivity, careful sequencing, relevant and responsive content, skilled delivery, and a whole-school approach.

Our RSHE curriculum reflects strengthened national expectations around safeguarding, online safety (including emerging digital and AI-related risks), personal and financial safety, inclusion and diversity in family life, and mental health and wellbeing. 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, remain the statutory foundation.

At Educate U, RSHE contributes to our duty to safeguard children and prepare them for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. It is delivered in an age-appropriate and needs-sensitive way, tailored to our pupils, and designed to complement the role of parents and carers as the first educators of their children.

What's New in 2025 Guidance (compared to 2019)

- Seven Guiding Principles introduced (pupil voice, parent engagement, positivity, sequencing, relevance, skilled delivery, whole-school approach).
- Safeguarding and Online Safety now explicitly covers AI-related risks, deepfakes, pornography, misogyny, and harmful online cultures (e.g. incel/manosphere).
- Personal Safety broadened to include water, road, fire, and railway safety.
- Financial Safety now includes gambling, scams, gaming monetisation, and financial exploitation.
- Mental Health clarified: normalising emotions (e.g. worry, low mood), understanding grief/loss, teaching about mental health conditions factually, and suicide prevention (secondary).
- Inclusion and Diversity extended to reflect same-sex parents, single parents, foster, adoptive, and kinship carers.
- Sex and Gender Law must be explained clearly and neutrally, with no specific ideology taught as fact.
- Policy Transparency requires clear curriculum sequencing, who teaches what, and how parents can view materials or exercise withdrawal rights (secondary only).

Definition

RSHE at Educate U revolves around the emotional, social, and cultural development of pupils, emphasising relationships, sexual health, diversity, and personal identity. This school defines 'healthy relationships and sex education' (RSHE) as the holistic understanding of emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality, and sexual health. The primary focus is on fostering healthy, consensual, and safe relationships.

Aims of the RSHE Policy

This policy underlines Educate U's commitment to RSHE, intending to:

- Establish a basis for sensitive discussions.
- Prepare pupils for puberty and instil an understanding of sexual development.
- Nurture self-respect, confidence, and empathy.
- Foster a positive culture around sexuality and relationships.
- Enable pupils to distinguish between healthy and distorted/harmful relationships.
- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Equip pupils with correct vocabulary and self-understanding.
- Encourage appropriate behaviour patterns and prevent exploitation.
- Address vulnerabilities and promote understanding of potential risks.

Our main aim is to safeguard students, equipping them with knowledge and skills to stay safe and prepare for adult life. We tailor RSHE to pupils' needs, abilities, and experiences, recognising that maintaining friendships and relationships can be particularly challenging. Through our vision, values, and teaching, we promote tolerance and respect for all cultures, faiths, and lifestyles, underpinned by robust safeguarding policies.

We also ensure all students are prepared for life in modern Britain, in a safe and supportive learning environment. Bullying and derogatory behaviour are not tolerated, and our curriculum ensures that pupils receive accurate information to make positive, healthy choices, particularly where parents may feel less confident discussing these topics.

Key Objectives

Content and delivery

The RSHE curriculum at Educate U spans all Key Stages (1–5), from Year 1 to Year 13,

Our curriculum is planned and delivered through the PSHE Association Framework, including resources from the Medway Public Health Directorate, ensuring no repeated learning and age-appropriate materials. It reflects the strengthened expectations of the DfE 2025 Statutory RSHE Guidance, ensuring pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain.

RSHE provides lifelong learning about physical, moral, and emotional development, covering relationships, diversity, respect, healthy lifestyles, safety, body changes, reproduction, and birth in a sensitive, age-appropriate way.

In primary class, we build foundational knowledge and skills, which are developed further at secondary level. Students are grouped into age- phases to ensure precise outcomes are taught sensitively, and in the correct sequence of learning

The curriculum equips pupils with the knowledge and skills to:

- **Communication and Relationships**
    - Communicate effectively and respectfully in different contexts.
    - Build assertiveness, empathy, self-respect, and decision-making skills.
    - Understand and practise consent and recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- **Safeguarding and Online Harms**
    - Recognise and critically evaluate risks from online platforms, including misinformation, disinformation, and harmful online cultures.
    - Understand new and emerging risks such as AI-generated content (deepfakes), fake accounts, and harmful chatbot interactions.
    - Develop strategies for staying safe online and seeking trusted help when needed.
- **Challenging Harmful Attitudes and Misogyny**
    - Explore the impact of misogyny, pornography, and harmful gender stereotypes.
    - Recognise the influence of extremist online cultures (e.g. incel and “manosphere” ideologies) and learn how to counter them with positive role models and inclusive values.
- **Personal and Financial Safety**
    - Assess and manage risks in physical environments (roads, water, fire, and railways).
    - Recognise financial risks, including gambling, scams, online exploitation, and gaming monetisation.
    - Develop financial literacy to make informed, responsible decisions.
- **Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health**
    - Develop resilience and emotional literacy, recognising that feelings such as worry or sadness are a normal part of life.
    - Learn about grief, loss, and loneliness, and how to access support.
    - Understand factual information about common mental health conditions without encouraging self-diagnosis.

- In secondary settings, engage in age-appropriate discussions on suicide prevention in partnership with trained professionals.

- **Inclusion and Diversity**
  - Appreciate and respect different family structures, including single-parent, adoptive, foster, kinship, and same-sex families.
  - Understand how respect and inclusivity underpin healthy relationships and community life.

- **Legal Context of Sex and Gender**
  - Learn about the law relating to biological sex, gender reassignment, and equality in a clear, factual, and neutral way.
  - Understand rights and responsibilities under UK law without presenting any contested beliefs as fact.

Our RSHE provision supports pupils to become safe, confident, and responsible individuals. It contributes to our statutory duty to safeguard children and to prepare them for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Below is a current list of topics covered by our RSHE

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Changing and growing (CG)

CG1 Baby to Adult

CG2 Changes at puberty

CG3 Dealing with touch

CG4 Different types of relationships

Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5

Changing and growing (CG)

CG1 Puberty

CG2 Friendship

CG3 Healthy/Unhealthy relationship behaviours

CG4 Intimate relationships, consent and contraception

CG5 Long-lasting relationships and parenthood

For Key Stage 5 learners, RSHE is adapted to be age-appropriate and personally relevant. It focuses on preparing learners for adult life, covering healthy relationships, sexual

health, mental wellbeing, financial literacy, independent living, employment, further education, civic responsibilities, and community participation. Content is delivered through a combination of dedicated lessons, workshops, practical scenarios, and external partnerships, ensuring a holistic and functional approach to lifelong learning.

Working with Parents and Carers

Educate U recognises the joint responsibility of parents, the school, and the community in RSHE. The policy encourages collaboration, offering parents insight into the RSHE curriculum, opportunities to discuss it, and view resources. The school aims to accommodate various religious and cultural views, and develop good relationships with parents and carers.

Parents and carers are crucial stakeholders, and we value their input. Parents will be shown the key resources (PowerPoints and videos) for their children in advance of sessions starting.

Addressing concerns about online exposure, early puberty, and potential trauma triggers, we approach topics with extra care, supporting students experiencing difficulties. Building trust is crucial, and we collect questions anonymously to facilitate open communication both from our children and young people and their families.

Parental Right to Withdraw from Relationships and Sex Education lessons

In Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (secondary education) parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from part or all aspects of sex education within statutory RSHE. Before granting such a request, the head teacher will discuss it with the parents and, where appropriate, with the child to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the purpose of the curriculum. Educate U will document this process and outline the benefits of receiving sex education, as well as any potential drawbacks of withdrawal, such as social or emotional effects and the risk of misinformation from peers. These concerns may be mitigated if parents choose to provide sex education at home.

Educate U will respect withdrawal requests up to three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education, the school will ensure they have access to it. The same process applies to pupils with SEND, though exceptional circumstances may require additional consideration of their specific needs.

In primary education at Educate U, the head teacher will grant withdrawal requests for any sex education that is not part of the science curriculum. The Headteacher will approve any request from parents to withdraw their child from sex education in primary school, except for content covered in the science curriculum.

If a pupil is withdrawn, the school will provide alternative, meaningful education during this time. However, there is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

The process for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is the same as for all other pupils. However, in exceptional cases, the head teacher may consider a pupil's specific needs related to their SEND when making decisions.

Parental Involvement for young people in KS5
For learners aged 16–17, parents are informed about curriculum content and may be consulted, though withdrawal rights are limited. For learners aged 18, parental withdrawal rights do not apply. Learners are encouraged to engage in RSHE discussions independently, with alternative support provided where necessary.

Sensitivity to children and young people with SEND and Trauma

Given Educate U's focus on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), the RSHE curriculum is personalised, will be flexible for adaptive learning, and sensitive to individual learners. It acknowledges the vulnerability of learners, adapting content to be age, developmental and physical appropriateness.

As an adoption-friendly school, we are sensitive to children's history, trauma experiences, and physical disabilities, ensuring inclusivity. External agencies may be engaged to provide credible and inclusive perspectives.

At Educate U, emotional well-being and high-quality learning are top priorities, central to our vision and purpose. We prioritise nurture and connection as the building blocks for reducing school-based anxiety and creating a safe space for learning and resilience. Recognising the unique needs of our pupils, we operate as a relational school, placing relationships at the core of our approach.

Safeguarding and Vulnerability (Students aged 18)
For learners aged 18, staff follow the Safeguarding Adults and Vulnerable Adults Policy. Adult learners with care or support needs are considered under the Care Act 2014. Disclosures during RSHE are managed in line with adult safeguarding procedures, ensuring learner safety while respecting their legal adult status. Staff are trained to maintain appropriate boundaries, confidentiality, and referral procedures.

Mental Health and Wellbeing
At Educate U, we place a strong emphasis on supporting pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing as part of RSHE. In line with the DfE 2025 guidance, our curriculum develops pupils' emotional literacy, resilience, and coping strategies, helping them to recognise that feelings such as worry, sadness, or stress are a normal part of life.

Pupils learn to articulate emotions, seek support from trusted adults, and understand factual information about common mental health conditions without encouraging self-diagnosis.

Teaching also addresses grief, loss, and loneliness. Across all Key Stages, the focus is on normalising discussions, reducing stigma, and equipping pupils with lifelong skills to maintain positive wellbeing.

RSHE for KS5 continues to develop emotional literacy, coping strategies, and resilience. Learners explore stress management, emotional regulation, grief and loss, and peer and professional support networks. Teaching is sensitive to SEND, trauma, and developmental stage, promoting lifelong wellbeing and responsible decision-making.

Legal and Neutral Presentation

In accordance with the DfE 2025 RSHE guidance, Educate U ensures that teaching on sensitive and contested issues, such as biological sex and gender reassignment, is delivered in a clear, factual, and legally accurate manner.

Content is taught neutrally, without promoting any particular ideology or viewpoint as fact, and pupils are supported to understand their rights and responsibilities under UK law. This approach enables pupils to engage critically and respectfully with different perspectives while safeguarding inclusivity and ensuring compliance with statutory requirements.

Emerging Trends

The RSHE policy remains dynamic, addressing emerging trends such as TikTok and real-life implications. Speakers with real-life experiences or external agencies may be invited to provide reliable information.

County Lines and Risky Behaviour

Concerns related to County Lines and risky behaviours are addressed, considering the specific needs and vulnerabilities of our students. The policy addresses the vulnerability of students to exploitation, emphasising love, care, attention, and acceptance. Guidelines are established to prevent inappropriate disclosures in public settings.

Implementation Timeline

The updated RSHE policy and curriculum have been developed in line with the DfE Statutory Guidance (July 2025), which becomes mandatory from September 2026. Educate U has established the following implementation plan to ensure readiness and consistency across all Key Stages:

- Autumn 2025 – Initial staff briefing on the 2025 RSHE guidance; audit of existing curriculum against new requirements (online harms, misogyny, financial safety, mental health, legal context of sex and gender).
- Spring 2026 – Curriculum adjustments drafted and trialled in selected year groups; staff training on sensitive content (e.g. AI-related online harms, mental health, and gender/sex law). Materials made available for parent review.

- Summer 2026 – Finalised schemes of work, teaching resources, and assessment frameworks approved by SLT and governors. Whole-school CPD delivered to ensure consistent practice.
- September 2026 – Full statutory implementation across all year groups, with age-appropriate sequencing in line with the new guidance. Parents informed of updated provision and withdrawal rights where applicable.

Policy Review and Update

The RSHE policy is annually reviewed and updated to stay current with emerging trends and evolving student needs. Parental involvement through periodic meetings ensures ongoing collaboration.

Educate U's Trauma-Informed RSHE Policy aims to create a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment, building healthy relationships and preparing students for adulthood in a mindful and individualised manner.