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Greater Manchester Education Trust

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

V2.0

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Approval History

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		V1.0	On website from September 2022
Performance Board	6/2/2025	V1.1	Responsible colleagues added

Revision History

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Owner/Editor
26/01/26		The policy wording has been updated to consistently use the term “ PSHE and RSE ” throughout, ensuring clarity and alignment with Trust-wide terminology. Additional detail has been added to the organisation and delivery section , strengthening guidance on curriculum structure, inclusion, safeguarding, and the use of external agencies.	Alex Reed – LHS

CONTENTS

1. Purpose of the Policy	5
2. Principles and Values	5
3. The aim of PSHE including RSE.....	5
4. The elements of PSHE including RSE.....	6
5. Organisation and Content of PSHE including RSE.....	7
6. Inclusion	9
7. Right of Withdrawal of Students from Sex Education	9
8. Confidentiality, Controversial and Sensitive Issues	9
9. Monitoring and Evaluation of PSHE including RSE.....	10
10. Assessment	10
11. Consultation and Training	11
12. Monitoring and Evaluation	11
13. Policy Review	11
14. Links with other Policies	11
Appendix 1 PSHE and RSE Curriculum Information for parents/carers April 2025	13

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

1.1 PSHE, including Relationships and Sex Education, is lifelong learning that supports pupils' physical, emotional, social, moral, and personal development. It helps pupils understand the importance of stable and caring relationships, respect, empathy and responsibility within family and wider community life. It involves gaining accurate information, developing key life skills, and forming positive beliefs, values and attitudes.

2.0 PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

2.1 Greater Manchester Education Trust schools believe that PSHE and RSE should:

- Promote respect, equality, and diversity in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Support safeguarding and resilience while fostering independence and responsibility.
- Encourage partnership with parents/carers and the wider community.
 - Provide a safe environment for discussion and reflection, with clear ground rules for sensitive topics.
 - Be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and continue into adult life.
 - Be an entitlement for all young people
 - Encourage every student to contribute to make our community and aims to support each individual as they grow and learn.
 - Be set within this wider school context and support family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g. nuclear family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of different approaches.
 - Encourage students, teachers and facilitators to share and respect each others' views. We are aware of different approaches to sexual orientation, without promotion of any particular family structure. The important values are love, relationship, respect and care for each other.
 - Generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
 - Recognise that parents/carers are the key people in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents/carers and students, informing them about the content of programmes.
 - Recognise that the wider community has much to offer and we aim to work in partnership with health professionals, social workers, peer educators and other mentors or advisers.

ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY

PSHE and RSE is delivered through a flexible and inclusive programme that may include:

- Timetabled lessons led by trained staff, ensuring consistency and depth across all strands of the curriculum.
- Drop-down days and enrichment activities, offering immersive opportunities for students to explore complex themes in greater detail through interactive workshops and collaborative projects.
- Assemblies and tutor time, which reinforce key messages, encourage reflection, and provide space for discussion on issues relevant to students' lives.
- Cross-curricular links with subjects such as Science, PE, and Computing, embedding PSHE and RSE principles into wider learning and demonstrating their real-world application.

The curriculum follows a spiral approach, revisiting key concepts at increasing levels of complexity to ensure age-appropriate progression from Year 7 onwards. All delivery is underpinned by clear ground rules to create a safe and respectful learning environment, particularly when addressing sensitive topics.

Where appropriate, external agencies and specialist providers may contribute to the programme, enriching learning with expert knowledge and practical guidance. All external involvement is carefully vetted and delivered in line with safeguarding protocols.

Teachers receive ongoing professional development to maintain confidence and consistency in delivering PSHE and RSE content. Lessons are designed to be inclusive of SEND learners, with differentiated resources and strategies to ensure accessibility for all students.

3.0 THE AIM OF PSHE and RSE

3.1 The aim of PSHE and RSE is to provide balanced factual and age-appropriate information about human reproduction, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our PSHE and RSE programme aims to prepare students for an adult life in which they can:

- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour; have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want
- understand what consent means and factors which influence one's ability to consent
- understand the consequences of their actions in relation to the law and behave responsibly within sexual and pastoral relationships
- avoid being exploited or exploiting others or being pressured into unwanted or unprotected sex
- communicate effectively by developing appropriate terminology for sex and relationship issues
- develop awareness of their sexuality and understand human sexuality; challenge sexism and prejudice and promote equality and diversity
- understand the arguments for delaying sexual activity

- understand the reasons for having protected sex
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and, where they have one, their partner from uninvited/unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections including HIV
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access confidential health advice, support and treatment if necessary
- know how the law applies to sexual relationships, consent and sexual harassment

4.0 **THE ELEMENTS of PSHE and RSE**

PSHE and RSE in our Trust schools has three main elements:

4.1 **Attitudes and Values**

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience and moral choices;
- learning the value of family life, stable and loving relationships, and marriage;
- learning about the nurture of children; and the roles and responsibilities of parents
- learning the value of respect, love and care;
- exploring, considering and understanding moral dilemmas;
- developing critical thinking as part of decision-making
- challenging myths, misconceptions and false assumptions about normal behaviour.

4.2 **Personal and Social Skills**

- learning to manage emotions and relationships confidently and sensitively;
- developing self-respect and empathy for others;
- learning to make choices with an absence of prejudice;
- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made;
- managing conflict;
- empower students with the skills to be able to avoid inappropriate pressures or advances (both as exploited or exploiter)

4.3 **Knowledge and Understanding**

- learning and understanding physical development at appropriate stages;
- understanding human sexuality, reproduction, sexual health, emotions and relationships;
- learning about contraception and the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services;
- learning the reasons for delaying sexual activity, and the benefits to be gained from such delay;
- the avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.

5.0 **ORGANISATION AND CONTENT OF PSHE and RSE**

Greater Manchester Education Trust schools deliver each school's PSHE and RSE Programme in Deep Learning Days/Focus Days/Drop Down Days, through targeted sessions, the tutor programme, assemblies, Science lessons at KS3 and KS4 and other

curriculum areas (eg. Drama, English). Each school's implementation for delivery is catered to their cohort and pupils' needs.

5.1 Statutory Provision in the National Curriculum

All students must study sex education within the KS3 and KS4 Science curricula.

Key Stage 3

- reproduction in humans (as an example of a mammal), including the structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems, menstrual cycle (without details of hormones), gametes, fertilisation, gestation and birth, to include the effect of maternal lifestyle on the foetus through the placenta
- reproduction in plants, including flower structure, wind and insect pollination, fertilisation, seed and fruit formation and dispersal, including quantitative investigation of some dispersal mechanisms

Key Stage 4

- communicable diseases including sexually transmitted infections in humans (including HIV/AIDs)
- reducing and preventing the spread of infectious diseases in animals and plants
- principles of hormonal coordination and control in humans
- hormones in human reproduction, hormonal and non-hormonal methods of contraception

5.2 PSHE and RSE– Provision Across the Curriculum

Key Stage 3

- Confidence and self-esteem.
- Mental wellbeing
- Resilience
- The risks related to unprotected sex.
- Features of positive and stable relationships.
- Marriage, civil partnerships and family life.
- The arguments for delaying sexual activity and resisting pressure.
- Gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Diversity in sexual attraction.
- How the law applies to sexual relationships.
- ICT – safe management of own and other's personal images.
- Keeping safe online
- The link between sex and other risk-taking behaviour including substance use.
- Managing feelings
- Same sex relationships
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage/ honour-based violence/abuse

Key Stage 4

- Confidence and self-esteem.

- Mental wellbeing
- Resilience
- Keeping safe online
- The benefits of positive, strong, supportive, equal relationships.
- Living together, marriage and civil partnerships.
- Implications of young parenthood and parenting skills.
- Managing changes in personal relationships.
- Domestic abuse.
- How to access organisations for support and advice.
- Diversity in sexual attraction and developing sexuality.
- Recognising the impact of drugs and alcohol on choices and sexual behaviour.
- Assessing the correct use of contraception.
- Abortion.
- Assessing the readiness for sex.
- Consent
- Positive relationships
- Forced marriage/ honour-based violence/abuse

Key Stage 5

A level biology:

- Embryogenesis and its genetic control
- Communicable diseases and their prevention
- Detailed genetics of inheritance
- Meiosis and gametogenesis
- Reproductive strategies in a variety of organisms

BTEC applied science:

- Specialisation of gametes
- Genetic diseases and inheritance
- Communicable diseases and their prevention

Any PSHE and RSE delivery may consider questions or issues that some students will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson. When students ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly, within the ground rules established at the start of the sessions. When it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the development of the rest of the students, the question may be dealt with individually at another time.

6.0 INCLUSION

We will ensure that all young people receive PSHE and RSE and we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all our students, taking specialist advice where necessary.

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate question and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that PSHE and RSE is relevant to them.

6.1 Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Teaching and resources will be adapted as appropriate to address the needs of these children, in order for them to have full access to the content of relationship and sex education.

6.2 Ethnic Groups

We intend our policy to be sensitive to the needs of different ethnic groups. We will reply to parental requests and concerns.

6.3 Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate question and offer support. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality need to feel that PSHE and RSE is relevant to them.

7.0 RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM SEX EDUCATION

Sex education in secondary schools is a statutory component of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). It focuses on teaching pupils the facts and principles about human sexuality:

- Human reproduction and sexual health
- Contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- The law relating to sexual behaviour and consent
- The emotional, social, and physical aspects of sexual relationships

The aim is to ensure pupils have accurate knowledge to make informed decisions, maintain personal safety, and understand the responsibilities and consequences associated with sexual activity. Sex education is taught in an age-appropriate, inclusive, and sensitive manner, reflecting safeguarding principles and promoting respect for all.

(Adapted from Department for Education statutory guidance, 2025)

- Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE.
- Before granting any request, a member of Senior Leadership (or their nominated representative) will discuss the request with parents and, where appropriate, the child, to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum and explain potential impacts of withdrawal. Requests may be refused only in exceptional circumstances.
- From three terms before a pupil turns 16, the pupil may opt back into sex education: for example, if a pupil turns 16 during the autumn term, the pupil can opt back into sex education at any time after the start of the previous autumn term.
- Parents cannot withdraw pupils from relationships or health education, nor from science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction.

8.0 CONFIDENTIALITY, CONTROVERSIAL AND SENSITIVE ISSUES

PSHE and RSE is conducted in a safe learning environment. Students are not expected to discuss their own personal issues. No one (teacher/facilitator or student) should be expected to answer a personal question and no one will be forced to take part in a discussion.

Teachers/facilitators will attempt to answer students' questions and concerns in a sensitive, age and development appropriate manner. Individual teacher/facilitators will use their skill and discretion in these situations and if necessary refer to the PSHE and RSE Co-ordinator, Child Protection team or other multi agency link for advice and support.

Teachers/facilitators will also follow the following guidance:

- Teachers/facilitators will establish clear parameters about what is appropriate and inappropriate in a whole-class setting.
- If a student's question is inappropriate to address with the whole class the teachers and facilitators should acknowledge the question and attend to it later, on an individual basis.
- If a question is too personal the teacher/facilitator should remind the students of the ground rules.
- Teachers/facilitators will set the tone ensuring that students discuss issues in a way which encourages thoughtful participation.
- If a teacher/facilitator is concerned that a student is at risk of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding and Child Protection team should be informed and the usual child protection procedures followed.
- Teachers/facilitators cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.

In a case where a teacher/facilitator learns from an under 16-year-old that they are having or contemplating sexual intercourse:

- the young person will be persuaded, wherever possible, to talk to parent/carer and if necessary to seek medical advice.
- the young person will be properly counselled about contraception, including precise information about where young people can access contraception and advice services.
- If a teacher/facilitator is concerned that a student is at risk, the member of staff will follow the school's Child Protection protocol, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed, and the school safeguarding procedures should be followed.

Where Child Protection procedures are followed, the teacher/facilitator will ensure that the young person understands that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first.

Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct in a one-to-one situation with an individual student, but in a classroom situation they must follow the school's confidentiality policy. All staff and volunteers must understand that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

9.0

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PSHE and RSE

It is the responsibility of the Personal Development Senior Leader to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PSHE and RSE, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

The Trustees are responsible for overseeing, reviewing and organising the revision of the PSHE and RSE Policy.

10.0 ASSESSMENT

Students' existing knowledge needs to be the starting point for all PSHE and RSE work. Needs assessments are built into sessions as each group and individual may have different knowledge, experience and understanding.

The elements of PSHE and RSE which form part of the Science and RE curriculum are assessed in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum.

11.0 STAFF TRAINING

Trust schools are committed to ensuring that everyone involved in the delivery of PSHE and RSE receives appropriate and ongoing professional development in order to maintain whole school consistency and high standards for the students in our care.

Up to date records of CPD are kept ensuring that training meets the requirements of the needs of the staff body and covers the content of the programme being delivered.

12.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The programme is regularly evaluated by the Personal Development Senior Leader on an ongoing basis, to ensure that it meets the needs of our students and the ever-changing demands of our local community.

13.0 POLICY REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. If new guidance becomes available it may be necessary to review this policy at an earlier date.

13.1 Parental/Carer Information

Each school includes information on PSHE and RSE on the school website.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from those aspects of PSHE and RSE not included in the National Curriculum Science Orders. Alternative work will be set. However, we will strongly urge parents/carers not to exercise this right, stressing the high level of importance of this aspect of their child's education. We will also emphasise that by working in partnership with parents/carers, we hope that they will come to recognise the importance of this aspect of their child's education.

13.2 Student Voice

Feedback from students regarding PSHE and RSE will be gathered through student voice activities.

14.0 LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

14.1 Equality

PSHE and RSE incorporates an approach that ensures that all students, irrespective of their class, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexuality and cultural background, can access these crucial elements of their education.

14.2 Anti-bullying

The PSHE and RSE programme will deal honestly and sensitively with the areas of positive and negative relationships and will recognise that there is diversity in sexual attraction and developing sexuality. The Trust's Anti-bullying policy includes strategies to tackle any bullying incidents in school.

14.3 Child Protection

If any disclosure occurs during a PSHE and RSE session or concerns are raised, teacher/facilitators and facilitators will follow the school's procedure for Safeguarding/Child Protection.

14.4 Behaviour

PSHE and RSE is fully inclusive, and as such will enable all students to be involved in their learning. Poor behaviour, in particular in terms of inappropriate comments and bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy.

14.5 E- Safety

The Trust expect all staff and learners to use the internet, mobile and digital technologies responsibly and strictly according to the school's E-Safety policy.

PSHE and RSE Curriculum Information for parents and carers

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

We understand that some parents and carers may have read or heard reports about the new national PSHE and RSE guidance. In order that you have accurate information about what your child will be learning we have provided a description below:

- **Families**

This covers - different types of relationships; how relationships contribute to happiness; legal rights; consent; the rights, roles and responsibilities of parenting; learning about trust in relationships and how to seek advice

- **Respectful relationships, including friendships**

This covers - positive and healthy relationships of all kinds (including online and cyber-bullying); the dangers of stereotypes; the impact of bullying and how to get help; the Equality Act 2010, including protected characteristics

- **Online and media**

This covers - acceptable online behaviour and risks, including accessing and sharing material; learning about the internet and the law; understanding how internet data is used; reporting concerns and seeking advice

- **Being safe**

This covers - the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM; how these can affect current and future relationships; how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent; how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)

- **Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health**

This covers – loyalty and respect in friendships and intimate relationships; impact of relationships on all aspects of health and wellbeing; consent and sexual pressure; reproduction and fertility; contraception; pregnancy; infections and treatment; where to access support and confidential advice

- **Mental well-being**

This covers - how to talk about your emotions sensitively and accurately, using appropriate language; how to recognise early signs of mental well-being concerns; the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors and community; that happiness is linked to being connected to others

- **Internet safety and harms**

This covers - how to identify and avoid harmful behaviours online; how to report and find support if you have been affected by those behaviours

- **Physical health and fitness**

This covers - the characteristics of a healthy lifestyle; maintaining a healthy weight; the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health; the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation

- **Healthy eating**

This covers - how to maintain healthy eating; the links between a poor diet and health risks

- **Drugs, alcohol and tobacco**

This covers - the facts about legal drugs, illegal drugs and alcohol and their associated risks (legal, physical and psychological); the facts about the harmful risks of smoking tobacco

- **Health and Prevention**

This covers - personal hygiene; dental health; self-examination and screening; immunisations; the importance of a good night's sleep

- **Basic First Aid**

This covers - how to treat basic common injuries; life-saving skills, including administering CPR; the purpose of defibrillators; the changing adolescent body and puberty, including menstrual well-being