Highlands
School & Sixth Form

Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) policy

APPROVED

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Section 1: Vision statement

At Highlands school we believe that our high-quality relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) and a broader personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) will stay with our students for life. Our DARE values are at the heart of everything we do at Highlands school and our RSHE and PSHE curriculum embodies these core values.

RSHE (relationships, sex and health education) is not about encouraging students to become sexually active nor is it about promoting any particular lifestyle of relationship choice. RSHE is about providing students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make safe, healthy and informed relationship choices as young people and in the future as adults. At Highlands school we provide students with an innovative curriculum fit for the world our students are living in. We are committed to the important role that RSHE has in students' holistic education and we aim to build on the RSHE programmes covered in primary school. The theme of consent underpins our RSHE curriculum. We introduce students to the importance of consent from year 7 and this is revisited on a yearly basis and adapted to the age of each year group.

We have an obligation to provide students with high-quality and age-appropriate teaching of RSHE. This policy outlines how our curriculum in these subjects will be organised and delivered, to ensure it meets the needs of all students.

1.1. Definitions and statutory requirements

This policy covers three overlapping curriculum areas

PSHE stands for personal, social, health and economic education and is a non - statutory subject. However, we are required by law to teach some aspects of PSHE. We follow best practice guidance from the PSHE Association and provide our students with a full PSHE education.

RSHE stands for relationships, sex and health education. Schools are required by law to teach relationships and sex education (RSE) under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, in line with the terms set out in the new **statutory guidance** and section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

At Highlands school we teach PSHE and RSHE as set out in this policy.

Section 2: Aims

The aims of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) at Highlands school are to:

- Provide a safe and inclusive framework where sensitive, age-appropriate discussions can take place, guided by our DARE values.
- Help students develop emotional resilience, self-respect, and empathy as they navigate the psychological shifts of adolescence.
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships, ensuring our curriculum remains fully LGBT+ inclusive.
- Teach students the correct biological vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies, reducing the stigma around puberty and menstrual health.
- Educate students on how to keep themselves physically, emotionally, and mentally safe, with a specific focus on identifying and managing online risks and social media pressures.
- Ensure that all students have a comprehensive and legal understanding of what it means to give and receive consent within sexual, romantic, and social relationships.
- Prepare students for the biological facts of puberty while bridging the gap between hormonal changes and emotional regulation.
- Support students in developing a neutral and positive body image, specifically by challenging the unrealistic standards often found in digital media and advertising.
- Equip students with the critical thinking skills needed to understand how algorithms and online content can distort their view of relationships and self-worth.
- Prepare students for the adult world by providing the knowledge and tools required to make informed, healthy choices about their reproductive and sexual health.
- Provide students with the evidence-based information they need to make informed decisions about their own physical health and mental wellbeing.
- Teach students how to monitor their own health, recognising the difference between expected adolescent changes and potential issues, ensuring they know how to access early support from trusted and regulated sources.
- Establish clear links between physical health and mental wellbeing, emphasising how factors like sleep, digital habits, and nutrition impact emotional stability.
- Help students understand the biological basis of self-regulation, providing them with practical strategies to manage stress and high-emotion situations as their brains develop.
- Actively reduce the stigma associated with health issues, with a particular focus on normalising conversations around mental health, neurodiversity, and menstrual health.
- Prepare students for the integrated changes of puberty by teaching the physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects of development in a way that promotes body neutrality and self-compassion.
- Ensure students understand the importance of personal hygiene and self-care routines as fundamental components of overall health and self-respect.

Aims of PSHE

The aims of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) at Highlands school, covering areas not already addressed in RSHE, are to:

- Contribute to the wider spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of students, encouraging them to engage with diverse perspectives in a respectful and modern society.
- Equip students with the practical life skills required to live independently, including understanding their rights and responsibilities as citizens in future workforces and communities.
- Develop comprehensive financial literacy, covering everything from basic budgeting to the risks associated with online financial pressures, digital currencies, and consumer influence.
- Support students in becoming reflective, emotionally intelligent individuals who can navigate complex social dynamics both in person and online.
- Teach students how to contribute positively to their school and the wider community, fostering a sense of social responsibility and active citizenship.
- Develop critical media literacy, helping students understand how information is targeted toward them and how to identify misinformation or biased content in their daily lives.

Section 3: Policy development

All schools are required to consult parents/carers on their RSHE policy.

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents/carers. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

- Review – the senior leaders responsible for RSHE and PSHE collated all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance.
- Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
- Parent/carer consultation – an information pack was prepared and shared with all parents along with the policy and survey to submit feedback.
- Student consultation – we investigated what exactly students want from their RSE curriculum.
- Ratification – once amendments were made; the policy was shared with governors and ratified.,

Section 4: Curriculum

You can view the full curriculum overview for the 2026/27 academic year in appendix 1d. Adaptations may take place as and when necessary.

The statutory guidance (published in July 2025 for implementation by September 2026) requires that schools teach the specified content covering these key themes.

- Mental 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
- Families
- Respectful relationships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

For information on the content specified in the statutory guidance see appendix 1. For specific information about our RSHE and PSHE curriculum see appendix 2.

Section 5: Delivery of RSHE

We ensure that when teaching RSHE and PSHE, we do so in an inclusive manner that reflects the modern world. We acknowledge and celebrate what unites us as a community and what makes us unique. For example, when teaching about family life, we ensure there is no stigmatisation of students who do not live in a traditional heterosexual nuclear family. We teach students that families can include single-parent families, LGBT+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, and foster parents/carers, among other structures.

We provide ongoing training for staff to ensure they are sensitive to the personal circumstances and diverse backgrounds of our students. Our goal is to empower students to be inclusive, respectful, and sensitive to the wide-ranging diversity within our school, our local community, and the wider world.

PSHE, RSE, and health education are delivered in the following way:

In key stage 3, year 10 and year 12, students follow a full, comprehensive curriculum designed to build foundational knowledge and resilience, delivered through a 65-minute PSHE lesson once per week.

For students in year 11 and year 13, we deliver a reduced and highly focused curriculum. We recognise the academic pressures of these milestone years; therefore, the RSHE provision is streamlined to focus on essential life skills, mental health maintenance, and post-16 or post-18 transitions. This ensures students receive vital statutory information and wellbeing support without detracting from their core examination preparation.

Section 6: Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The governing body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring all students make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes.
- Ensuring the RSHE curriculum is well-led, effectively managed and well-planned.
- Evaluating the quality of provision through regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Ensuring that teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all students with SEND.
- Providing clear information to parents/carers on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn.
- Ensuring RSHE is resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

6.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for, and may delegate through a deputy or assistant headteacher:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring all staff are suitably trained to deliver the subjects.
- Ensuring parents/carers are fully informed of this policy.
- Reviewing all requests to withdraw students from non-statutory elements of the RSHE curriculum.
- Discussing withdrawal requests with parents, and the child if appropriate, to ensure their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, including the benefits of receiving the education.
- Ensuring withdrawn students receive appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- Encouraging parents/carers to be involved in consultations regarding the school's RSHE curriculum.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Reporting to the governing board on the effectiveness of this policy and the curriculum.

6.3 The PSHE leader

The PSHE leader is responsible for:

- Overseeing the delivery of RSHE.
- Working closely with colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the RSHE curriculum complements, and does not duplicate, the content covered in national curriculum subjects.
- Ensuring the curriculum is age-appropriate and of high-quality.
- Reviewing changes to the RSHE curriculum and advising on their implementation.
- Monitoring the learning and teaching of RSHE, providing support to staff where necessary.
- Ensuring the continuity and progression between each year group.
- Helping to develop colleagues' expertise in the subject.
- Ensuring teachers are provided with adequate resources to support teaching of the curriculum.
- Ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements in relation to RSHE.
- Leading staff meetings and ensuring all members of staff involved in the curriculum have received the appropriate training.
- Organising, providing and monitoring CPD opportunities in the subject.
- Ensuring the correct standards are met for recording and assessing student performance.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the subjects and providing reports to the headteacher.
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents/carers have requested to withdraw them from the non-statutory components of RSHE, by providing them with alternative education opportunities.

6.4 Staff who teach PSHE and RSHE

Staff who teach PSHE and RSHE are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with, and promoting, this policy.
- Delivering RSHE in a sensitive way and that is of a high-quality and appropriate for each year group.
- Ensuring they do not express personal views or beliefs when delivering the curriculum.
- Planning lessons effectively, ensuring a range of appropriate teaching methods and resources are used to cover the content.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE.
- Liaising with the SENCO about identifying and responding to the individual needs of students with SEND.
- Liaising with the PSHE leader about key topics, resources and support for individual students.
- Monitoring student progress in PSHE and RSHE.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the teaching of RSHE to the subject leader or another member of the SLT.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that students may make as a result of the subject content to the DSL.

6.5 The SENCO

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Advising the PSHE leader and teaching staff how best to identify and support students' individual needs.
- Advising staff on the use of TAs in order to meet students' individual needs.

Section 7: Parents'/carers' right to withdraw

The school feels strongly that all students should have the opportunity to engage fully with all aspects of sex education. We are committed to ensuring students are educated and empowered to keep themselves physically, emotionally and mentally safe, and feel it is highly important that students have a clear understanding of all components of sex education.

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from the sex education components within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this. As a school, we define sex education as content under the topic of 'contraception and STI prevention'.

Parents/carers cannot withdraw their children from sex and reproduction education taught as part of the science curriculum.

Parents/carers cannot withdraw their children from the relationships or health aspects of the RSHE curriculum.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing and addressed to the headteacher.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record.

The headteacher or senior leader responsible for RSHE will arrange a time to meet with the parent/carer to discuss their concerns and to outline the importance of RSE. If after this meeting the parent/carer still wishes to withdraw their child from sex education, then arrangements will be made for this to happen and alternative work will be given to these students.

Section 8: Training

All staff required to teach PSHE and RSHE will be trained to do so. This training is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The senior leader responsible for RSHE will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE.

Section 9: Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of PSHE and RSHE is monitored by the senior leader responsible.

Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted through the whole school quality assurance process in addition to subject specific learning walks, work sampling, staff feedback, student voice and the quality assurance of teaching materials.

Students' development in RSHE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the senior leader responsible for PSHE and RSHE. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body and the headteacher.

Appendices

Appendix 1a: Statutory RSE learning outcomes

These have been taken from the statutory guidance, which can be read in full here.

By the end of secondary school students should know:

Topic	**Students should know**
Families	Curriculum content: ● That there are different types of committed, stable relationships. ● How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children. ● Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage and civil partnership, including that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have, for example, undergone a non-legally binding religious ceremony. ● That 'common-law marriage' is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children. ● That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal. ● How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships. ● The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development. ● How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust.
Respectful relationships	Curriculum content: ● The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships. For example, pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outlooks, generosity, boundaries, tolerance, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. ● How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces and including strangers. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and equal. ● The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these characteristics support healthy relationships with others. This includes developing one's own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should understand what it means to be treated with respect by others.

	● What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs. ● The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes skills for communicating respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict. ● The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help. ● Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration. ● The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical behaviour goes beyond consent and involves kindness, care, attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power dynamics. Pupils should understand that just because someone says yes to doing something, that doesn't automatically make it ethically ok. ● How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be equipped to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice. ● How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how people who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy an unequal amount of power might, with or without realising it, impose their preferences on others. ● How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual behaviours and by disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing some people with a sense of sexual entitlement to the bodies of others. ● Pupils should have an opportunity to discuss how some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by so-called "involuntary celibates" (incels) or online influencers.
Online safety and awareness	Curriculum content: ● Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online. ● Online risks, including the importance of being cautious about sharing personal information online and of using privacy and location settings appropriately to protect information online. Pupils should also understand the difference between public and private online spaces and related safety issues. ● The characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and / or may post things which aren't real / have been created with AI. That social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they might in face-to-face situations, and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online. ● Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal material which is sent to them. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened there is no way of controlling where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law concerning the sharing of images.

	● That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. Pupils should understand the potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment. Pupils should know how to seek support and should understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either at school or with the police, if an image of themselves has been shared. Pupils should also understand that sharing indecent images of people over 18 without consent is a crime. ● What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including personal information, images or videos, and how to manage issues online.9 ● About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as for entertainment, the harms that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them. ● That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content that encourages misogyny, violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong. ● That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice. ● How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns. ● That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviours and can negatively affect how people behave towards sexual partners. This can affect pupils who see pornographic content accidentally as well as those who see it deliberately. Pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively influence those who see it. ● How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online. ● That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for commercial purposes (e.g. to enable targeted advertising). ● That criminals can operate online scams, for example using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable personal information. This information can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams relating to sex, and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion. ● That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating fake intimacy or offering harmful advice. It is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how they might pose a risk.
Being Safe	Curriculum content: ● How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (in all contexts, including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and care for others requires more than just consent.

	● That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from peers or others, including sexual pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others. ● How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge when a relationship is unsafe (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed. ● How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community or strangers. Pupils should learn ways of seeking help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. Pupils should understand that there are strategies they can use to increase their safety, and that this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. Pupils might reflect on the importance of trusting their instincts when something doesn't feel right, and should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but have harmful intentions. ● What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it. ● That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language / attention / touching, taking and/or sharing intimate or sexual images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting. ● The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault. ● The concepts and laws relating to harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people but also includes other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language. ● The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour. ● That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed. ● The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation. ● The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage. ● The physical and emotional damage which can be caused by female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty, where to find support, and the law around these areas. This should include that it is a criminal offence for anyone to perform or assist in the performance of FGM, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, in the UK or abroad, or to fail to protect a person under 16 for whom they are responsible. ● That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) is an offence, regardless of whether it causes injury. That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth and nose is dangerous and can lead to serious injury or death. ● That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which can be emotionally and/or physically harmful.

	● How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced from others, including information on where to report abuse, and where to seek medical attention when required, for example after an assault.
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	Curriculum content: ● That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive. ● The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people wait until they are older, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex. ● Sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given, as well as the considerations that people might take into account prior to sexual activity, e.g. the law, faith and family values. That kindness and care for others require more than just consent. ● That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing. ● That some sexual behaviours can be harmful. ● The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, and signposting towards medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decisionmaking. ● That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help. ● How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use). The use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and how and where to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma ● The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment. ● How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour. ● How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms. ● How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further advice, and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Appendix 1b: Statutory health education learning outcomes

These have been taken from the statutory guidance, which can be read in full here.

By the end of secondary school students should know:

Topic	Students should know
Mental wellbeing	Curriculum content: ● How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary. ● The benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness. ● That happiness is linked to being connected to others. Pupils should be supported to understand what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel unhappy, while recognising that loneliness can be for most people an inevitable part of life at times and is not something of which to be ashamed. ● That worrying and feeling down are normal, can affect everyone at different times and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition, and that managing those feelings can be helped by seeing them as normal. ● Characteristics of common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression), including carefully-presented factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental health conditions. This should not be discussed in a way that encourages normal feelings to be labelled as mental health conditions. ● How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall wellbeing. ● Understanding how to overcome anxiety or other barriers to participating in fun, enjoyable or rewarding activities – that it's possible to overcome those barriers using coping strategies, and that finding the courage to participate in activities which initially feel challenging may decrease anxiety over time rather than increasing it. ● That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others. ● That the co-occurrence of alcohol/drug use and poor mental health is common and that the relationship is bi-directional: mental health problems can increase the risk of alcohol/drug use, and alcohol/drug use can trigger mental health problems or exacerbate existing ones. That stopping smoking can improve people's mental health and decrease anxiety.
Wellbeing online	Curriculum content: ● About the benefits of limiting time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing.

	● The similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image); how people may curate a specific image of their life online; the impact that an over-reliance on online relationships, including relationships formed through social media, can have. ● How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours. ● The risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt. ● How advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online, understanding the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation online, including conspiracy theories. ● The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online. ● The serious risks of viewing online content that promotes self-harm, suicide or violence, including how to safely report this material and how to access support after viewing it.
Physical health and fitness	Curriculum content: ● The characteristics of a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill-health, including cardiovascular ill-health. ● Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions. ● That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress. ● The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation
Healthy eating	Curriculum content: ● How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease. ● The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. ● The impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain.
Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping	Curriculum content: ● The facts about which drugs are illegal, the risks of taking illegal drugs, including the increased risk of potent synthetic drugs being added to illegal drugs, the risks of illicit vapes containing drugs, illicit drugs and counterfeit medicines, and the potential health harms, including the link to poor mental health. ● The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances. ● The physical and psychological risks associated with alcohol consumption. What constitutes low risk alcohol consumption in adulthood, and the legal age of sale for alcohol in England. Understanding how to increase personal safety while drinking alcohol, including how to decrease the risks of having a drink spiked or of poisoning from potentially fatal substances such as methanol. ● The physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency.

	● The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines. ● The facts about the multiple serious harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so. ● The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit.
Health protection and prevention, and understanding the healthcare system	Curriculum content: ● Personal hygiene, germs and how they are spread, including bacteria and viruses, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics. ● Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene, including brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and cleaning between teeth, reducing consumption of sugar-containing food and drinks, and regular check-ups at the dentist. ● How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals. ● The importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening. ● The facts and scientific evidence relating to vaccination, immunisation and antimicrobial resistance. The introduction of topics relating to vaccination and immunisation should be aligned with when vaccinations are offered to pupils. ● The importance of sufficient good-quality sleep for good health, the importance of screen-free time before bed and removing phones from the bedroom, and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn. ● The importance of healthy behaviours before and during pregnancy, including the importance of pre-conception health, including taking folic acid. The importance of pelvic floor health. Information on miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and how to access care and support. ● How to navigate their local healthcare system: what a GP is; when to use A&E / minor injuries; accessing sexual health and family planning clinics; the role of local pharmacies; and how to seek help via local third sector partners which may have specialist services. ● The concept of Gillick competence. That the legal age of medical consent is 16. That before this, a child's parents will have responsibility for consenting to medical treatment on their behalf unless they are Gillick competent to take this decision for themselves. Pupils should understand the circumstances in which someone over 16 may not be deemed to have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment.
Personal safety	Curriculum content: ● How to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including around roads, railways – including level crossings - and water (including the water safety code), and in unfamiliar social or work settings (for example the first time a young person goes on holiday without their parents). ● How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media.

	● How to develop key social and emotional skills that will increase pupils' safety from involvement in conflict and violence. These include skills to support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making, as well as skills to recognise and manage peer pressure. ● Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about violence and/or knife crime. ● The law as it relates to knives and violence. Content and examples should relate to the local context and avoid using fear as an educational tool. Children should be taught that carrying weapons is uncommon, and should not be scared into the perception that many young people are carrying knives (which can lead to the misconception that they need to carry a knife too). ● The risks and signs that they may be at risk of grooming or exploitation, and how to seek help where there is a concern.
Basic first aid	Curriculum content: ● Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments. ● Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.11 ● The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.
Developing bodies	Curriculum content: ● The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health. ● The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development. ● About menstrual and gynaecological health, including: what is an average period; period problems such as premenstrual syndrome; heavy menstrual bleeding; endometriosis; and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). When to seek help from healthcare professionals. ● The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.

Appendix 1c: Non-statutory PSHE learning outcomes

This section covers the learning outcomes for aspects of PSHE that do not fall under the statutory requirements in RSE and health education. These learning outcomes are taken from the PSHE Association programmes of study.

By the end of secondary school students should know:

Topic	**Students should know**
Digital literacy *(many elements of this component are also covered within statutory RSE)*	Curriculum content: ● About online communication. ● How to use social networking sites safely. ● How to recognise online grooming in different forms, e.g. in relation to sexual or financial exploitation, extremism and radicalisation. ● How to respond and seek support in cases of online grooming. ● How to recognise biased or misleading information online. ● How to critically assess different media sources. ● How to distinguish between content which is publicly and privately shared. ● About age restrictions when accessing different forms of media and how to make responsible decisions ● How to protect financial security online. ● How to assess and manage risks in relation to gambling and chance-based transactions.
Economic wellbeing	Curriculum content: ● How to make safe financial choices. ● About ethical and unethical business practices and consumerism. ● About saving, spending and budgeting. ● How to manage risk-taking behaviour. ● How to effectively budget and evaluate savings options. ● How to prevent and manage debt, including understanding credit rating and pay day lending. ● How data is generated, collected and shared, and the influence of targeted advertising. ● How thinking errors, e.g. gambler's fallacy, can increase susceptibility to gambling. ● Strategies for managing influences related to gambling, including online. ● About the relationship between gambling and debt. ● About the law and illegal financial activities, including fraud and cybercrime.

	● How to manage risk in relation to financial activities.
Employability and enterprise	Curriculum content: ● How to be enterprising, including skills of problem-solving, communication, teamwork, leadership, risk-management, and creativity. ● About equality of opportunity in life and work. ● How to challenge stereotypes and discrimination in relation to work and pay. ● About employment, self-employment and voluntary work. ● About different types of employment and career pathways. ● How to manage feelings relating to future employment. ● About young people's employment rights and responsibilities. ● How to evaluate strengths and interests in relation to career development. ● Strategies for overcoming challenges or adversity at work. ● About responsibilities in the workplace. ● How to manage practical problems and health and safety. ● How to maximise employability, including managing online presence and taking opportunities to broaden experience. ● About rights, responsibilities and challenges in relation to working part time whilst studying. ● How to manage work/life balance.
Career progression	Curriculum content: ● About a broad range of careers and the abilities and qualities required for different careers ● How to challenge stereotypes, broaden their horizons and how to identify future career aspirations ● About the link between values and career choices ● About transferable skills, abilities and interests ● How to demonstrate strengths. ● How to work towards aspirations and set meaningful, realistic goals for the future. ● About GCSE and post-16 options. ● To set and achieve SMART targets. ● Effective revision techniques and strategies. ● About application processes, including writing CVs, personal statements and interview technique. ● How to set aspirational goals for future careers and challenge expectations that limit choices.

Appendix 1d: PSHE / RSHE curriculum map 2026-2027

The spiral framework: Key themes

1. Health and wellbeing: Mental health, physical health, and puberty.
2. Relationships: Friendships, family, consent, and intimacy.
3. Living in the wider world: Digital safety, finance, and career (PSHE elements).
4. New statutory additions: Misogyny, AI literacy, and personal safety.

Year	Autumn 1: Health and wellbeing	Autumn 2: Health and wellbeing	Spring: Living in the wider world	Spring 2: Living in the wider world	Summer 1: Relationships	Summer 2: Relationships
Year 7	**Unit 1: Transition to secondary school** Lesson 1: An introduction to PSHE and expectations at Highlands Lesson 2: School life and organisation Lesson 3: Mental health and emotions Lesson 4: Healthy friendships Lesson 5: Bullying and conflict Lesson 6: Friendship challenges	**Unit 2: Health, hygiene and wellbeing** Lesson 1: Hygiene and prevention Lesson 2: Sleep and recovery Lesson 3: Nutrition and the body Lesson 4: Exercise and physical health Lesson 5: The mental health connection Lesson 6: Climate change and wellbeing	**Unit 3: The Digital Citizen: Online safety basics, scams/fraud** Lesson 1: Digital footprints and privacy Lesson 2: Online scams and phishing Lesson 3: Algorithms and influence Lesson 4: Gaming and spending risks Lesson 5: Fake news and misinformation Lesson 6: Seeking help and being an upstander	**Unit 4: Safety and first aid** Lesson 1: Road, rail and firework safety Lesson 2: Water safety Lesson 3: Travel and personal awareness Lesson 4: First aid and CPR, and emergency management	**Unit 5: Diversity and discrimination** Lesson 1: Diversity and its importance. Lesson 2: Identity and intersectionality. Lesson 3: Stereotypes and prejudice. Lesson 4: Discrimination and the law Lesson 5: Challenging prejudice and discrimination. Lesson 6: Allyship and the power of the bystander.	**Unit 6: Connections and character** Lesson 1: Modern families and diversity Lesson 2: Changing Families and the law Lesson 3: Healthy vs. unhealthy relationships Lesson 4: Consent and personal boundaries Lesson 5: Bullying and managing emotions Lesson 6: Endings, grief and loss
Year 8	**Unit 1: Developing bodies: Puberty (biological facts), menstrual health,**	**Unit 2: Mental Health** Lesson 1: Managing strong emotions	**Unit 3: Planning for the future** Lesson 1: What are	**Unit 4: Digital awareness and financial literacy**	**Unit 5: Our bodies and personal boundaries**	**Unit 6: Rights, respect and resilience** Lesson 1: The Equality

	and body image. Lesson 1: Puberty and the hormone shift. Lesson 2: The menstrual cycle and reproductive health. Lesson 3: Why your body is changing. Lesson 4: Personal maintenance (hygiene and self-care) Lesson 5: Body image and mental wellbeing Lesson 6: Positive body image	Lesson 2: Managing distractions Lesson 3: Managing disappointments and setbacks Lesson 4: Unhealthy coping strategies Lesson 5: Healthy coping strategies Lesson 6: Influences and self-expression	my aspirations? Lesson 2: How do I work best with others and Skills for working with others Lesson 3: Goal setting and how do I plan for my future? Lesson 4: What do I need to plan for? Lesson 5: What opportunities are out there for me? Lesson 6: How do I improve my prospects?	Lesson 1: How to start banking Lesson 2: Using your money safely and saving vs. debt Lesson 3: Harmful online content: the risks of AI / online content Lesson 4: The impact of online influencers	Lesson 1: Healthy relationships and consent Lesson 2: Sexualised media and harassment Lesson 3: Sharing nudes and the law Lesson 4: FGM awareness Lesson 5: Marriage, Family and honour Lesson 6: The law and staying Safe	Act and protected characteristics Lesson 2: Disability and neurodiversity discrimination Lesson 3: Racism, religion and faith Lesson 4: LGBTQ+ awareness and homophobia Lesson 5: Sexism, gender stereotypes and positive masculinity Lesson 6: Grooming awareness and power dynamics
Year 9	**Unit 1: Body image** Lesson 1: History of beauty standards Lesson 2: Digital alteration and filters Lesson 3: Social media and comparison / Body modifications Lesson 4: The Influence of advertising Lesson 5: Building body neutrality Lesson 6: Positive body image- healthy coping strategies.	**Unit 2: Substances - awareness and managing risks** Lesson 1: Energy drinks and caffeine Lesson 2-3: Smoking, e-cigarettes, vaping and 'snus'. Lesson 4: Alcohol misuse Lesson 5: Nitrous oxide and other harmful substances Lesson 6: Managing influences and the impact of addiction	**Unit 3: Careers** Lesson 1: What do I want to do? Marketing yourself and personal branding Lesson 2: Types of employment and employment trends Lesson 3: Rights and responsibilities at work Lesson 4: Employment opportunities Lessons 5-6: Debate: Eighteen-year-olds	**Unit 4: Safety on the streets** Lesson 1: Being a respectful community citizen / keeping safe on the streets Lesson 2: Gangs and youth crime / knife crime Lesson 3: County lines and exploitation Lesson 4: The law and 'joint enterprise'.	**Unit 5: Intimate romantic relationships** Lesson 1-2: Unhealthy relationships Lesson 3: Healthy relationships Lesson 4-5: Consent: Avoiding assumptions, the law, freedom and capacity Lesson 6: Sharing indecent images Lesson 7: Managing the ending of relationships	**Unit 6: Online harms, Addressing misogyny: Incel culture, toxic subcultures / AI deepfakes** Lesson 1:Motivations and consequences Lesson 2: Tackling deepfakes Lesson 3: Challenging the narrative: thinking critically about misogyny Lesson 4: Exploring harms and misconceptions

			should be required to take part in some form of national service			Lesson 5-6: Responding to misogyny / Sexual harassment
Year 10	**Unit 1: Mental wellbeing** Lesson 1: Mental health and wellbeing throughout life Lesson 2: Managing strong emotions and distractions Lesson 3: Reframing negative thinking / changing thinking habits Lesson 4: Managing change, loss and grief Lesson 5: The sleep factor Lesson 6: Healthy and unhealthy coping strategies / tackling stigma	**Unit 2: Physical health** Lesson 1: Personal health care Lesson 2: Cancer screening - testicular Lesson 3: Cancer screening - Breast cancer awareness Lesson 4: The science relating to donation. Exploring blood, stem cell and organ donation Lesson 5: Superbugs: The AMR threat Unit 6: Navigating your own health care	**Unit 3: Financial decisions / online financial harms** Lesson 1: Making money online: Rights, risks and cryptocurrencies Lesson 2: Controlled and uncontrolled online spending Lesson 3: Financial exploitation online: Factors, strategies and support Lesson 4: Money laundering / social engineering Lesson 5: Different types of financial decisions at different stages in life Lesson 6: Building good financial habits for the future	**Unit 4: Addressing radicalisation and extremism** Lesson 1: Valuing diversity Lesson 2: What is extremism? Understanding and preventing extremism Lesson 3: The online hook / spotting ‘fake news’ Lesson 4: Standing up to hate	**Unit 5: Digital literacy and social attitudes** Lesson 1: How does AI affect our daily lives? Lesson 2: What are the limitations of generative AI? Lesson 3: How does generative AI affect our understanding of the world? Lesson 4: How do chatbots affect relationships? Lesson 5: Social attitudes to sending nudes (the harm and the law) Lesson 6: Challenging misogynistic narratives online	**Unit 6 RSE: Sexual health** Lesson 1: When is the right time to begin a sexual relationship and delay sexual activity? Lesson 2-3: Safe sex - contraception. Lesson 4: Sexual health and sexually transmitted infections. Lesson 5: Looking after yourself: Sexual health Lesson 6: Understanding the risks related to pornography exposure
Year 11	**Unit 1: Careers**	**Unit 2: Parenthood: Fertility, pregnancy**	**Revision and intervention programme**			

	Lesson 1: Post 16 - Skills and Interests Lesson 2: The changing job market LMI Lesson 3: World of work Lesson 4: Choices now, choices later? Lesson 5: Writing a CV / Covering letter Lesson 6: Interviews and making a good impression	**and childbirth** Lesson 1: Readiness for parenthood and different routes to parenthood. Lesson 2: Fertility, age and health. Lesson 3: The stages of pregnancy and childbirth. Lesson 4: Miscarriage and abortion. (Mid-year assessments)	Standalone lessons will be covered during this time on the following topics: Mental health and wellbeing: Managing exam stress and pressure Drugs and personal safety: Substance awareness and navigating social pressures Consent and intimate relationships: Relationship rights and recognising abuse Online risks and harms: Online safety, image sharing and AI deepfakes

Year	Autumn: Adult wellbeing	Autumn: Mature relationships	Spring: Life after school	Spring: Life after school	Summer: Life after school	Summer
Year 12	**Unit 1: Independent health and personal safety in independent contexts** Lesson 1: Clinical independence (GPs and rights) Lesson 2: Assessing	**Unit 2: RSE: Reviewing consent, sexual transmitted infections, online misogyny** Lesson 1: Reviewing your understanding of consent	**Unit 3: Employment rights and professional ethics** Lesson 1: The Equality Act Lesson 2: Rights and responsibilities in the workplace	**Unit 4: Financial planning** Lesson 1: Managing money and budgeting Lesson 2: Credit cards, debit cards and loans and mortgages Lesson 3: Tax and	**Unit 5: Choices and pathways** Lesson 1: Ambitions and motivation Lesson 2: Educational pathways and career pathways Lesson 3: Post-18	**Exams and work experience**

	the risks (drugs and alcohol) Lesson 3: Substance use and managing influence Lesson 4: Awareness and staying safe, including spiking Lesson 5: Seeking help and support Lesson 6: Emergency response (First aid for adults)	Lesson 2: Reviewing your understanding of safe sex, contraception and sexually transmitted infections Lesson 3: Online misogyny / incel culture Lesson 4: Understanding the risks related to pornography exposure Lesson 5: Coercion, control and pressure Lesson 6: Relationship rights and reporting abuse	Lesson 3: Minimum wage and trade unions Lesson 4: Balancing part time work and education Lesson 5: Laws around young people and employment Lesson 6: AI and the future of work	deductions, pensions and life insurance Lesson 4: Financial crime and fraud	options Lesson 4: Preparing for the world of work Lesson 5: Professional communication and interview etiquette	
Year 13	**UCAS, revision and intervention programme** Year 13 will still access aspects of our stay safe curriculum through the assembly programme, visiting speakers and standalone PSHE/RSE lessons					