



ERASMUS DARWIN ACADEMY

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Change Record

Version:	Date	Description
1.1	4 December 2014 (FGB)	Updates to Sections 2, 3, 5 and 8
1.2	29 November 2016 (FGB)	Updates to Sections 1 - 6
1.3	11 December 2018	Updates to all Sections
1.4	October 2020	Updates to all Sections – Renamed RSHE policy.
1.5	January 2023	Update to all Sections
1.6	January 2025	RSHE mapping date change – audit has taken place and remains the same.
1.7	May 2026	Due to new legislation, this document has been rewritten

“Erasmus Darwin Academy promotes the safeguarding and welfare of children in its care; all policies support the “Safeguarding Policy”.

RSHE Policy

Schools maintain a statutory obligation under the Children Act (2004) to promote their pupils' wellbeing, and under the Education Act (1996) to prepare children and young people for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life. The teaching of Relationships and Sex Education has now been incorporated into the National Curriculum with mandatory teaching in secondary schools from September 2020. A comprehensive approach to RSHE has a positive impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and their ability to achieve, and can play a crucial part in meeting these obligations.

1. Rationale

- 1.1 The Children Act 1989 places a duty on professionals to talk about relationships and sex with young people in order to help them acquire knowledge and information about their bodies, sex and sexual health, and to develop relevant skills.
- 1.2 The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires that: young people learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and bringing up children. It also requires that young people are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate, having regard to the age and the religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned. It also takes note that parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of RSHE provided outside national curriculum science, in accordance with UK law.
- 1.3 All RSHE content will be in compliance with the Equalities Act 2010.

All RSHE content taught at Erasmus Darwin Academy complies with the additional content required under the National Curriculum framework, published in 2025. This policy has been written using information from the Department for Education's (DfE) [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education guidance](#) (2025) and other relevant guidance document and statutory requirements.

Since 2019, the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, says that by law all schools must teach children about relationships and health.

- 1.4 Effective RSHE is key in supporting young people through both physical and emotional development, enabling them to make informed life choices confidently, and furthering their respect for themselves and others as they move through life. It prepares young people for the physical and emotional changes that will take place at puberty and helps develop positive attitudes, values and self-esteem and challenges negative attitudes and prejudices. Furthermore, it helps promote equality in relationships. It helps make sense of misinformation in the media and from peers. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity to talk about feelings and relationships. It protects young people from risk and harm in relationships, including violence and sexual exploitation and inappropriate online content and communication. It helps deal appropriately with social and cultural pressures as a result of being exposed to distorted or inaccurate view of sex and relationships in the media. It helps to reduce early sexual activity, prevent teenage conceptions, STIs, child sexual exploitation and abuse (including sexual harassment and sexual violence), domestic violence and FGM.

2. Objectives

The RSHE delivered at Erasmus Darwin Academy has three main elements, in accordance with DfE guidelines:

2.1 **Knowledge and Understanding** including; emotional, social and physical development, body image, human sexuality, gender identity different types of families, different types of relationships, healthy and unhealthy relationships, sex, consent, rights and responsibilities to others, reproduction, sexual health, contraception, the range of local and national sexual health services, reasons and benefits for delaying sexual activity, law about sexual activity and the use of technology and social media, misuse of drugs and alcohol and sexual activity, sexual exploitation and violence in all types of relationships, including personal and family relationships, the impact of pornography on relationships, FGM, being safe including online.

2.2 **Personal and Social Skills** including; managing emotions and relationships, developing self-respect and empathy for others, resilience to cope with change, how to make choices and understanding the consequences of choices, managing conflict, dealing with peer pressure, recognising and avoiding exploitation and abuse, communicating respectfully, making responsible and safe decisions, how to identify, assess and manage risk, ask for help and access advice and services.

2.3 **Attitudes and Values** including; understand a range of views about relationships and sex in society, respect in relationships, the importance of stable and loving relationships including marriage (both heterosexual and same sex) and civil partnerships, respect, love and care, rights and respect for rights in relationships, value of family life, gender equality, acceptance of difference and diversity. Understanding that violence, coercion and sexual exploitation in relationships is unacceptable, including forced marriage, understanding that discrimination based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, faith is unacceptable, promoting equality and challenging inequality.

3. Roles and Responsibilities for RSHE provision at Erasmus Darwin Academy

3.1 The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, alongside Governors, will oversee the effective implementation of the policy and ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy.

3.2 The Assistant Headteacher with strategic responsibility for Personal Development will be responsible for ensuring that the curriculum provision at Erasmus Darwin Academy regarding RSHE is applied as per the policy through line management of the Careers Leader and Personal Development Subject Leader. They will also keep up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it.

3.3 Academy staff will be made fully aware of the RSHE Policy and how it relates to them. They will be informed that they should adhere to the policy in line with teacher standards and expected to act in accordance with it and express any queries or training requirements. The curriculum provision for the teaching of RSHE will be monitored and led by the Subject Lead for Personal Development.

3.4 Students will be expected to actively support the policy and informed of Academy expectations to act in accordance with it.

3.5 Parents will be encouraged to actively support the policy. They will also be informed of any incident related to this policy which could directly affect their child.

3.6 The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the success and effectiveness of the Policy.

4. Implementation of RSHE curriculum provision at Erasmus Darwin Academy

4.1.1 Implementation of RSHE at Erasmus Darwin Academy falls within our Wider Personal Development offer. This means that RSHE will be delivered in both Personal Development lessons (as part of the scheme of learning) or additional enrichment activities.

4.1.2 The purpose of our implementation is as follows:

- Delivering a quality relationships and sex education programme to students which is age appropriate to their needs and meets national standards;
- Working in partnership with parents, families, appropriate external agencies and the wider community to promote positive relationships and provide effective support for young people;
- To deliver relationships and sex education through both subject specific and a whole-school approach to Personal Development education across each year group, appropriate to the age group;
- To help support young people through spiritual, physical, emotional and moral development;
- To provide CPD training for staff so that they know how to signpost effectively with regards to young people on personal relationship and sexual health issues.
- To ensure that our pupils know how to stay safe, including staying safe online and recognising safe and unsafe behaviour in relationships.
- To understand the vast array of relationships that students may encounter in both their present and future life.

Our teaching of RSHE is both culturally sensitive and inclusive; for example, taking into account the range of religious and cultural views regarding sexual behaviour whilst still ensuring that students have access to the learning, they need to stay safe, healthy and understand their rights as individuals. Our RSHE provision is inclusive to the Equality Act, with due consideration to the Nine Protected Characteristics. For the majority of RSHE teaching, students are taught in mixed gender groups in a classroom as part of a timetabled lesson. The rationale for this in our context is for all students to have the same curriculum experience, knowledge and understanding. Where appropriate, different groups (including targeted single sex groups) may be assembled to discuss RSHE learning. This will also extend to occasions where SEND needs are addressed in 1:1 or small groups work regarding RSHE learning.

Our delivery takes place in Personal Development timetabled lessons for Years 7-11 which is. In addition to this, assemblies, bespoke year group gatherings and other subjects may also teach statutory elements of RSHE if it is both timely and relevant to their respective curriculum delivery. Our Sixth Form provision is delivered as part of our Tutorial programme.

4.4 Our Personal Development curriculum is planned as a spiral curriculum, where learning is revisited and built upon as pupils progress from Year 7 to Year 11. This is outlined in our long-term curriculum plan which can be found on our website. This approach ensures that pupils deepen their understanding and develop the skills they need to thrive both in school and beyond. Our curriculum is designed to:

- Reduce vulnerabilities to harm, exploitation and unsafe relationships
- Promote healthy, respectful and equal relationships

- Build confidence, resilience and self-belief
- Support informed decision-making
- Equip young people with the skills to seek help and support
- Respond to local and national safeguarding and health trends

We know there is a proven link between pupils' health and wellbeing, and their academic progress. Crucial skills and positive attitudes developed through comprehensive Personal Development education are critical our pupils are effective learners

Our Personal Development curriculum is tailored to the needs of our pupils and community and is informed by safeguarding data, pupil voice, national and local intelligence and emerging risks. Whilst we have discrete lessons, content is reinforced through assemblies, tutor time and cross curricular links (e.g science, ICT, History) and Careers.

The DfE has set out guiding principles for effective RSHE delivery. These principles are utilised to inform our programme. These principles are reflected throughout this policy:

- Engagement with pupils
- Engagement and transparency with parents/carers
- Positivity
- Careful sequencing
- Relevant and responsive
- Skilled delivery of participatory education
- Whole school approach

5. Statutory Elements of the RSHE Curriculum

- 5.1.1 Sex Education is a mandatory element of the National Curriculum in Science. The elements of RSHE cover anatomy, puberty, biological aspects of sexual reproduction and use of hormones to control and promote fertility. These are taught to all students at Erasmus Darwin Academy.
- 5.1.2 Relationships Education is a mandatory element of Secondary Education and is delivered with a holistic and inclusive approach.
- 5.2 Erasmus Darwin Academy encourages students to talk to their parents/carers openly about RSHE issues and informing students of other avenues of support. We notify parents of upcoming discussion points that are sensitive in nature to prepare parents/carers for such conversations.

6. Curriculum Delivery

- 6.1 RSHE is taught to every year group throughout the school (Years 7-11). The curriculum is age-appropriate, inclusive and progressive, building on the young people's knowledge, and skills year on year. Our content and delivery support young people to develop a positive view of healthy relationships, being healthy and keeping safe.
- 6.1 The Academy is committed to the learning that takes place within RSHE, and therefore expects staff to set clear boundaries for the asking of questions, with emphasis on using pedagogy that ensure all students receive the same provision in all classes. Support for this is given in half termly Staff CPD for teachers of Personal Development.
- 6.2.1 When staff are delivering RSHE content, staff will continue to adhere to the Academy Safeguarding Policy and follow procedures should concerns arise.
- 6.2.2 Teachers are required as part of RSHE provision to deliver topics of a sensitive nature, whilst at the same time avoiding bias, political/personal opinions and prejudice. Staff should be aware that they

may be dealing with students who are affected by any sensitive issues, including Protected Characteristics as defined in the Equality Act or indirectly be linked with others who are. The promotion of Fundamental British values should underpin any discussion of RSHE, with all RSHE being delivered with the intention of preparing students for life in Modern Britain.

- 6.2.3 As with other subjects, the breadth of the Personal Development curriculum means that we use a wide variety of age-appropriate and evidence-based resources to support PSHE delivery. These are provided through our schemes of work, and other quality-assured reputable sources. All resources are reviewed prior to teaching to ensure they are accurate, age-appropriate, and evidence-based. Parents and carers can view examples of resources by arranging a meeting with the Subject Leader of Personal Development.
- 6.2.4 We encourage engagement from parents and carers in our Personal Development programme. We inform parents and carers about our curriculum content through the school website, half termly newsletters and EduLink messages.
- 6.2.5 Occasionally we utilise external providers to enhance our delivery of RSHE. All external provider deliver in line with our RSHE policy and safeguarding procedures and our Visitor Policy. Where an external provider is utilised, we will make sure that any materials used are appropriate, in line with our legal duties around political impartiality. Any resources delivered by an external provider will be made available for parents and carers before delivery.

7. Parents and RSHE (including the right to withdraw a child from certain aspects of RSHE)

- 7.1 Parents/Carers play a key role in the healthy promotion of RSHE learning. In order for the partnership between parents and school to be effective, the Academy will provide parental information as to when RSHE lessons are being delivered via Curriculum Overviews on the Academy website and timely correspondence when sensitive topics are being considered. This way parents are able to contribute to the overall education of the child at the time that they are learning about RSHE in their studies. We actively encourage parents to have discussions about their child's learning in all subjects, including RSHE.
 - 7.1.1 Those with parental responsibility have the right to withdraw their children from teaching about aspects of sex education. As an Academy it has been deemed that all RSHE content is invaluable to a student and can be argued as compulsory either Relationship or Health Education. After reviewing the statutory content, it is up to parents/carers to complete Appendix 3, The Request to Withdraw form.
 - 7.1.2 Any such request should be directed to the Assistant Headteacher strategically responsible for Personal Development and Subject Leader of Personal Development who will advise of next steps.
 - 7.1.3 Parents do not have the right to withdraw their pupils from relationships and health education, nor can they be withdrawn from topics taught as part of the science curriculum, including science topics related to puberty or sexual reproduction.
 - 7.1.4 Students where such a request has been made to withdraw from what parent/cares deem 'sex education' will still be taught elements of reproduction in line with the National Curriculum. These elements of RSHE cover anatomy, puberty, biological aspects of sexual reproduction and use of hormones to control and promote fertility. It is not possible for a student to be withdrawn from the Relationships element of RSHE (this includes the teaching on different types of relationships).
 - 7.1.5 Should a request be made for a student to withdraw from the Sex Education element of the curriculum by persons with parental responsibility, this will be reviewed three terms before the child's 16th birthday. This is when the decision will lay with the student. In the event a student opts to include themselves in the Sex Education' element of RSHE, all efforts will be made to ensure that they are sufficiently educated in all aspects of the curriculum prior to the end of their secondary education.

Appendix 1: Expectations of secondary school RSHE (as taken from RSHE DFE 2025 for 2026 implementation)

- *Elements of ‘sex education’ and, in line with our procedures, these are the aspects that a person with parental responsibility would have a right to withdraw their child from if all persons with parental responsibility are in agreement. Discussions about staying safe and healthy, which may include elements of discussion about objective sex education may still be included as part of wider relationships education.*

Secondary Relationship and Sex Education curriculum content

Families

Curriculum content:

1. That there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
2. How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children.
3. 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.
4. That ‘common-law marriage’ is a myth and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together or by having children.
5. That forced marriage and marrying before the age of 18 are illegal.
6. How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships.
7. 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.
8. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people's beliefs.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings might bring, including disappointment, hurt or frustration.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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:

1. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online.

13. 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).

14. 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.

15. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.

7. The concepts and laws relating to sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault.

8. 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.

9. The concepts and laws relating to domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour.¹⁰

10. That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed.

11. The concepts and laws relating to harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming, and financial exploitation.

12. The concepts and laws relating to forced marriage.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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:

1. That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. That some sexual behaviours can be harmful.
6. 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 decision making.
7. 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.
8. 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
9. The prevalence of STIs, the short and long term impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment.
10. How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour.
11. How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms.
12. 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.

Mental wellbeing

Curriculum content:

1. How to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.
2. The benefits and importance of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors, community participation and volunteering or acts of kindness for mental wellbeing and happiness.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. How to critically evaluate which activities will contribute to their overall wellbeing.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. The risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content within gaming, including the accumulation of debt.
5. 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.
6. The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online.
7. 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:

1. 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.
2. Factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious health conditions.
3. That physical activity can promote wellbeing and combat stress.
4. The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

Healthy eating

Curriculum content:

1. How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay, unhealthy weight gain, and cardiovascular disease.
2. The risks of unhealthy weight gain, including increased risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
3. The impacts of alcohol on diet and unhealthy weight gain.

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping

Curriculum content:

1. 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.
2. The law relating to the supply and possession of illegal substances.
3. 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.
4. The physical and psychological consequences of problem-use of alcohol, including alcohol dependency.
5. The dangers of the misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines.
6. 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.
7. 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:

1. Personal hygiene, germs and how they are spread, including bacteria and viruses, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.

2. 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.
3. How and when to self-care for minor ailments, and the role of pharmacists as knowledgeable healthcare professionals.
4. The importance of taking responsibility for their own health, and the benefits of regular self-examination and screening.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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:

1. 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).

2. How to recognise and manage peer influence in relation to risk-taking behaviour and personal safety, including peer influence online and on social media.

3. 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.

4. Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about violence and/or knife crime.

5. 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).

6. 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:

1. Basic treatment for common injuries and ailments.
2. Life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR.,
3. The purpose of defibrillators, when one might be needed and who can use them.

Developing bodies

Curriculum content:

1. The main changes which take place in males and females, and the implications for emotional and physical health.
2. The facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body, including brain development.
3. 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.
4. The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and menopause, and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women.

Appendix 2: Compulsory element of RSHE Curriculum Map Provision at Erasmus Darwin Academy

RSHE Mapping 2026-2028

	Personal Development Curriculum	Wider Academy subjects
Year 7	Respectful relationships, including friendships Families Healthy eating Health and prevention Being Safe Mental wellbeing Healthy eating Basic first aid	Online Relationships- ICT Online and media- ICT Respectful relationships including friendships- ICT, PE, History Mental Wellbeing- English Physical health and fitness- PE and Food Tech Healthy eating- Food Tech and Science Changing adolescent body- Science Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health- Science Drugs, alcohol and tobacco- Science
Year 8	Respectful relationships, including friendships Being safe Health and prevention Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health Mental wellbeing Drugs, alcohol and tobacco Changing adolescent body FGM	Internet safety and harms- ICT Online and media- ICT Physical health and fitness- PE Respectful Relationships including friendships- PE Mental Wellbeing- English Changing adolescent body- Science
Year 9	Respectful relationships, including friendships Being Safe Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	Respectful Relationships including friendships- PE and English Physical health and fitness- PE and Science
Year 10	Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships The Age of Consent and the law Contraception	Families- RE and English Respectful relationships, including friendships- English Health and prevention- Science Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health- Science

Year 11	Sexually Transmitted Infections Access to healthcare professionals – C-Card.	
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Appendix 3- Request to Withdraw from Sex Education

Right to Withdraw from Sex Education Request Form

(Based on statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) guidance for England from September 2026)

Parent/Carer Request to Withdraw a Student from Sex Education

Under the statutory Department for Education guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all components of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSHE in secondary schools, except for content included within the National Curriculum for Science. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk))

There is no right to withdraw from:

- Relationships Education
- Health Education
- Science curriculum content including human reproduction, puberty and biological aspects of sex education.

Parents may request withdrawal up to three terms before the student turns 16. After this point, the student may choose to receive sex education themselves.

Section A – Student Details

Student Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Year: _____

Tutor Group: _____

Section B – Parent/Carer Details

Parent/Carer Name: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Section C – Withdrawal Request

Please indicate the elements you deem to be sex education which you wish your child to be withdrawn from:

Section D – Reason for Request (Optional)

Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss any concerns with the school so that appropriate information and support can be provided.

Section E – Meeting with School

In line with statutory guidance, Subject Leader for Personal Development and Assistant Principle for Personal Development will normally invite parents/carers to discuss:

- the curriculum content,
- the educational aims of RSHE,
- any concerns raised,
- and the implications of withdrawal.

Preferred contact method:

- ☐ Telephone
☐ Email
☐ In-person meeting

Section F – Parent/Carer Declaration

I confirm that I am the parent/carers of the student named above and wish to request withdrawal from sex education as outlined in this form.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

School Use Only

Meeting Held

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Date of Meeting: _____

Staff Member(s): _____

Decision

- ☐ Request Approved
☐ Request Partially Approved
☐ Request Declined (exceptional circumstances only)

Alternative Provision Arranged

Headteacher Signature: _____

Date: _____

Notes for Parents/Carers

Further information about statutory RSHE guidance can be found via:

- [Department for Education RSHE Guidance](#)
- [RSHE Parent Guides \(GOV.UK\)](#)