



RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION (RSHE) POLICY

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Bancroft's
Independent Co-educational Day School 7–18

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RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND HEALTH EDUCATION (RSHE) POLICY 2026

1. Introduction and Policy Aims

This policy sets out Bancroft's School's approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). At Bancroft's, we believe that RSHE is a vital part of education and personal development. Through high-quality, age-appropriate and inclusive RSHE, pupils develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes they need to lead healthy, safe and fulfilling lives, both now and in the future. RSHE forms an integral part of our Learning for Life programme and contributes directly to safeguarding, wellbeing, character development and preparation for adult life.

The programme reflects the School's values of Balance, Integrity, Excellence, Kindness, Curiosity and Courage, and seeks to equip pupils to navigate an increasingly complex world confidently, responsibly and respectfully.

This policy aims to:

- Explain the School's approach to RSHE.
- Outline how RSHE is delivered and monitored.
- Inform parents and carers about curriculum content.
- Clarify the respective roles of the School and parents.
- Support safeguarding and pupil wellbeing.
- Ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

2. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Department for Education Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Statutory Guidance (as amended).
- Equality Act 2010.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (as amended).
- Children Act 1989
 - Children Act 2004
 - Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
 - Human Rights Act 1998
- ISI Inspection Framework.
- PSHE Association Programme of Study and associated guidance.

In line with revised statutory guidance, the School's approach reflects the principles of:

- engagement with pupils and parents;
- positivity;
- careful curriculum sequencing;
- relevance;
- responsiveness to need;
- skilled delivery; and
- a whole-school approach.

3. Definitions

RSHE consists of three interconnected strands.

Relationships Education

Relationships Education develops the knowledge, skills and values needed to form and maintain healthy, respectful relationships. It explores friendships, family relationships, intimate relationships, online relationships, communication, boundaries, consent, exploitation, pornography, sexual harassment, diversity and respect for others.

Sex Education

Sex Education provides factual, age-appropriate information about human sexuality, sexual development and sexual health. It includes reproduction, contraception and sexually transmitted infections.

Health Education

Health Education develops understanding of physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Topics include physical health, puberty, emotional literacy, mental health, healthy lifestyles, substance misuse, personal safety, online safety and accessing support.

4. Ethos and Aims

Young people today live their lives seamlessly between the online and offline worlds. Whilst technology brings opportunity, it also presents risks and challenges. Effective RSHE enables pupils to understand these challenges, build resilience and make informed decisions.

At Bancroft's, RSHE seeks to help pupils:

- develop confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness;
- build healthy, respectful and fulfilling relationships;
- understand personal boundaries and consent;
- recognise and challenge discrimination, prejudice and harmful stereotypes;
- understand the law relating to relationships and sexual behaviour;
- develop resilience and positive mental health;
- recognise abuse, coercion, exploitation and manipulation;
- stay safe online and offline;
- access appropriate support when needed;
- become thoughtful, responsible and informed citizens.

Pupils are provided with accurate scientific and medical information within a broader moral, ethical and social framework. The School promotes respect for different beliefs, backgrounds and experiences while encouraging pupils to engage critically, thoughtfully and respectfully with complex issues.

RSHE contributes directly to safeguarding by helping pupils recognise situations that may place them or others at risk and by developing the confidence to seek help when required.

5. Inclusion, Equality and Diversity

Bancroft's is committed to an inclusive RSHE curriculum that reflects the diversity of modern society and the values of equality, dignity and mutual respect.

Teaching:

- complies with the Equality Act 2010;
- reflects a range of family structures and experiences;
- promotes understanding of protected characteristics;
- challenges discrimination, sexism, prejudice and harassment;
- supports pupils in understanding diversity and inclusion; and
- encourages respectful discussion of differing viewpoints.

Content is delivered sensitively and appropriately, taking account of pupils' age, maturity, background and individual circumstances.

Teaching reflects current statutory guidance and supports all pupils with dignity and respect, including those who may be questioning aspects of their identity, while maintaining the School's safeguarding responsibilities.

6. Delivery of RSHE

RSHE is delivered primarily through the Learning for Life programme from Thirds to Upper Sixth. It is taught by specialist Learning for Life staff in Key Stages 3 and 4 and by tutors and specialist staff in the Sixth Form. External speakers and professionals are also used where appropriate to enhance provision.

The curriculum follows a progressive model, revisiting key themes at increasing levels of complexity as pupils mature.

RSHE complements the School's wider online safety arrangements, including filtering, monitoring, cyber-security education and the safe use of digital technologies.

Content is responsive to safeguarding concerns, pupil need and developments in society and technology.

Teaching methods may include:

- discussion and debate;
- reflection activities;
- written tasks;
- case studies;
- scenario-based learning;
- visiting speakers;
- workshops; and
- off-timetable events.

Parents receive regular curriculum and speaker information.

7. Curriculum Content

Key Stage 3

Topics include:

- mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- friendships and healthy relationships;
- self-esteem and self-concept;
- prejudice, discrimination and equality;
- digital literacy and online safety including;
 - image-based abuse;
 - online coercion;
 - online misogyny;
 - harmful online communities;
 - algorithmic influence;
 - AI-generated content and deepfakes;
 - generative artificial intelligence (AI), deepfakes, synthetic media and the ways in which these technologies can be used positively or misused to manipulate, exploit or harm others.
 - digital manipulation and scams.
- puberty and physical development;
- consent and personal boundaries;
- physical health;
- alcohol and drugs;
- personal safety and risk management.

Key Stage 4

Topics include:

- romantic and intimate relationships;
- healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviours;
- coercive control and domestic abuse;
- contraception and sexual health;
- sexually transmitted infections;
- sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- exploitation and grooming;
- pornography and unrealistic representations of relationships;
- sexting and sextortion;
- financial decision-making;
- gambling harms;
- mental health and wellbeing.

Sixth Form

Topics include:

- consent and communication;
- healthy adult relationships;
- workplace conduct and harassment;
- fertility and reproductive health;
- parenting and family life;
- managing independent living;

- finances and economic wellbeing;
- addiction and risk-taking behaviours;
- online relationships;
- misinformation and disinformation;
- AI, deepfakes and digital influence;
- preparing for higher education and employment.

8. Contribution of Other Curriculum Areas

RSHE is supported by learning across the wider curriculum, including in PE, Enrichment and through personal development activities.

In particular, the curriculum is supported by teaching in:

Science

Pupils learn about reproduction, puberty, human development, fertility, contraception and sexually transmitted infections as part of the statutory science curriculum.

Religious Studies

Pupils consider ethical and religious perspectives relating to issues such as abortion, sexuality, discrimination and family life.

These curriculum areas complement and reinforce Learning for Life provision whilst maintaining their distinct academic focus.

9. Safeguarding, Confidentiality and Disclosures

RSHE forms an important part of the School's safeguarding framework. Through the curriculum, pupils learn to recognise:

- abuse and neglect;
- unhealthy relationships;
- coercive control;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- exploitation;
- online harms;
- harassment and discrimination;
- grooming and radicalisation.

Pupils are taught to recognise and challenge prejudice-based harm, including racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, faith-based prejudice, misogyny, misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and other forms of discriminatory behaviour. The School maintains a zero-tolerance approach to these and such behaviours are never dismissed as banter, part of growing up or harmless conduct.

The School recognises that child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment, can occur both inside and outside school and online. Such behaviour is never tolerated and is addressed in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the School's safeguarding procedures.

The School recognises the importance of educating pupils about Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), including the attitudes, behaviours and social influences that can contribute to harassment,

abuse and violence. Through the curriculum, pupils learn to recognise harmful behaviours, challenge stereotypes and develop respectful relationships based on equality and mutual respect.

The School recognises that persistent mental health difficulties may be an indicator that a pupil has experienced or is at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns. Staff remain alert to this possibility and respond in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

The curriculum adopts a preventative approach and teaches pupils to understand the continuum between harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence. Pupils learn to recognise inappropriate behaviour, challenge harmful attitudes and understand when and how to seek support.

Teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.

Where information suggests that a pupil or another person may be at risk of harm, staff must follow the School's safeguarding procedures and share concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff will handle disclosures sensitively, record concerns appropriately and act in accordance with safeguarding policy.

Pupils are regularly reminded of sources of support available both within and beyond the School.

10. Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues

Some RSHE topics are sensitive and may generate differing views.

Teachers establish clear expectations for respectful discussion and create a safe environment in which pupils can ask questions, explore ideas and engage critically with evidence and differing perspectives.

Teaching is age-appropriate, balanced and educational. The purpose is to develop understanding and critical thinking rather than prescribe personal beliefs or values.

11. Working with Parents and Carers

The School recognises that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children.

Bancroft's seeks to work in partnership with families by:

- providing information about curriculum content;
- consulting where appropriate;
- signposting relevant resources;
- encouraging discussion at home; and
- responding openly to questions or concerns.

Parents are encouraged to contact the Head of Learning for Life, Housemaster or Housemistress, or Deputy Head (Pastoral) if they wish to discuss any aspect of RSHE provision.

12. Visiting Speakers and External Organisations

External contributors are used to enhance and enrich learning.

All external providers are selected for their expertise, educational value and suitability. Sessions are planned within the wider curriculum and supervised by School staff. Appropriate safeguarding and quality assurance procedures apply.

13. Right to Withdraw

Parents may request that their child be withdrawn from some or all aspects of Sex Education delivered as part of RSHE.

There is no right to withdraw from:

- Relationships Education;
- Health Education; or
- the statutory Science curriculum.

Before any request is agreed, parents will meet with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Head of Learning for Life to discuss the content and educational purpose of the curriculum. Except in exceptional circumstances, requests will normally be granted up to three terms before the pupil turns sixteen. Thereafter, if the pupil wishes to receive Sex Education, the School will make appropriate arrangements for this to occur.

Alternative supervised educational provision will be provided during periods of withdrawal.

14. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of RSHE is monitored through:

- pupil feedback;
- staff feedback;
- lesson observations;
- curriculum review;
- safeguarding trends;
- parental feedback where appropriate; and
- governor oversight.

The policy will be reviewed biennially, or sooner where legislative, safeguarding or educational developments require revision.