



ALDENHAM
— SCHOOL —

Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education

&

Sex Education Policy

SEPTEMBER 2026
REVIEWED BY HEAD OF PSHE

CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

Sarah Allmon

DATE 14/09/2026

PSHE & RSE Policy 2026–27

1. Context and Statutory Framework

All schools must provide a curriculum that is broadly based, balanced and meets the needs of all students. Under section 78 of the Education Act 2002 and the Academies Act 2010, the PSHE curriculum must promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students, and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, updated by DfE Statutory Guidance (July 2025), make Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education compulsory for all secondary-aged students, including those in independent schools. PSHE as a whole remains compulsory in independent schools.

This policy is further informed by: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024); the Equality Act 2010; the SEND Code of Practice (2015); Behaviour and Discipline in Schools; Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools; Preventing and Tackling Bullying; Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools; and Promoting Fundamental British Values in SMSC.

This policy reflects the updated DfE Relationships, Sex and Health Education statutory guidance (July 2025), including new requirements relating to online harms, consent, ethical relationships, and student rights.

“Children and young people need knowledge and skills that will enable them to make informed and ethical decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships. High quality, evidence-based teaching can help prepare students for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.”

- DfE RSHE Statutory Guidance, July 2025

2. Our Vision for PSHE Education

At Aldenham School, we believe that every young person deserves an education that prepares them not just academically, but as rounded, resilient individuals ready to navigate the complexities of modern life. PSHE sits at the heart of this commitment.

We deliver PSHE through a whole-school approach, recognising it not as an add-on but as a fundamental part of our students' development. We believe that high-quality PSHE is essential in supporting young people to become confident, healthy and respectful members of society.

Through high-quality PSHE, we equip young people with the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to keep themselves healthy and safe, to develop their wellbeing, and to build positive, respectful relationships throughout their lives.

We are committed to:

- **Supporting the whole young person** - recognising that students' emotional and social development directly impacts their capacity to learn.
- **Creating a safe, inclusive environment** where every student feels valued and able to discuss concerns without fear or stigma.

- **Building foundations for adulthood** - providing age-appropriate learning that prepares young people for healthy relationships, independent living and active citizenship.
- **Working in partnership with families**, recognising that parents are important educators in many aspects of relationships and health and providing them with platforms such as “Tooled up”.
- Embedding PSHE **across school life** - not just in fortnightly timetabled lessons, but through our values, relationships and everyday interactions.
- Ensuring all students understand the **protected characteristics** and the importance of equality and respect.

3. Our Programme: Jigsaw PSHE

At Aldenham School we use **Jigsaw PSHE 11–16** as our curriculum framework for Years 7–11. Jigsaw provides a comprehensive, carefully sequenced scheme of work that brings consistency and progression to students’ learning and is kept continuously updated to reflect evolving statutory guidance. The programme is distinctive in:

- **Emotional literacy at the core** - systematically developing students’ emotional vocabulary so they can recognise, name and discuss feelings in themselves and others.
- **Mindfulness approach** - each lesson incorporates mindfulness activities supporting self-regulation and a focused, safe learning space.
- **Spiral curriculum** - topics are revisited across year groups with increasing depth and complexity.
- **Participative teaching** - discussion, role-play, case studies and critical evaluation develop skills alongside knowledge.

The Jigsaw programme is aligned to the PSHE Association Programme of Study and the DfE RSHE statutory guidance. The full mapping document ‘11-16-mapping-to-dfe-statutory-rshe-outcomes Aldenham 2026-27’ and the PSHE SOW 2026-27 are attached to this policy and available on the school website.

Curriculum Overview - Years 7–11

Term	Unit / Puzzle	Key Content
Autumn 1	Being Me in My World	Identity, belonging, rights and responsibilities; online identity; gateway emotions; peer pressure; safeguarding awareness.
Autumn 2	Celebrating Difference	Anti-bullying (including cyberbullying, racism, homophobic bullying); stereotypes; Equality Act 2010; discrimination; protected characteristics.
Spring 1	Dreams and Goals	Goal setting; aspirations; careers and economic awareness; financial literacy; resilience and grit; skills for employment.
Spring 2	Healthy Me	Physical health; mental wellbeing; drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping; healthy eating; sleep; personal safety; first aid.
Summer 1	Relationships	Friendships; family life; intimate relationships; consent; communication; conflict resolution; bereavement and loss; online relationships.
Summer 2	Changing Me	RSE in the context of change: puberty; reproduction; contraception; STIs; pregnancy choices; body image; power and ethics in relationships.

Sixth Form Provision

PSHE in the Sixth Form is delivered through a programme of dedicated workshops and enrichment opportunities across the academic year. Workshop topics are selected through consultation with the Sixth Form PSHE Committee to ensure provision remains relevant, responsive and focused on current student needs.

PSHE is further reinforced through tutor time activities, assemblies, guest speakers and wider aspects of school life, creating a seamless whole-school approach. This collaborative model embeds strong student voice, with students helping to identify key themes, shape provision and contribute to the development of the PSHE programme.

4. Curriculum Time and Delivery

Aldenham School allocates **one period per fortnight** to dedicated PSHE lessons in Years 7–11, delivered by the dedicated PSHE Team. This explicit curriculum time is reinforced and extended through:

- Assemblies and chapel services
- Tutor time with class tutors
- The praise, reward and recognition system
- Staff modelling PSHE values in all interactions
- Student leadership and contribution to school community life
- Pastoral support structures

Students must not be withdrawn from PSHE for other activities (e.g. music lessons, LAMDA sessions), as PSHE is a statutory component of the curriculum and attendance is therefore compulsory.

5. Relationships and Sex Education

The RSE curriculum is structured to address all five statutory content domains defined by the DfE: Families; Respectful Relationships (including friendships); Online and Media; Being Safe; and Intimate and Sexual Relationships.

Families

- Different types of committed, stable relationships and how these contribute to wellbeing.
- Why marriage and civil partnership are significant choices, including legal rights.
- That forced marriage and marriage under 18 are illegal.
- How families change; roles and responsibilities of parents and carers.

Respectful Relationships (online and offline)

- Characteristics of positive relationships: consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, boundaries, and conflict management.
- Students are taught that healthy relationships require ethical behaviour that goes beyond legal consent, including kindness, respect, and awareness of power imbalances.

- That ethical behaviour goes beyond consent - it involves kindness, care and awareness of power dynamics.
- How stereotypes (sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability) cause damage and can normalise inequality.
- Different types of bullying; responsibilities of bystanders.
- How pornography presents a distorted picture and can negatively influence attitudes and behaviours.
- Recognising misogyny and other forms of prejudice; developing positive conceptions of gender.

Online Safety and Awareness

- Rights, responsibilities and opportunities online; privacy settings and personal information.
- The law on sharing images: keeping or forwarding sexual images of under-18s is a crime - including AI-generated imagery.
- Understanding deepfakes and their potential harms.
- Risks of sextortion and online scams.
- How technology can be used in bullying, harassment, stalking and coercive control.
- Where to get support; reporting tools (CEOP, Report Remove).

Being Safe

- How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries.
- What constitutes sexual harassment, sexual violence and exploitation - it is never the victim's fault.
- Laws relating to sexual violence, domestic abuse, grooming, forced marriage and harmful sexual behaviour.
- That non-fatal strangulation and suffocation are serious criminal offences and are associated with high levels of harm and risk.
- The physical and emotional damage of FGM, virginity testing and hymenoplasty, and the law.
- How to increase personal safety; where to seek support.

Intimate and Sexual Relationships, including Sexual Health

- Sexual consent and the capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time.
- The full range of contraceptive choices and their efficacy.
- How STIs (including HIV) are transmitted; how risk is reduced; importance of testing.
- Pregnancy choices with medically accurate information.
- How alcohol and drugs can lead to risky behaviour.
- Where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

6. Health Education

The Health Education curriculum covers all statutory areas: mental wellbeing; internet safety and harms; physical health and fitness; healthy eating; drugs, alcohol and tobacco; health and prevention; basic first aid; and changing adolescent bodies.

Mental Wellbeing

- How to talk about emotions accurately using appropriate vocabulary.
- Benefits of physical activity, sleep, time outdoors and community connection.
- Common mental health conditions (anxiety, depression) presented factually.
- That gambling can lead to serious mental health harms.

- The relationship between substance use and mental health.

Wellbeing Online

- Risks of excessive screen time; benefits of healthy boundaries with technology.
- Impact of unhealthy social comparison online; how people curate their online presence.
- Risks of online gambling and gambling-like content in gaming.
- How advertising and information is targeted; prevalence of misinformation.

Physical Health & Healthy Eating

- Characteristics of a healthy lifestyle; links between inactivity and ill health.
- How to maintain healthy eating; links between poor diet and health risks.
- Impacts of alcohol on diet and weight.

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Vaping

- Facts about illegal drugs and associated risks, including synthetic drugs.
- Facts about vaping, including specific harms to young people - distinct from tobacco.
- Physical and psychological risks of alcohol; what constitutes low-risk consumption in adulthood.
- Harms from smoking tobacco.
- The law on supply and possession of illegal substances.

Health Protection and Prevention

- Personal hygiene; treatment and prevention of infection; role of antibiotics.
- Importance of self-examination, screening and vaccination.
- Importance of good sleep; impact of screens on sleep.
- How to navigate the healthcare system (GPs, A&E, pharmacies, sexual health services).

Basic First Aid

- Basic treatment for common injuries.
- Life-saving skills, including CPR.
- Purpose of defibrillators and how to use them.

Developing Bodies (Puberty)

- Main physical and emotional changes during puberty.
- Menstrual and gynaecological health.
- Reproductive health, fertility and menopause; impact of lifestyle on fertility.

7. Parental Right to Withdraw from Sex Education

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. This right does not extend to:

- Relationships Education
- Health Education
- Science curriculum content about reproduction

Process for Withdrawal Requests

Parents wishing to exercise this right should contact the **Deputy Head (Pastoral) & DSL (Lisa Lobo, llobo@aldenham.com)**. A meeting will be arranged to understand the request, clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum, and discuss the potential impact of withdrawal, including social and emotional effects on the child.

Except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child up to and until three terms before the child turns 16.

Student Right to Opt Back In

Students are explicitly informed of this right through PSHE and pastoral systems: from three terms before a student turns 16, they may choose to opt back into sex education even if their parent has requested withdrawal. The school will make arrangements to provide sex education during that period

If a student is withdrawn from sex education, the school will ensure they receive purposeful alternative education during the withdrawal period. A record of all such decisions is maintained by the school.

8. Inclusive Practice and Equality

Aldenham School is committed to an inclusive PSHE/RSE curriculum that is accessible to and respectful of all students and families. We comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Teaching about Families and Relationships

Our curriculum presents families in all their forms - single-parent, same-sex parent, adoptive, foster, kinship, blended and multigenerational families. No student is stigmatised based on their home circumstances. All family structures are represented positively, with emphasis on committed, stable relationships that provide love, care and security.

LGBT

LGBT content is integrated throughout the PSHE/RSE programme - not delivered as a standalone unit. Students learn that all people deserve respect regardless of differences. Sexual health content (including STIs) is presented in a way that is relevant for all students, including those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Biological Sex and Gender Reassignment

Students are taught the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment. Teaching recognises that people have legal rights by virtue of their biological sex, and that people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment have protection from discrimination and should be treated with respect and dignity.

In teaching this topic, Aldenham School is mindful that, beyond the facts and the law there is significant debate. The school does not endorse any particular view or teach contested positions as fact. Aldenham avoid language and activities which reinforce gender stereotypes.

Challenging Stereotypes

Throughout the curriculum, we actively challenge harmful stereotypes, including gender stereotypes that limit aspirations or contribute to disrespectful behaviour. Students learn to recognise misogyny and other forms of prejudice, understanding the links between sexist attitudes and violence against women and girls.

Students with SEND

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive planned and sometimes differentiated PSHE/RSE education that meets their needs. Teachers adapt lessons using visual supports, simplified language, concrete examples, multi-sensory approaches and personalised resources where appropriate.

Religion and Belief

Aldenham School respects the religious backgrounds and beliefs of all families. PSHE/RSE content is delivered in a factual, objective manner, presenting scientific and medical information accurately whilst remaining sensitive to diverse religious perspectives.

9. Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Topics

Sensitive and controversial issues will arise in PSHE/RSE. Teachers handle these constructively: offering a balanced presentation of views, avoiding personal bias, and maintaining a classroom climate where all students feel safe to express reasonable views without fear. Teachers will challenge factually inaccurate statements; they will not present controversial views as devil's advocate.

Ground rules are established and reaffirmed throughout the course.

Suicide Prevention

Mental wellbeing content addresses many aspects of suicide prevention: recognising and talking about emotions, coping when things go wrong, and seeking help from trusted adults. Where suicide prevention is addressed more directly, the school follows evidence-based guidance and ensures staff have appropriate training before delivery. Teachers use accurate, straightforward language, take care not to discuss methods, and avoid emotive language, images or videos that could signpost students towards dangerous content.

Eating Disorders

When addressing eating disorders, staff use language which does not romanticise these conditions, and avoid discussing methods of restriction, bingeing or purging. Any concerns about individual students trigger immediate safeguarding procedures.

Sexual Harassment and Violence

Students are taught that anyone can be a victim of sexual violence regardless of sex, sexual orientation or any other protected characteristic, and that the victim is never to blame. Staff are conscious of everyday sexism and misogyny and take action to build a culture where prejudice is identified and tackled. Where misogynistic ideas are expressed, staff challenge the ideas, not the person.

Answering Difficult Questions

Questions are answered in an age- and maturity-appropriate way. Teachers are not obliged to answer a question directly in class if it is inappropriate to do so - questions can be acknowledged and addressed individually. Students are signposted to trusted adults and appropriate external services. Anonymous question boxes may be used.

10. Safeguarding and Child Protection

PSHE/RSE has a crucial role in Aldenham's safeguarding provision, equipping students with the knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe and to seek help. Through the programme, students learn to recognise unsafe relationships and situations, understand that abuse is never their fault, develop vocabulary to express concerns, and build confidence to keep seeking help until they are heard.

Managing Disclosures

PSHE/RSE lessons, particularly those on sensitive topics, may lead to disclosures. Disclosures made during PSHE lessons are treated in the same way as disclosures made in any other context, following the school's safeguarding procedures and reported to the Safeguarding team without delay.

At the start of the year, students are informed how confidentiality works - personal information is treated with care, but if a teacher is worried about a student's safety, they must share this with people who can help.

All staff are familiar with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Where external visitors contribute to delivery, they are briefed on safeguarding procedures before working with students and must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

Teenage Relationship Abuse

RSE content supports students in recognising warning signs of relationship abuse including: changes in mood, withdrawal, isolation from friends and family, physical signs of injury, depression, inappropriate sexual language or behaviour, and making excuses for a partner. Any concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately.

Signposting to Support

Students are regularly informed about sources of support: named trusted adults within school; the School Health Centre; Childline; The Mix; CEOP; Report Remove; local sexual health services; and emergency services.

11. Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents are important educators in many aspects of relationships and health. Aldenham School works proactively to keep parents informed about PSHE/RSE, to support them in continuing conversations at home, and to address any concerns.

Viewing Teaching Materials

Parents may view curriculum materials used in PSHE/RSE on request. To arrange access, please contact the Head of PSHE (Jade Silver, jsilver@aldenham.com). The school website provides curriculum overviews for each year group and the PSHE sway keeps parents up to date with updates.

12. External Contributors

External contributors - including health promotion specialists, school nurses, community police officers and fire officers - can make a valuable contribution to PSHE. Their involvement is carefully planned to complement the programme. A member of school staff must always be present during these sessions. All external contributors must be briefed on safeguarding procedures and the school's child protection policy before working with students.

13. Staff Training and Professional Development

High-quality PSHE/RSE requires confident, well-supported teachers. Aldenham School provides:

- **Comprehensive Jigsaw resources** - detailed lesson plans, teaching resources, assessment materials and guidance ensuring consistency across year groups.
- **Regular professional development** covering: effective use of the Jigsaw programme; teaching sensitive and controversial topics; managing difficult questions; safeguarding and responding to disclosures; creating safe, inclusive classroom environments; adolescent development; and current issues (online safety, mental health, sexual harassment).
- **Collaborative planning and review** - staff have opportunities to share effective practice and discuss challenges.

- **Senior leadership support** - the PSHE lead and SLT provide ongoing support, including advising on complex situations.

14. Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation

Teachers collect evidence of learning to make judgements about student progress, including: classroom discussion and formative assessment activities; presentations; written evidence; group work; and observations. Student voice is central - students' views are gathered through lesson feedback and used to adapt and improve the PSHE/RSE programme.

The PSHE lead monitors provision through: review of planning and teaching materials; lesson observations; analysis of student work and assessment information; student voice activities; staff feedback on confidence and support needs, and feedback from the DSL.

The governing body monitors this policy on an annual basis and reviews teaching materials to ensure they accord with the school's ethos.

15. Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

Ensure the school meets its statutory duties; approve this policy annually; monitor implementation; engage with consultation processes.

Headteacher

Ensure RSE and Health Education are taught consistently across the school; support staff; ensure adequate resources and CPD.

PSHE Lead (Jade Silver)

Overall coordination; keep up to date with statutory requirements; support staff; monitor quality and impact; lead policy review; liaise with external agencies and keep parents up to date.

DSL (Lisa Lobo)

Oversight of safeguarding disclosures arising from PSHE lessons; first point of contact for parental withdrawal requests.

All Teaching Staff

Deliver high-quality PSHE/RSE; reinforce learning throughout school life; respond appropriately to disclosures; model values; engage with CPD.

Students

Engage fully in PSHE/RSE and treat others with respect and sensitivity during discussions.

16. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Pastoral care policy
- Student code of conduct Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Strategy
- ICT – Online Safety Policy
- Equal opportunities for students' policy
- Special Educational Needs Disability Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

17. Intended Outcomes

As a result of our PSHE and RSE programme, students will:

- Develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to manage their lives now and in the future.
- Learn to make responsible decisions about alcohol, drugs, relationships and future careers.
- Recognise and manage risk, and take increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- Understand the importance of wellbeing and how to tackle issues that affect their ability to learn.
- Build healthy, positive relationships based on respect, kindness and mutual trust.
- Develop skills such as teamwork, communication, resilience and emotional literacy.
- Be encouraged to make positive contributions to their families, school and communities.
- Explore differences and learn to value diversity in all its forms.
- Reflect on their own individual values and attitudes.
- Identify and articulate feelings and emotions, and manage difficult situations positively.
- Learn about the world of work and manage money and finances effectively.

18. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually. The next scheduled review is **June 2027**. Aldenham School welcomes comments from parents about the PSHE/RSE programme and maintains a record of all such comments.

Key supporting documents (available on request):

- 11-16-mapping-to-dfe-statutory-rshe-outcomes Aldenham 2026-27
- PSHE SOW 2026-27
- Sex Education in Jigsaw 11-16 and Right to Withdraw Students
- Jigsaw Snapshot PSHE 11-16 Curriculum Overview