

Grow Independent School



RSHE Policy

Policy Document (2024-2025)

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Approved by:	A Lee (Chair of Govs)

At Grow, we are committed to providing an accessible and inclusive environment for all our students, staff, parents, and visitors. We strive to ensure that everyone can fully participate in our educational community, regardless of any physical, sensory, cognitive, or neurodiverse conditions.

We can provide information in multiple formats, including printed, electronic, and audio versions. Please let us know your preferred format. We offer translation and interpretation services to support non-English speakers and those who use sign language.

We value feedback from our community to help us improve our accessibility measures. If you have any suggestions or require assistance, please contact us: office@growschool.co.uk

Thank you for helping us make Grow a welcoming and accessible environment for everyone.

Curriculum Intent

For all students at Grow, the overall intent is that each pupil engages, achieves, and makes the most personal progress they can over time to enable them to have the most fulfilling, enjoyable, and independent life possible.

PSHE and RSHE didn't used to be prioritised so much in schools. Now young people have access to more information and risk at a younger age. Below are the main reasons why RSHE is a statutory requirement and is prioritised in this school:

Develop life skills and knowledge

- Communication/oracy and listening
- Healthy relationships
- Resilience
- Look after your physical and mental health
- Critical thinking to make good choices

Safety

- Preventative
- Staying safe in school, online, in the world
- Reporting concerns

A safe space to talk

- Counter negative influence (Including the web)
- Consider alternative viewpoints

School culture and behaviour

- Respect others and treat them well
- We talk about things

Statutory requirements in secondary education

- From 2020, Relationships and sex Education became compulsory in all secondary schools
- Following consultations with parents, young people and professionals, the Department for Education published statutory guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education.
- A new focus in the requirements was on supporting young people to have healthy and consensual relationships (previously, only sex education was

compulsory and was covered mainly in Science).

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning teaching for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Pupils with SEND typically experience more barriers to their learning than other children. The following are some of the key challenges that may affect their learning:

- Their behaviour – some pupils with SEND struggle with self-regulation, difficulties with focus and challenges with accessing learning materials This can mean pupils with SEND are more likely to leave the classroom and/or disengage with their learning.
- Socialisation skills – many pupils with SEND struggle with socialisation meaning that making friends, group tasks and discussion based activities can be challenging
- Reading and writing – a challenge that is seen in dyslexic pupils but also those with some physical disabilities, those with speech and language difficulties or students with PMLD (Profound and multiple learning disability)
- Their cognitive ability – some students with SEND are working at a much lower cognitive level than their actual age meaning they struggle to access the lesson content when it is not sufficiently adapted
- Their concentration levels – this is a trait often seen in pupils with ADHD but can manifest in many ways for a number of SEND students e.g. a lack of concentration because of something triggering that took place before school

Implementation

Our RSHE curriculum has been developed following research carried out by Life Lessons, the methodology of which included pupil focus groups, teacher focus groups, SENCo interview, PSHE lead interview and class observations into what works in special schools for teaching RSHE.

Key Challenges for Teaching RSHE to SEND Learners

Research found that schools were experiencing the following challenges:

- Pupil engagement with the subject matter
 - Some students struggle to see the relevance of RSHE/PSHE

- Difficulties with emotional regulation and/or maintaining focus
- Challenges with discussion-led/group learning
- Complexities in terms of the range of needs within the class
 - Disparity between learning age and chronological age
 - Catering for a wide range of needs within one classroom
 - Pupils are not always assessing risk – vulnerable to harmful behaviours
 - Pupils parroting of others’ language/views without considering their own
 - Challenges with understanding nuances, literal thinking due to their need
 - The need for clear guidelines on what is and isn’t appropriate
- The curriculum and resources were not appropriate for SEND pupils

SEND Curriculum and Resources

- Up to date and relevant resources that meet the needs of students
- Pupils’ poor working memory and struggles with information retention meaning more lesson time is needed
- Having enough time to cover the content in a way that is accessible for students

Our curriculum follows the 5 key recommendations, as referenced in the research, for teaching RSHE to SEND Learners.

Recommendation 1: Language

To safeguard effectively and to support pupils to develop healthy relationships, it’s important that they understand key concepts to be able to recognise and report harmful behaviour. To support pupil engagement, inclusive language and resources helps pupils see the relevance of RSHE to their own lives.

- Use inclusive language and resources
- Make sure images are inclusive of all pupils
- Consider all protected characteristics with language choices e.g. ‘most girls’
- Use straightforward, medically/scientifically correct language and explicit explanations
- Avoid euphemisms and analogies e.g. ‘jumping into bed’
- Glossary of key terms with simple definitions
- Pre and post-teach key vocabulary where possible
- Consider vocabulary based activities e.g match the word with the definition, use the word in a sentence

- Use key terms for recall and retrieval activities as well as introducing new topics
- Dual-coding for key terms e.g. use pictures to support pupil learning
- Consider listing other synonyms they may know e.g. slang words they may be using or have heard
- Use a range of resources and methods to support language learning
- Consider images, videos, role play, practical demonstrations, audio, real life objects e.g. condoms, menstrual products Use narratives with fictional characters to explore different experiences relating to the topics being covered.
- Support staff with responding to questions and inappropriate behaviour
- Provide CPD for all staff and not just RSHE teachers to support a whole-school approach to RSHE including SEND support
- Provide staff guidance around using a matter of fact approach/tone and clear and consistent language
- Support staff to find an appropriate and private space to answer questions if necessary
- School-wide scripted responses are a good way to ensure a consistent approach to managing challenging questions and behaviours.

Recommendation 2: Participation and Engagement

Engagement within RSHE is going to look differently for all pupils. It's important we encourage different methods of participation to engage pupils. The more engagement, the better the pupil outcomes.

- Encourage pupils to contribute in ways they feel comfortable doing so and that work for them
- Writing their thoughts/opinions in a journal
- Anonymous question boxes
- Holding up visual prompt cards e.g. true/false, yes/no
- Use their personal lives and/or interests to engage pupils
- Find ways to incorporate activities that are based around their interests to engage pupils
- Use real-life examples to give context to concepts and ideas
- Localisation helps pupils to see the relevance of lesson content so find opportunities in your existing resources to include facts/data/pictures relevant to their local area.
- Be explicit with the 'why'
- Support pupils to understand why they are learning each topic and how it will support them in their individual goals e.g. becoming more independent, having positive friendships, becoming an engineer.
- Use interests to engage students

- Be explicit with the 'why'

Recommendation 3: Safe Spaces

To feel confident to engage in RSHE topics, specifically more sensitive and difficult topics, pupils require a safe space where they can voice their opinions and questions without fear of judgement.

- Consider groupings
- Most pupils we spoke to felt more comfortable speaking with other pupils with SEND
- Handle SEND groupings sensitively so pupils do not feel singled out because of their SEND
- Arrange smaller groups of pupils for discussion/tasks where possible and consider having a mix of SEND and non-SEND pupils who can benefit from each others' experiences and opinions during discussion.
- Consider additional small group sessions
- Check understanding of nuances of topics
- Allow for questions/discussion and avoid risk of bullying
- Use distancing techniques
- Role play, social stories, video clips
- Have clear guidelines
- Ground rules for the classroom
- Clear start and end to lessons with space for support for difficult topics
- Support staff with CPD around managing disclosures, challenging questions and protective interrupting.

Recommendation 4: Teaching and Learning

Whether teaching in a specialist provision or a mainstream classroom, it's important all pupils can access the information being taught. Most of the adaptations made for SEND pupils will support all pupils e.g. EAL, low ability, low reading age and others.

- Give pupils extra time to process information and complete tasks
- Support with writing prompts, worksheets, gap-fill tasks
- Give examples to pupils
- Model answering questions, starting a task or discussions
- Regularly check for understanding
- Go at a slower pace and allow time to return to topics where knowledge gaps exist
- Plan repetition and knowledge checks into your lessons

- A variety of assessment tools e.g. confidence scales, multiple choice, matching images to definitions, verbal explanations
- Break information down into smaller chunks
- Use visuals to support learning
- Reinforce learning using a variety of methods e.g. games, stories, pictures, videos
- Do not patronise or make assumptions based on their need and/or disability

Recommendation 5: Emotional Support

Emotional regulation can be a barrier for pupils when teaching difficult topics or those that might be triggering for pupils with specific experiences.

- Consider time-out passes and/or learning breaks
- Support pupils with safe spaces outside the classroom and trusted adults
- Use zones of regulation or similar approaches to support pupils to articulate their feelings and take appropriate steps to regulate their emotions
- Explicit teaching of recognising emotions in themselves and in others will support pupils, particularly with ASC
- Give pupils and their parents/carers advance warning of all topics that will be taught
- We work closely with our SENDCo and Pastoral Leads to identify triggering topics to facilitate conversations in advance with pupils/families
- Offer alternatives to pupils for these topics e.g. alternative spaces, time-out so they can still receive information but in a way they feel safe and comfortable.

Our whole-school approach to RSHE, aims to support a healthy school culture through a “Watch” “Discuss” and “Do” model, which allows teachers to facilitate the discussion. It is relatable; we put our young people at the heart of RSHE and encourage learners to interact with the material and relate it back to their own lives and experiences. It is inclusive; our video library models openness to our pupils and provides positive role models to reflect the diversity of young people.



**Discussion
based**



**Connects directly
with lives of
young people**



Inclusive

Age appropriateness

We are sensitive to teach topics at a time that will most benefit the safety and development of the child. The maturity and development of children varies hugely and this is influenced many factors including:

- A child's homelife - language and openness modelled by parents/carers
- The influence of other people including friends and older siblings
- Access to technology and the world of adult focussed content it opens up
- Neurodivergence

We use a combination of the following inputs to develop and deliver our curriculum:

1. National statistics and evidence - for example recommendations published by the PSHE Association or by national charities such as the NSPCC
2. We use a spiral curriculum format - this means themes are revisited throughout a child's time in secondary education, each time revisiting the topic in an age appropriate way.
3. An awareness of the community students are growing up within including police data
4. Surveys to students and parents
5. Our understanding of pupil maturity based upon their behaviour, language and prevalence of safeguarding concerns raised in schools
6. Two classes within the same year group could in theory receive different lessons based upon a judgement of maturity and need.
7. There is potential for us to deliver interventions with a pupil(s) who needs education on a specific topic without a whole class receiving that lesson.
8. Feedback from parents!

National statistics:

The average age at which children first view pornography is now 13 years old.

[\(The Children's Commissioner report 2023\)](#)

- The report findings, based upon a survey of over a thousand 16-21-year-olds and focus groups with teenagers, also showed substantial proportions of young people had seen pornography viewed it at a much younger age than 13 – 27% by age 11 and 10% by the age of 9.
- Young people spoke about the unbearable pressure to view hardcore pornography even if they do not want to, much of which depicts degrading acts and violence against women

In response to this report, the PSHE Association has recommended in strong terms that pornography should be **taught before year 11** and that this topic should be revisited as part of a spiral curriculum of study throughout secondary education.

Our school RSHE resource partner Life Lessons recommend that pornography is introduced as a topic in year 8. However schools can teach the subject sooner or later than year 8 based upon their understanding of the maturity, attitudes, prevalence of sexualised language and behaviour and how active students are on digital media.

Life Lessons take an **evidence based approach**, using best practice recommended by the government endorsed PSHE Association to create their lesson materials.

- Materials are updated ongoing so that **lessons reflect what's going on in the world and in the lives of young people.**
- Materials are **100% flexible**. So what we teach, to who and when is all in our control as a school and parent community.
- Life Lessons support our **whole school approach** with materials designed for use to deliver the curriculum but also to reinforce important themes elsewhere in Pastoral Times and Interventions.
- The materials, in particular **videos, make discussion much easier** as they model the conversation in the classroom.

Impact

Impact is recognised in pupils' contributions, questions and enthusiasm in lessons, and participation. Pupils are encouraged to foster a positive mindset with a focus on developing curiosity to draw on prior learning by asking "What do I already know?"

In order to evaluate the impact and progress of our school, we utilise evaluation tools which help us to collect useful data about a variety of things.

Our impact and evaluation tools cover **three key areas**:

1. Audit tools

The aim of these surveys is to gauge the effectiveness of our current RSHE provision for staff and students to inform any improvements moving forward.

2. Whole-school approach, safeguarding and healthy-school culture

The aim of the student survey is to evaluate whether our approach to RSHE is successfully supporting safeguarding and a healthy school culture. The aim of the staff survey is to assess the profile and buy-in of RSHE in your school according to staff with the aim of highlighting any gaps and areas for improvement.

3. Topic based assessment

The aim of these assessments is to evaluate student progress, identify knowledge gaps and support students' confidence with their learning within the subject.

Information from the aforementioned assessments, alongside teacher judgements, will be used to provide an to identity an 'attainment level' :

Emerging	Working below expectations
Developing	Working towards expectations
Secure	Working within expectations
Advanced	Working beyond expectations

Achievement



Belonging



Compassion

