Relationships, Sex and Health and Education (RSHE) Policy (Primary School Version)

Hartley Primary School

Introduction

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is an essential part of the curriculum and reflects our commitment to delivering high-quality, age-appropriate learning opportunities that support students' wellbeing and help to keep them safe. Through RSHE, students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to build and maintain healthy, respectful and safe relationships, now and in the future, supporting their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

This policy reflects the RSE and Health Education Statutory Guidance (2025) and has been shaped through consultation with stakeholders to ensure the curriculum is relevant, inclusive and responsive to the needs of our community.

Aims

We aim to deliver high-quality Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) in order to support the personal development, wellbeing and future success of all students.

Our RSHE provision aims to:

- provide high-quality, age-appropriate RSHE that meets statutory requirements;
- promote respect for the law and for the diverse communities that make up our community, fostering understanding, inclusion and mutual respect;
- help students to develop a secure understanding of themselves, their relationships and the world in which they live;
- help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy and to cultivate positive characteristics such as kindness and integrity;
- equip students with the knowledge, skills and language they need to make informed, responsible and healthy choices;
- support students to stay safe, including understanding how to recognise risk, seek help and protect their physical and emotional wellbeing;
- prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and challenges of adulthood, in a world that is complex and sometimes difficult to navigate; and
- establish RSHE as a central and valued part of the curriculum, contributing to students' lifelong learning and personal development and wellbeing.

RSHE Curriculum

All schools are required to teach RSHE, alongside the National Curriculum for science and within the context of safeguarding. We work in partnership with our parents and carers, ensuring that information about our RSHE curriculum is published on our website and that we provide annual meetings so that there is an opportunity to review the content of sessions, and discuss any queries they may have. We have developed the RSHE curriculum taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

The curriculum for RSHE is based on Oak National Academy (Appendix 1) and sets out in which year group each aspect of the RSHE statutory guidance expectations will be taught. All lessons are taught by class

teachers, but we give careful consideration to how we teach sensitive topics, including menstruation, puberty and human reproduction and birth. This includes:

- setting clear expectations at the beginning of a lesson;
- using single sex classes for some or all lessons; and
- allowing students to ask questions privately e.g. using a post-box

We may amend our curriculum content to respond to the needs and context of our pupils, to discuss issues affecting them in an age-appropriate manner. We will inform parents and carers of any deviation from our published policy in advance, and share any relevant materials on request.

A summary of the different elements of RSHE is provided below.

1. **Relationships Education**

In Relationships Education, the focus is on teaching the fundamental building blocks of positive, healthy and respectful relationships with family members, other children and adults.

Teaching is designed to help students develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to form kind, caring relationships, manage feelings and conflict, set and respect boundaries, and develop self-respect and empathy for others. Lessons are age-appropriate and culturally sensitive, rooted in the law, and responsive to students' lived experiences. Teaching recognises, and represents, a wide range of family structures, ensuring that no child is stigmatised because of their home circumstances.

Students are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including understanding privacy, consent and boundaries, recognising bullying, harmful or abusive behaviour (including online), and knowing how and where to seek help or report concerns. Online relationships are addressed in line with face-to-face expectations of respect and safety, whilst reflecting the risks that are posed by anonymous contact online.

Throughout, the school promotes fundamental British values: the rule of law; democracy; individual liberty; mutual respect and tolerance of different beliefs and faiths. Respect for difference does not require agreement, but by fostering respectful relationships, we support students to navigate difference thoughtfully and with confidence.

Relationships education is statutory and there is no right for parents and carers to request that their child is withdrawn. Click here for further information: Expectations for Relationships Education

2. **Non-statutory Sex Education**

Sex Education refers to teaching students about how a baby is conceived and born. It is not compulsory in primary schools, but the Department for Education recommends that primary schools teach sex education in Year 5 and/or Year 6, in line with content from the science national curriculum about the life cycles of mammals and the life process of reproduction in some animals. We encourage all students to use the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.

Following our consultation, we have decided to continue to include the teaching of human reproduction, 'how babies are conceived and born', as part of the RSHE curriculum, with this content being introduced in Year 6. By teaching this topic at primary school, it helps to equip our students for transition to secondary education, where they may learn about sex from less reliable sources such as friends or older students.

Parents and Carers may wish to refer to Appendix 2: Talking about Puberty and Human Reproduction – A Guide for Parents and Carers. This provides information about the content included in sex education lessons and how to talk to children about these sensitive topics.

Parents and carers retain the right to request that their child is withdrawn from RSHE lessons that teach human reproduction. Click here for further information: Expectations for Non-Statutory Sex Education (page 6).

3. Health and Wellbeing

Health Education refers to teaching students about physical health and mental wellbeing with the aim of equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed, responsible decisions.

Learning about health and wellbeing supports students to recognise what is typical and healthy in themselves and others, to develop emotional awareness and appropriate vocabulary for feelings, and to understand when and how to seek help or support at the earliest opportunity. It promotes the benefits of physical activity, healthy eating, sufficient sleep, time outdoors and positive use of leisure time, while also addressing health protection and prevention, including personal hygiene and basic first aid.

There is an emphasis placed on online wellbeing and safety, recognising the growing impact of digital life on students' mental and physical health, including respectful online behaviour, managing screen time, understanding age restrictions, and knowing how to report concerns or seek support. Learning is age-appropriate and sensitive to students' experiences.

Puberty, including menstruation, will be covered in health education.

There is no right for parents and carers to request that their child is withdrawn from health and wellbeing education. Click here for further information: Expectations for Health Education (page 20).

4. National Curriculum Science

Through the National Curriculum for Science, students learn about: the main external parts of the body; changes to the human body as it grows from birth to old age (including puberty); and sexual and asexual reproduction in mammals and plants. The curriculum also includes aspects of health education and how to keep our bodies safe and healthy.

The above areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to make sure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (i.e. families can include single-parent families, same-sex parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and foster parents among other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example, looked-after children, young carers or kinship carers).

Across our school, we will also be mindful of the law, legal requirements and AI related risks, taking care not to condone illegal activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, or hate crime.

Resources

Resources used in RSHE lessons will be carefully selected to ensure they are age-appropriate. All materials will be reviewed in advance by staff and used sensitively, with consideration given to students' backgrounds, experiences and any additional vulnerabilities. The RSHE curriculum will be made accessible to all students, including those with SEND. The class teacher and SENCo, will make decisions about how to adapt the curriculum depending on the student's individual needs and stage of development.

In planning our RSHE curriculum, we draw from a range of educational resources, including material from the NSPCC and Oak National Academy.

Communication with Parents and Carers

We aim to work in partnership with parents and carers, and will communicate about learning in RSHE, with an annual offer to meet in order to explain what will happen in RSHE, so that parents and carers can, if they wish, talk to their children ahead of lessons. This allows parents and carers to be ready for any questions that their child may have concerning what they have learnt in school.

The school will send out information to parents and carers and invite them in to view the RSHE materials, discuss lesson plans and to get support and advice on how to talk about these sensitive topics at home. The intention is to make lessons sensitive to the backgrounds of all our students so that parents and carers feel confident about letting their children remain in the lessons. This way they will learn the facts from a teacher.

Parents and carers who wish to remove their children from non-statutory sex education need to inform the school in writing. Following a meeting with a member of the SLT to discuss concerns, alternative provision can be made for the student.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are among the most vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and unhealthy relationships. High-quality RSHE is therefore particularly important and acts as a key protective factor. RSHE is made accessible through careful planning and adaptation, including differentiated resources and teaching approaches appropriate to students' developmental stage and communication needs. Teaching is also sensitive to all pupil's experiences and during lessons staff ensure that all pupils feel safe and supported and able to engage with the key messages. Where appropriate, additional support may be provided through targeted intervention and careful consideration is given to the level of support needed.

Safeguarding

Students' learning in RSHE strengthens safeguarding by ensuring students are taught, in an age-appropriate way, how to recognise risk, unsafe or abusive behaviour (including online), and how to seek help or report concerns. Through our RSHE curriculum, students are equipped with the knowledge, language and confidence to speak to a trusted adult, supporting early identification of concerns and helping the school to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities. RSHE may provide opportunities for students to share concerns or make disclosures. Staff will report any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and any such issues will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Teaching and learning in RSHE is monitored by the PSHE Subject Leader and the Senior Leadership Team.

Training is provided annually to ensure that staff know how to answer questions and teach RSHE topics in an age-appropriate way, with a particular focus on the teaching of sensitive topics.

When RSHE is taught effectively, students will develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to form positive, respectful relationships, make informed choices about their health and wellbeing, and keep themselves and others safe. Over time, this also contributes to improved emotional literacy, resilience and behaviour, as well as increased confidence in seeking help and support when needed.

Appendix 1:

Curriculum Map for RSHE

The RSHE curriculum map is provided below and can be found in the curriculum section of our website.

	Nursery	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Autumn 1	Who am I and how do I fit?	Who am I and how do I fit?	Emotions: How do I feel today? Communities: Who am I? Who are you?	Emotions: What helps me to be happy? Communities: Who is in my community?	Emotions: How can I manage my emotions? Communities: What does it mean to be British?	Emotions: How can we add to our emotions toolkit? Communities: How are we all different?	Emotions: How can we manage challenges? Communities: How can we ensure fairness and respect for women and girls?	Emotions: How can we manage our emotions through periods of change? Communities: How can we show respect to people of different races and cultures?
Autumn 2	Respect for similarity and difference. Anti-bullying and being unique	Respect for similarity and difference. Anti-bullying and being unique	Healthy relationships: Who's in my family? Healthy relationships: What makes a good friend?	Communities: Who is in my community? continued Healthy relationships: What does a family look like?	Healthy relationships: How can I help my family? Healthy relationships: Are friendships ever perfect?	Communities: What does it mean to be British? continued Healthy relationships: Do all families look the same?	Healthy relationships: Is there such a thing as a perfect family? Healthy relationships: How can I be a great friend?	Healthy relationships: How can we live in harmony? Healthy relationships: How can we have healthy boundaries?
Spring 1	Aspirations, how to achieve goals and understanding the emotions that go with this	Aspirations, how to achieve goals and understanding the emotions that go with this	Power in relationships: When do I feel safe?	Power in relationships: Should I keep secrets safe? Media Influence: Is everything I see online true?	Healthy relationships: Are friendships ever perfect? Continued Power in relationships: Who does my body belong to? Media Influence: How do I keep myself safe online?	Healthy relationships: Are all friends the same? Power in relationships: What does a healthy relationship feel like?	Power in relationships: How do I get help if I don't feel safe? Media Influence: Who decides what I experience in the online world?	Power in relationships: What are my boundaries? Media influence: How do I decide what is true online?
Spring 2	Being and keeping safe and healthy	Being and keeping safe and healthy	Media Influence: How do I decide what to do online?	Media Influence: Is everything I see online true? Continued Our online lives: Who should I talk to online?	Media Influence: How do I keep myself safe online? Continued	Media Influence: What is fake news?	Our online lives: How do I thrive online?	Media influence: How do I decide what is true online? Continued Our online lives: What should I share online?

Summer 1	Building positive, healthy relationships	Building positive, healthy relationships	Our online lives: What should I do if I feel unsafe online? Physical health: How can I look after my body?	Physical health: How do I eat a balanced diet? Risky substances: How do I stay safe at home?	Our online lives: How can I be kind and happy online?	Our online lives: How do I decide who to trust online? Physical health: What makes a balanced lifestyle?	Physical health: Is it hard to be healthy? Risky substances: Why do people get addicted?	Our online lives: What should I share online? Physical health: how do I plan a healthy week? Risky substances: Why do people use alcohol and drugs?
Summer 2	Coping positively with change	Coping positively with change	Physical health: How can I look after my body? Continued Staying safe and healthy: How can I look after my body?	Stay safe and healthy: How can I take responsibility for my health? Healthy relationships: How can we stop bullying?	Physical health: How can I get active and eat well every day? Stay safe and healthy: How can I stay safe while out and about?	Stay safe and healthy: How do I avoid getting ill? Puberty: How will I change as I grow up?	Stay safe and healthy: How can I avoid harm?	Risky substances: Why do people use alcohol and drugs? continued Staying safe and healthy: How can I save a life? Puberty: What happens during adolescence?

Appendix 2: Talking about Puberty and Human Reproduction

A Guide for Parents and Carers

Talking about puberty and human reproduction can feel daunting for many parents and carers. This guide is designed to support you in having open conversations with your child about these important topics.

In today's world, children are exposed to information about growing up and reproduction from many sources, including the Internet (including AI) and social media. These sources can be unreliable, which can lead to misconceptions. By talking with your child at home, you can provide accurate, age-appropriate information and help them understand their changing bodies, feelings, and relationships in a safe and supportive way.

It is normal to feel anxious or embarrassed when talking about these topics with your child. Learning in school around RSHE has changed dramatically from the experiences that many of us will have experienced growing up ourselves. For many of us, learning about our bodies and how we grow into adults may have been tied in with shame or embarrassment. We know that, for young people today, it is more important than ever to ensure that we remove the shame and embarrassment we might feel before we teach our children.

Our goal is to ensure that our children feel safe to talk to the trusted adults in their lives and ask open questions without fear or embarrassment. This will enable us to protect them from the many challenges of growing up in the digital age.

Top Tips

1. **Drip feed information rather than having 'the talk'.**
   Preparing to have 'the talk' can be a stressful experience for parents and carers. It can also be overwhelming for children as there is so much information for them to process. It is far more beneficial to have regular small chats about different elements of growing up. This makes it easier to prepare for as a caregiver, as well as promoting the idea that this is an important topic that your child can speak to you about whenever they have questions.

2. **Find appropriate times to have small chats with your child about sensitive topics.**
   Find a stimulus to begin the conversation. Finding a TV programme, song or book can help get the conversation started and to make it feel more natural. There are so many opportunities in everyday life to begin these conversations. These may include (but are not limited to):
   - when a member of your family announces that they are pregnant;
   - when a topic such as puberty comes up in a TV show or movie;
   - when gender stereotypes are pushed in TV adverts (especially children's toy adverts); or
   - after watching an advert on TV for period/menstrual products.

   When these opportunities arise, ask your child an open-ended question to begin the conversation such as, 'What do you know about how pregnancy happens?' It can also be a great idea to try and discuss these topics just before we have the lessons in school so that children can make the most of having a safe space to ask questions with trusted adults.

3. **Prepare before you have these talks with your child.**
   Look through the resources included in this handout, or others that you know are from reliable sources, and make sure that you understand what you are going to talk about before you begin the conversation at home. This will help you feel more confident when talking to your children and will help you answer any tricky questions that they might ask, as you will have already thought through your responses to those questions.

4. **Talk about it in the car or on a walk where appropriate.**

It can be much easier to have these conversations where two people are facing forward rather than face to face.

5. **Ask them what they know or have already heard.**
   Often children will have heard half-truths or will have many misconceptions about puberty and human reproduction. Asking them to tell you what they think they already know gives you an opportunity to address any misconceptions at home.

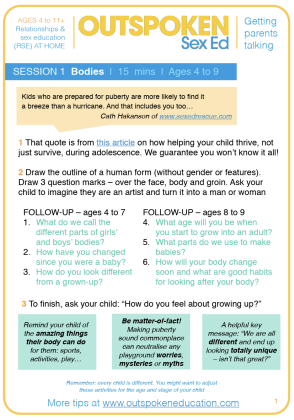
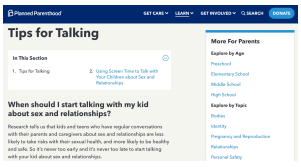
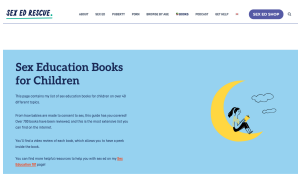
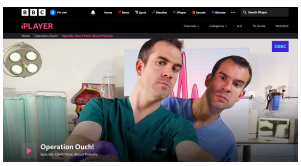
6. **Build open communication based on trust.**
   We want to ensure our children feel comfortable talking about these sensitive topics with someone they can trust. This helps ensure that children receive the information they need at an age-appropriate level rather than looking for the information elsewhere.

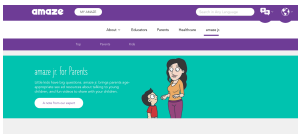
Responding to your Child's Questions

- Generally, if the information you give is too basic, children will ask more questions. However, if the information is too in-depth, children will usually only take away what they are able to understand. The most important thing is that you try to begin these conversations. Let your child know that you are there to answer the questions or worries that they have to ensure that they feel comfortable talking to you.
- Keep answers as short and simple as possible. Make sure to explain the meaning of any words that your child might not have heard of before (refer to the glossary at the end of this handout if you are unsure about how to define and explain any of the words).
- After giving an answer, keep the conversation open. You might want to ask, 'Does that answer your question?' or, 'What do you think about that?' If your answer has not been in enough detail, this will give your child the opportunity to ask anything more they are ready to know.
- Ask your child open-ended questions in response to things that they say or tell you about, in order to find out what they already know. This will help you answer it in an appropriate way, e.g., 'Can you tell me what you already know about that' or, 'What have you heard about that?'
- Don't feel like you have to answer every question straight away. You can always say to your child 'I'm not sure how to answer that question. Let me have a look and I'll talk to you about it later on.' You can then consider what answer you want to give your child.

A Guide to Resources

These resources are not websites you should leave your child to explore independently. Always ensure you have planned what you would like to share from these websites with your child beforehand. There are a range of resources available and it is important to ensure that the information comes from a reliable source. Before you show or use any of this information with your child, please make sure you check the websites for yourself and watch and read everything carefully. Each child matures at their own pace and it is important that you decide for yourself what they are ready to find out and when. Some of these websites have information that will be more appropriate as your children go through secondary school and so some resources are shared with the idea that families will be able to use them in years to come.

	**Outspoken Education** This resource contains ideas for talking to children about the differences between male and female bodies, how bodies change through puberty (including menstruation), how a baby is conceived, body image, body safety and different types of family. It includes cartoon-like images of both male and female genitals. The images provide an opportunity to explain the different parts of the human body (internal and external) as well as their function. Please review the list of body parts carefully to ensure you feel comfortable explaining what each one is.
	https://www.outspokeneducation.com/ages-6-to-10 Advice on how to have shame-free, open conversations with children about relationships and sex. Again, a lot of the information on the website will be useful as your child goes through secondary school; however, there are lots of resources to support you in talking to younger children about these sensitive topics.
	**https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/parents/tips-talking** This website gives ideas about how to talk about RSHE topics with your child. It is an American website, but lots of the information and guidance may be helpful for families.
	**https://sexedrescue.com/sex-education-books-for-children/#ages** This is a website with a long list of books that cover all elements of Sex and Relationships Education. Please check through any books carefully before sharing with your child. Some of the books on the website cover topics that we would not cover in primary school, such as masturbation. It is up to parents and carers if and when you would like to go beyond what we teach in school. We are also aware that in some religions, masturbation is something that is not acceptable, so please teach your child what is appropriate for them in the context of your family's beliefs. Again, please ensure you use trusted resources such as reputable books if you wish to do this.
	**https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0759l4k/operation-ouch-specials-dont-panic-about-puberty** This is a CBBC special episode on puberty. It could be used as a stimulus for parents and carers to begin the conversation at home but please watch it

	yourselves first to ensure you are happy with how they talk about puberty and to see if it is right for your child.
	https://amaze.org/jr/ This website is full of videos and information for parents and carers of children of all ages. Many of the videos will be useful as the children get older, however, this link is to the Amaze Jr Parents section so parents and carers can have a look and read more information about discussing how to discuss sex and relationships with their child. Again, please watch anything you would like to share with your child carefully beforehand as some of the material on this website will be too advanced for primary school students.

What should I talk about and when?

Early Years

- At this age, children should be able to name the different parts of their body. We strongly advise parents and carers to teach their children the scientific names of their body parts, including the genitals, even if they are not the names you would usually use at home.
  This is to ensure that children are able to tell a trusted adult if they are experiencing any pain or if something happens to them.
- Children should be taught about personal and public spaces and situations.
  For example, it might be okay for a child to be naked in the house when a grandparent visits but not when a plumber is working there.
- Consent – for this age, children might want to think about how they play with other children in the playground or at home. This can include what types of touch are appropriate and inappropriate, e.g. a high five is appropriate physical contact, whereas hitting someone is not.

Key Stage 1

- Children should be able to name and identify different parts of the body for both boys and girls. They should understand what job different body parts have.
- Children should also continue to learn about their own body and privacy. This will need to include the idea that some parts of our bodies are private and that we do not show them to other people. When teaching your child this, it is important to include that there may be times where we need to show people our private body parts, such as going to see a doctor.
- Children may also want to begin gaining some of their own independence by washing and drying themselves when they get out of the shower etc.

Lower Key Stage 2

- Girls as young as 8 years old can begin menstruating so this age is a really important time to begin that conversation at home. In these years, it is a good idea to talk to girls about beginning menstruation, what it is and how they can manage having their periods.
  They will often need to know how to use different period/menstrual products (period/menstrual pads being the easiest to begin with).
- At this age, it is also a good idea to talk about this with young boys. You may also want to begin talking about some of the changes boys might begin to experience through puberty.

Upper Key Stage 2

- At this age, children are taught about menstruation, puberty and human reproduction at primary school. This is a vital time for children to gain the information they need to understand puberty as they begin to notice changes in their own body.

Glossary

It is advised that correct terms for body parts, as well as nicknames, are used with children. This is to avoid shame or fear around these words and to also present the knowledge as factual information – just like learning about the digestive or circulatory systems in our bodies.

Male body

Penis	Part of a male body that contains the urethra. Urine and semen with sperm (in males who have passed puberty) pass through it to leave the body.
Scrotum	A pouch of skin that holds the testicles.
Testicles	Two small round organs that produce sperm, which is needed to make a baby.
Urethra	Carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body.

Female body

Clitoris	A sensitive part of the female body.
Ovaries	The organs inside the body which stores the eggs (ova).
Urethra	The passageway that carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body.
Uterus	The organ inside the body where a baby grows after it has been conceived.
Vagina	The passageway between the uterus and outside of the body.
Vulva	The part of a female's genitals that are visible on the outside of the body, containing the openings of the vagina, the urethra and also the clitoris.

Other words and terms

Ejaculation	The process where sperm and semen leave a male's body through the penis.
Period	A part of the menstrual cycle when a woman bleeds from her vagina for a few days.
Period/ menstrual products	These include period/menstrual pads, tampons and menstrual cups. There are a range of period/menstrual products that girls and women may choose to use when they are menstruating. Families may have different expectations around how menstruation is managed and will talk to their child about what is appropriate for them.
Puberty	the process of a child's body developing into an adult.
Wet dream (nocturnal emissions)	A spontaneous emission of semen for a male whilst asleep Parents and carers should ensure that sons are prepared for this event and know that there is no shame attached to it taking place. Speak to them about what to do with nightwear and bedding after such an event.

Appendix 3: Consultation Summary

School consultation 2026

As part of the development of our RSHE policy, we have undertaken a formal consultation process in line with statutory guidance. Its purpose was to ensure that RSHE reflects the needs of our students, is appropriate to the context of our school community, and is informed by the views of key stakeholders. Consultation outcomes were used to inform the final version of the RSHE policy and curriculum.

Stakeholders and Methods

We consulted with key stakeholder groups using a range of appropriate methods designed to ensure accessibility and meaningful engagement.

RSHE Consultation Summary Table

Stakeholder group	Method of consultation	Number of respondents	Key themes from feedback	Impact on policy and curriculum
Parents and carers	*Parent meeting*	*All parents invited.* *2 attended*	*Foundational skills for secondary, useful lessons, factual and important. Good balance of units*	*Agreed with image changes in Year 6. Puberty lessons taught separately and at the end of the academic year. Intersex not included in the Year 6 lesson*
Students	*Online survey*	*136*	*Desire to learn more about puberty. Worries about their bodies changing. Desire to learn from parents and school*	*Curriculum content and sequencing reviewed and confirmed; Support for parents to educate their children*
Staff	*Staff meeting, online survey*	*24*	*Support when teaching body changes in a faith-sensitive manner.*	*Professional development plan to include the 'how' of teaching content.*
Governors	*LGB meeting*	*8*	*Assurance of statutory compliance, curriculum oversight and accountability*	*Feedback was that the policy was clear and set out to support understanding*