

VOTESFORSCHOOLS & SECONDARY PSHE AND RSE & HEALTH EDUCATION

This document outlines how VotesforSchools supports schools in delivering effective, topical, and sensitive PSHE for Secondary-aged children.

By the end of the 2023-24 academic year, the PSHE Curriculum will have been covered in full (provided schools have used VotesforSchools resources consistently since 2021).

VotesforSchools' materials consistently support the Core Themes of PSHE at Secondary level, as set out in the [PSHE Association's guidance](#). It does so in the following ways:

- Weekly materials (VoteTopics) help to **contextualise** current issues, thereby furthering the aims of PSHE education
- The programme as a whole **inherently** supports students in developing skills, attitudes, and approaches pertinent to PSHE education
- Specifically-designed PSHE/RSE materials provide staff with the opportunity to take deeper dives into specific issues and are **fully mapped to specific curriculum criteria**.

Use the interactive list below to jump to the relevant section.

Section 1: Our weekly resources

[02 | PSHE curriculum & VotesforSchools' weekly materials \(2021-2023\)](#)

[06 | PSHE curriculum & the VotesforSchools programme](#)

[14 | PSHE curriculum & VotesforSchools' 9 Key Themes](#)

Section 2: Our PSHE & RSE resources

[21 | PSHE curriculum & VotesforSchools' additional materials](#)

[22 | RSE & Health Education curriculum & VotesforSchools' additional materials](#)

Section 3: Further information

[23 | Other areas VotesforSchools supports](#)

[24 | Links to relevant documents](#)

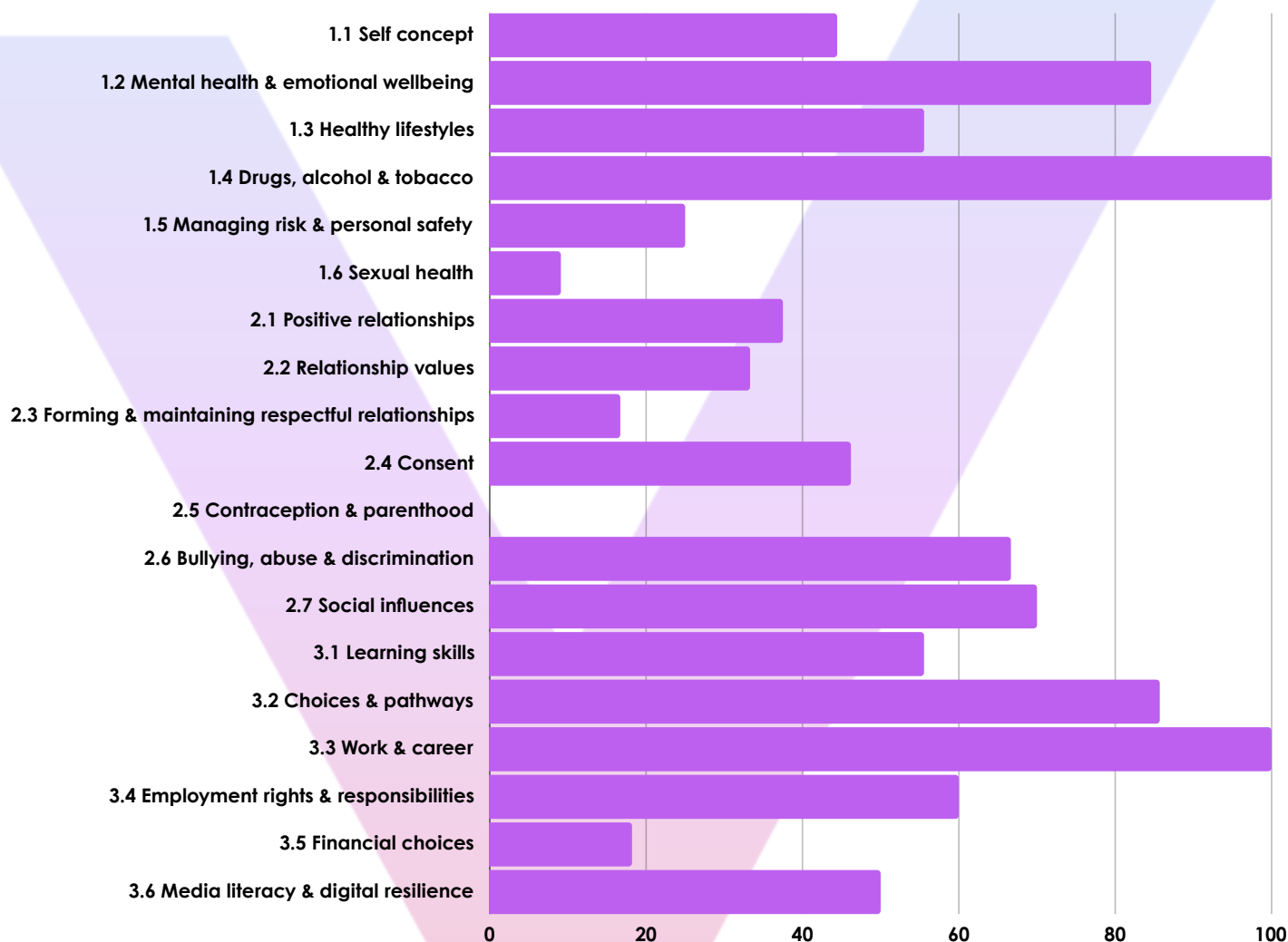
For the purposes of this document, "students" is used as a catch-all term for pupils/learners/young people; "staff" is used to denote any group of educational professionals (e.g. teachers, tutors etc), and "schools" is used to refer to any type of educational setting.

PSHE CURRICULUM & VOTESFORSCHOOLS' WEEKLY MATERIALS (2021-2023)

VotesforSchools materials help to **contextualise topical and sensitive issues** for students on a weekly basis. For schools that have consistently used VotesforSchools since September 2021, it is estimated that:

- Students aged 11-16 (KS3 & KS4) will have covered **31% of current PSHE objectives in full**, and will have been **introduced to an additional 45.5% of objectives** (76.5% total).
- Many of the PSHE objectives have been covered by VotesforSchools **more extensively than is required**; this includes areas such as healthy lifestyles and work & career.

The diagram below outlines the percentage of each Core Theme **supported by a weekly VoteTopic** between September 2021-July 2023.



Overleaf are a selection of weekly sessions (VoteTopics) for **ages 11-16** from 2021-23 that helped to support the different Core Themes. You can find these resources in our Archive by using the search bar.

CORE THEME 1: HEALTH & WELLBEING

1.1 Self-concept

- Does the internet normalise toxic support networks?
- Could you be better at following sun safety advice?
- Should we blame influencers for online harm?
- Do you see yourself as the leader in your life?

1.2 Mental health & emotional wellbeing

- Are young people equipped to deal with loneliness?
- Are we getting better at recognising burnout?
- Should learning about coping with loss and bereavement be included on the curriculum?
- Do you see yourself as the leader in your life?
- Are extreme right-wing views persuasive to young people?

1.3 Healthy lifestyles

- Is a four-day working week a good idea?
- Are we getting better at recognising burnout?
- Is the internet driving us apart?
- Should more children get free school meals?
- Does the UK waste too much food at Christmas?
- Could you be better at following sun safety advice?
- Should we blame influencers for online harm?
- Is banter an excuse for bullying?
- Do fandoms encourage bullying?
- Does the internet normalise toxic support networks?

1.4 Drugs, alcohol & tobacco

- Should we be worried about vaping?

1.5 Managing risk & personal safety

- Could you be better at following sun safety advice?

1.6 Sexual health

- Is the internet driving us apart?
- Does the internet affect the way that we view sex and relationships?

CORE THEME 2: RELATIONSHIPS

2.1 Positive relationships

- Do you see yourself as the leader in your life?
- Are extreme right-wing views persuasive to young people?
- Does the internet normalise toxic support networks?
- Should non-LGBTQ+ people tell LGBTQ+ stories?
- Do we view Pride as more of a party than a protest?

2.2 Relationship values

- Do you see yourself as the leader in your life?
- Have recent films challenged stereotypes of women and girls?

- Does the internet normalise toxic support networks?
- Are young people comfortable calling out misogynistic behaviour?

2.3 Forming & maintaining respectful relationships

- Is the internet driving us apart?
- Does the internet normalise toxic support networks?
- Does the internet affect the way we view sex and relationships?
- Are young people comfortable calling out misogynistic behaviour?

2.4 Consent

- Is the internet driving us apart?
- Does the internet normalise toxic support networks?
- Does the internet affect the way we view sex and relationships?
- Are young people comfortable calling out misogynistic behaviour?

2.5 Contraception & parenthood

- *N/A, though a standalone assembly on the overturning of Roe v. Wade was issued in June 2022.*

2.6 Bullying, abuse & discrimination

- Is the internet driving us apart?
- Does the internet normalise toxic support networks?
- Do fandoms encourage bullying?
- Are young people comfortable calling out misogynistic behaviour?
- Does the internet affect the way we view sex and relationships?
- Do we celebrate our differences enough?
- Have recent films challenged stereotypes of women and girls?
- Are extreme right-wing views persuasive to young people?
- Has the Ukraine war changed our perception of refugees?
- Has tackling racism in education improved since the protests of 2020?

2.7 Social influences

- Do you see yourself as the leader in your life?
- Does the internet normalise toxic support networks?
- Should we be worried about vaping?
- Does the internet affect the way we view sex and relationships?

CORE THEME 3: LIVING IN THE WIDER WORLD

3.1 Learning skills

- Do you see yourself as the leader in your life?
- Are difficult exams good for assessing people's skills?
- Will life improve with more use of artificial intelligence (AI)?
- Is it fair for apprentices to be paid a lower living wage?

3.2 Choices & pathways

- Do you see yourself as the leader in your life?
- Will life improve with more use of artificial intelligence (AI)?
- Is it fair for apprentices to be paid a lower living wage?
- Are difficult exams good for assessing people's skills?

3.3 Work & career

- Do you see yourself as the leader in your life?
- Will life improve with more use of artificial intelligence (AI)?
- Is it fair for apprentices to be paid a lower living wage?
- Is a four-day working week a good idea?

3.4 Employment rights & responsibilities

- Should transport workers be allowed to strike?
- Should there be strikes during the festive period?
- Is it fair for apprentices to be paid a lower living wage?
- Are we getting better at recognising burnout?

3.5 Financial choices

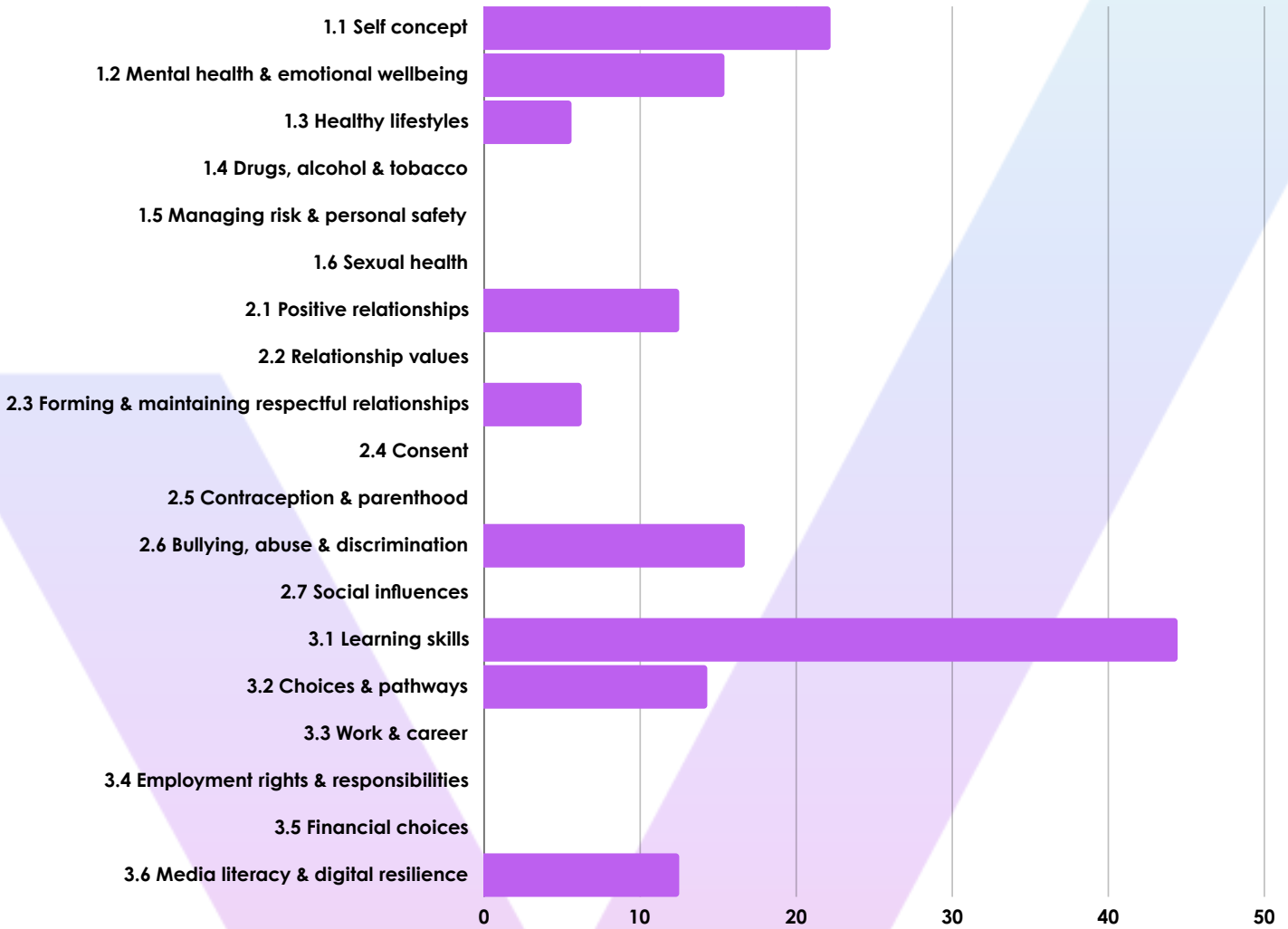
- Are we getting better at recognising burnout?
- Should we blame influencers for online harm?

3.6 Media literacy & digital resilience

- Will life improve with more use of artificial intelligence (AI)?
- Should we blame influencers for online harm?
- Should the teaching of political literacy be compulsory in schools?

PSHE CURRICULUM & THE VOTESFORSCHOOLS' PROGRAMME

VotesforSchools is designed for weekly use, but there are many Core Theme objectives that are met by any given VoteTopic. The diagram below outlines the percentage of each Core Theme inherently supported by **sustained and consistent usage of VotesforSchools** across your school, irrespective of the specific subject matter.



Please Note: The maximum value shown on this table is 50%.

Overleaf is an overview of the **specific criteria that are inherent in all weekly VotesforSchools sessions** for ages 11-16 (KS3 & KS4). For sections with no relevant criteria, please see other sections for more details.

CORE THEME 1: HEALTH & WELLBEING

1.1 Self concept KS3	
H5	<i>To recognise and manage internal & external influences on decisions which affect health and wellbeing</i>
	Students are consistently exposed to different influences in their lives and how these might affect decision-making when it comes to their physical, emotional, and mental health. They are encouraged to critically assess the role of the influences and to consider other options available to them.
1.1 Self concept KS4	
H2	<i>How self-confidence, self-esteem, and mental health are affected positively and negatively by internal and external influences and ways of managing this</i>
	By discussing issues that matter to them and how these make them feel, students build self-confidence and become more courageous in their convictions when using VotesforSchools materials. They are also able to see, both in themselves and others, the impact that peers and wider external influences (such as political decisions or social media) might have on mental wellbeing.
1.2 Mental health & emotional wellbeing KS3	
H6	<i>How to identify and articulate a range of emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary</i>
	VotesforSchools materials encourage students to speak up about issues they or others close to them might be feeling and what the contributing factor to these emotions might be. They are also regularly provided with the vocabulary needed to articulate new and unfamiliar emotions.

1.2 Mental health & emotional wellbeing KS4	
H5	<i>To develop empathy and understanding about how daily actions can affect people's mental health</i>
	By hearing and reflecting upon a range of different scenarios and situations, students develop empathy, compassion, and understanding for others. Students discuss new issues every week, which provides an opportunity to openly reflect on what matters to them, as well as recognise what matters to other people in their lives.
1.3 Healthy lifestyles KS3	
N/A	
1.3 Healthy lifestyles KS5	
H13	<i>To identify, evaluate and independently access reliable sources of information, advice and support for all aspects of physical and mental health</i>
	All VotesforSchools materials are fact-checked and use reliable sources to both impart information and to signpost students towards the best support available. This helps students to understand the characteristics and benefits of finding the right information and seeking advice.
1.4 Drugs, alcohol & tobacco KS3 & KS4	
N/A	
1.5 Managing risk & personal safety KS3 & KS4	
N/A	
1.6 Sexual health KS3 & KS4	
N/A	

CORE THEME 2: RELATIONSHIPS

2.1 Positive relationships KS3	
	<i>Indicators of positive, healthy relationships and unhealthy relationships, including online</i>
R2	VotesforSchools materials include a range of different activities that encourage pair or team work, as well as active and supportive listening. Students are also shown how effective communication works online through a variety of scenarios and references to different digital platforms. They feel empowered to self-safeguard through age-appropriate and relevant signposting to sources of support and advice.
	<i>About the similarities, differences and diversity among people of different race, culture, ability, sex, gender identity, age and sexual orientation</i>
R3	From Black History Month to Pride Month, students encounter a wide range of life experiences on a weekly basis and are thereby consistently informed of the importance of diversity in today's society.
2.1 Positive relationships KS4	
	<i>The characteristics and benefits of strong, positive relationships, including mutual support, trust, respect and equality</i>
R1	By debating different issues each week, students are able to refine their active listening, communication, and empathy skills across a range of situations. In doing so, they develop their ability to be supportive, respectful, and fair, thus helping them to be seen as a trustworthy and thoughtful figure amongst their peers.
2.2 Relationship values KS3 & KS4	
N/A	

2.3 Forming & maintaining respectful relationships KS3	
R16	<i>To further develop the skills of active listening, clear communication, negotiation and compromise</i>
	VotesforSchools' core values of students being informed, curious, and heard underpin all materials. This means that they are able to openly discuss challenging topics while still maintaining respect and open-mindedness towards the views of others. As such, an ability to compromise and/or productively disagree is developed in each student who accesses the resources.
2.3 Forming & maintaining respectful relationships KS4	
N/A	

2.4 Consent KS3 & KS4	
N/A	

2.5 Contraception & parenthood KS3 & KS4	
N/A	

2.6 Bullying, abuse & discrimination KS3	
R39	<i>The impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination on individuals and relationships</i>
	Students are regularly presented with news stories and/or topics that highlight the impact of prejudice on different groups and areas of our society. They are encouraged to find solutions to these issues and to use their voices to help influence positive change and break down barriers; this might be on a national/local scale, within their school environment, or with the different people in their lives.

R40	<i>About the unacceptability of prejudice-based language and behaviour, offline and online, including sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, racism, ableism and faith-based prejudice</i>
	Students are regularly presented with different scenarios or stories that involve discriminatory words or actions. This allows them to reflect on what it means for themselves and/or others, and to critically assess how it should be tackled in broader contexts (such as in schools or nationally).

2.6 Bullying, abuse & discrimination | KS4

N/A

2.7 Social influences | KS3 & KS4

N/A

CORE THEME 3: LIVING IN THE WIDER WORLD

3.1 Learning skills | KS3

L1	<i>Study, organisational, research and presentation skills</i>
	Every week, VotesforSchools materials contain a range of activities that support students in organising their thoughts and ideas in an articulate and productive way. They are also given regular opportunities to present their ideas and opinions to their peers. In some schools, students deliver the VotesforSchools sessions themselves to encourage peer-to-peer learning and to build confidence in oracy and communication.
L2	<i>To review their strengths, interests, skills, qualities and values and how to develop them</i>
	Through critically analysing and discussing a range of different issues, students have ample opportunity to better understand their core values and the things that matter most to them. The variety of topics covered by VotesforSchools means all students are able to find and develop their interests and abilities.

	<i>To set realistic yet ambitious targets and goals</i>
L3	In accessing VotesforSchools, students should feel motivated and empowered to set themselves goals, whether these are academic or personal. These could be improving their speaking and listening skills, or starting a club or society in their community.
	<i>The importance and benefits of being a lifelong learner</i>
L6	VotesforSchools encourages all students to be informed and curious so that they can then make themselves heard on key issues. They are shown that these attributes go beyond the school gates and are key qualities that they should maintain in themselves as they transition into adulthood. There are also many opportunities for staff to continue learning about issues affecting the younger generations from students themselves, thus promoting learning for (and from) all.
3.1 Learning skills KS4	
N/A	

3.2 Choices & pathways KS3	
N/A	
3.2 Choices & pathways KS4	
	<i>About the information, advice and guidance available to them on next steps and careers; how to access appropriate support and opportunities</i>
L6	VotesforSchools regularly exposes young people to the sources they should visit to access advice on careers and also showcase opportunities for them to build their personal experiences in a way that is conducive to future employment.

3.3 Work & career KS3 & KS4	
N/A	

3.4 Employment rights & responsibilities | KS3 & KS4

N/A

3.5 Financial choices | KS3 & KS4

N/A

3.6 Media literacy & digital resilience | KS3

	<i>To recognise the importance of seeking a variety of perspectives on issues and ways of assessing the evidence which supports those views</i>
L23	VotesforSchools materials consistently provide a range of viewpoints from a variety of sources to ensure that all opinions are represented. By seeing the full picture on specific issues, students recognise the value of a holistic discussion and well-informed debate.

3.6 Media literacy & digital resilience | KS4

	<i>Strategies to critically assess bias, reliability and accuracy in digital content</i>
L27	All information cited in VotesforSchools materials is fact-checked and from reliable sources so that students feel confident that they are being given trustworthy information. In turn, this helps build their appreciation for such news sources and helps them better separate opinion and fact.

PSHE CURRICULUM & VOTESFORSCHOOLS' 9 KEY THEMES

All VotesforSchools' weekly materials are mapped to our 9 Key Themes, all of which can be used to help **support effective PSHE delivery**. The tables below highlight the links between the 9 Key Themes and the Core Themes for PSHE. For more on VotesforSchools' 9 Key Themes, click [here](#).

<p>VFS KEY THEME 1: HEALTH & WELLBEING</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental wellbeing, e.g. <i>stress, mindfulness, self-esteem</i> • Health & medicine, e.g. <i>diet, smoking, vaccines</i> • Healthy relationships, e.g. <i>consent, FGM, harassment</i>
<p>PSHE Core Theme 1: Health & wellbeing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-concept • Mental health & emotional wellbeing • Healthy lifestyles • Health-related decisions • Drugs, alcohol & tobacco • Managing risk & personal safety • Puberty & sexual health • Sexual health & fertility
<p>PSHE Core Theme 2: Relationships</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive relationships • Relationship values • Forming & maintaining respectful relationships • Consent • Contraception & parenthood • Bullying, abuse & discrimination • Social influences
<p>PSHE Core Theme 3: Living in the wider world</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choices & pathways • Media literacy & digital resilience

VFS KEY THEME 2: EQUALITIES & IDENTITY

- Protected characteristics, gender, race, age, sex, sexuality, religion, disability /learning difficulties, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity
- Attitudes & isms, e.g. *racism, stereotyping, bullying*
- Societal issues, e.g. *human rights, tolerance, integration*

PSHE Core Theme 1: Health & wellbeing

- Self-concept
- Mental health & emotional wellbeing
- Health-related decisions
- Managing risk & personal safety
- Puberty & sexual health

PSHE Core Theme 2: Relationships

- Positive relationships
- Relationship values
- Forming & maintaining respectful relationships
- Consent
- Contraception & parenthood
- Bullying, abuse & discrimination
- Social influences

PSHE Core Theme 3: Living in the wider world

- Choices & pathways
- Media literacy & digital resilience

VFS KEY THEME 3: ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

- Global warming, e.g. *pollution, emissions, sustainability*
- Weather & climate, e.g. *natural disasters, extreme weather, environmental refugees*
- Nature & ecosystems, e.g. *wildlife, animal welfare, waste disposal*

PSHE Core Theme 1: Health & wellbeing

- Self-concept
- Mental health & emotional wellbeing

PSHE Core Theme 2: Relationships

- Social influences

PSHE Core Theme 3: Living in the wider world

- Choices & pathways
- Media literacy & digital resilience

VFS KEY THEME 4: GLOBAL ISSUES & POLITICS

- UK issues, e.g. *Brexit, free school meals, political parties*
- Global issues, e.g. *refugees, poverty, interdependence*
- Politicians & systems, e.g. *leaders, movements, democracy*

PSHE Core Theme 1: Health & wellbeing

- Self-concept
- Mental health & emotional wellbeing
- Managing risk & personal safety

PSHE Core Theme 2: Relationships

- Positive relationships
- Bullying, abuse & discrimination
- Social influences

PSHE Core Theme 3: Living in the wider world

- Learning skills
- Financial choices
- Media literacy & digital resilience

VFS KEY THEME 5: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- Discoveries & research, e.g. *GM crops, stem cell research, ethics*
- Personal devices & tech, e.g. *personal devices, life online, privacy*
- The future of tech, e.g. *drones, AI, automation*

PSHE Core Theme 1: Health & wellbeing

- Mental health & emotional wellbeing
- Healthy lifestyles
- Health-related decisions
- Drugs, alcohol & tobacco

PSHE Core Theme 2: Relationships

- Forming & maintaining respectful relationships
- Social influences

PSHE Core Theme 3: Living in the wider world

- Learning skills
- Choices & pathways
- Work & career
- Media literacy & digital resilience

VFS KEY THEME 6: COMMUNITY & CHARITY

- Citizenship, e.g. *multiculturalism, shared values, foreign aid*
- Charity & altruism, e.g. *fundraising, food banks, homelessness*
- Community action, e.g. *loneliness, the NHS, youth groups*

PSHE Core Theme 1: Health & wellbeing

- Mental health & emotional wellbeing
- Healthy lifestyles
- Health-related decisions
- Managing risk & personal safety

PSHE Core Theme 2: Relationships

- Forming & maintaining respectful relationships
- Contraception & parenthood
- Social influences

PSHE Core Theme 3: Living in the wider world

- Choices & pathways
- Financial choices
- Media literacy & digital resilience

VFS KEY THEME 7: CRIME, JUSTICE & EXTREMISM

- Societal issues, e.g. social care, gangs, modern slavery
- Authorities & the law, e.g. surveillance, lawmaking, police
- Attitudes & extremism, e.g. polarisation, freedom of speech, conspiracy theories

PSHE Core Theme 1: Health & wellbeing

- Mental health & emotional wellbeing
- Healthy lifestyles
- Drugs, alcohol & tobacco
- Managing personal risk & safety

PSHE Core Theme 2: Relationships

- Positive relationships
- Relationship values
- Forming & maintaining respectful relationships
- Consent
- Bullying, abuse & discrimination
- Social influences

PSHE Core Theme 3: Living in the wider world

- Choices & pathways
- Employment rights & responsibilities
- Financial choices
- Media literacy & digital resilience

VFS KEY THEME 8: JOBS, ECONOMY & EDUCATION

- Careers & employment, e.g. *business, work-life balance, future of jobs*
- Finances & the economy, e.g. *financial literacy, tax, Government spending*
- Continuing education, e.g. *university, apprenticeships, exams*

PSHE Core Theme 1: Health & wellbeing

- Self-concept
- Mental health & emotional wellbeing
- Health-related decisions

PSHE Core Theme 2: Relationships

- Bullying, abuse & discrimination

PSHE Core Theme 3: Living in the wider world

- Learning skills
- Choices & pathways
- Work & career
- Employment rights & responsibilities
- Financial choices
- Media literacy & digital resilience

VFS KEY THEME 9: CULTURE, MEDIA & THE ARTS

- Culture & heritage, e.g. *language, sport, food & drink*
- Media & entertainment, e.g. *fake news, celebrities, advertising*
- British "institutions", e.g. *the Royal Family, Church & State, "Britishness"*

PSHE Core Theme 1: Health & wellbeing

- Healthy lifestyle
- Health-related decisions
- Managing risk & personal safety

PSHE Core Theme 2: Relationships

- Positive relationships
- Consent
- Social influences

PSHE Core Theme 3: Living in the wider world

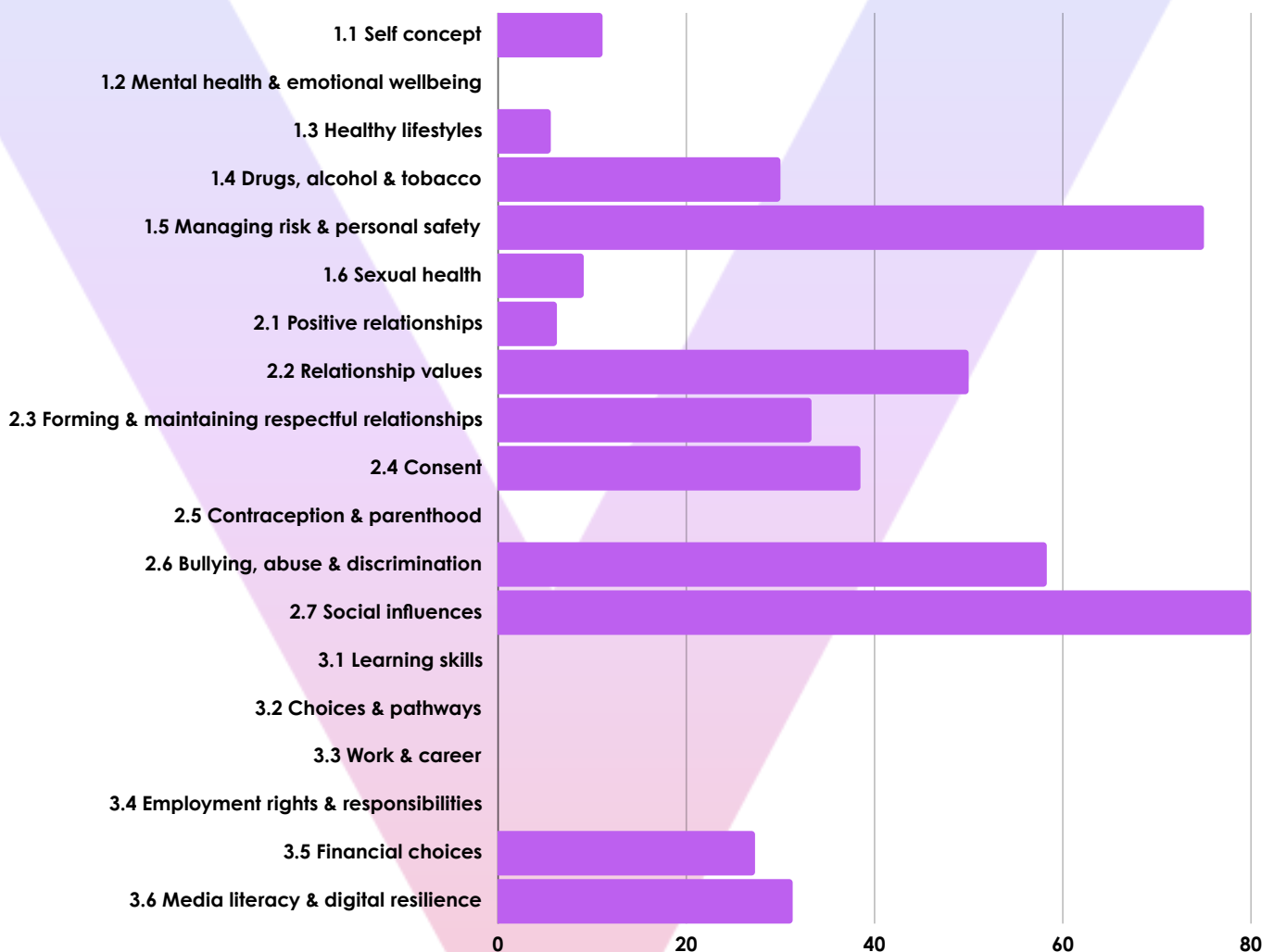
- Media literacy & digital resilience

In addition to weekly materials, VotesforSchools also provides subscribers with **full access to a selection of timeless resources covering a range of issues**, from FGM to extremism, consent to loss & bereavement. At present, these materials are split into two packages:

- **Challenging Conversations:** Materials in this series focus on topics that can be perceived as “tricky” to talk about, but are important to discuss with peers and trusted adults. Lesson themes include misogyny, loneliness, and online identity.
- **Healthy Conversations:** Materials in this series centre on health-based topics, aiming to help students feel comfortable discussing their own experiences. Lesson themes include vaping, sun safety, and consent.

These series of materials are in constant development, with adaptations or updates being made, as well as new lessons being added on a regular basis. All subscribers will be notified of new topics via email.

The diagram below outlines the percentage of each **PSHE Core Theme supported by an additional resource** (last updated August 2023).



Please Note: The maximum value shown on this table is 80%.

The specific PSHE objectives met by each of the topics in these series are also outlined in the accompanying lesson plans.

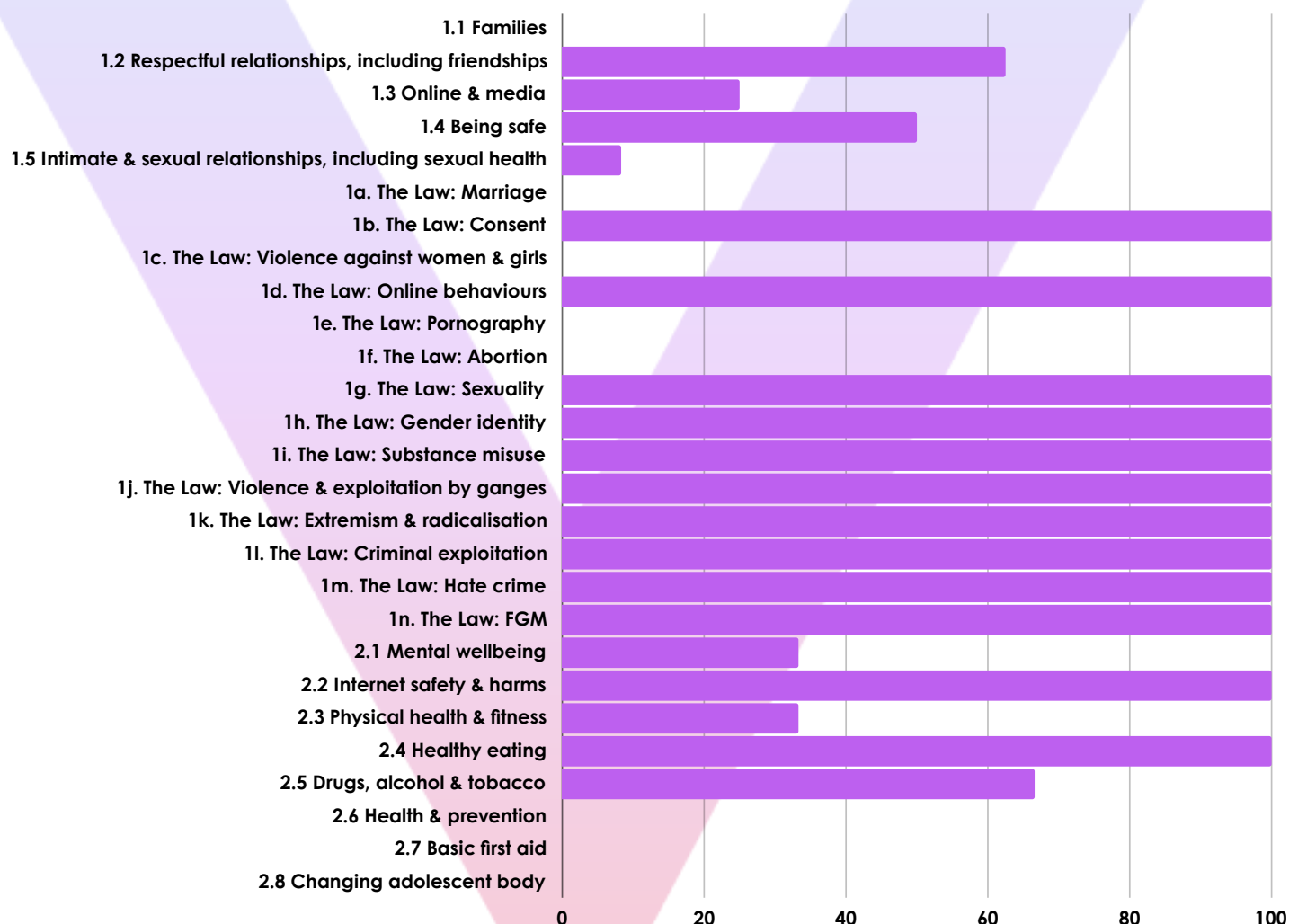
RSE & HEALTH EDUCATION & VOTESFORSCHOOLS' ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

In addition to weekly materials, VotesforSchools also provides subscribers with **full access to a selection of timeless resources covering a range of issues**, from FGM to extremism, consent to loss & bereavement. At present, these materials are split into two packages:

- **Challenging Conversations:** Materials in this series focus on topics that can be perceived as “tricky” to talk about, but are important to discuss with peers and trusted adults. Lesson themes include misogyny, loneliness, and online identity.
- **Healthy Conversations:** Materials in this series centre on health-based topics, aiming to help students feel comfortable discussing their own experiences. Lesson themes include vaping, sun safety, and consent.

These series of materials are in constant development, with adaptations or updates being made, as well as new lessons being added on a regular basis. All subscribers will be notified of new topics via email.

The diagram below outlines the percentage of the **Relationships Education and Health Education strands that are supported by an additional resource** (last updated August 2023).



The specific RSE objectives met by each of the topics in these series are also outlined in the accompanying lesson plans.

OTHER AREAS VOTESFORSCHOOLS SUPPORTS

Below are links to information about other areas of the curriculum that VotesforSchools supports (England only).

- **Curriculum Guide Criteria** | [SMSC, British Values & Prevent](#)
- **Curriculum Guide Criteria** | [UNCRC & UN SDGs](#)
- **Curriculum Guide Criteria** | [VotesforSchools 9 Key Themes](#)
- **Curriculum Overview** | [VotesforSchools & SMSC, British Values & Prevent](#)

Below are links to information about how VotesforSchools can support you with inspections and/or audits (England only).

- **Inspection Guidance** | [VotesforSchools & Inspection Bodies](#)
- **Policy Guidance** | [Political Impartiality in Schools](#)

LINKS TO RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Below are links to relevant curriculum and policy documents used to develop this guidance.

- **PSHE Association** | [Programme of Study: Key Stages 1-5](#)
- **DfE (via GOV.UK)** | [RSE & PSHE: Delivery & Teaching Strategies](#)
- **DfE (via GOV.UK)** | [Changes to personal, social, health and economic \(PSHE\) and relationships and sex education \(RSE\)](#)