

Relationship and Sex Education Policy



Approved by: Penny Harris (Director) Jane Cox (Director) **Date:** 1st September 2025

Last reviewed on: 1st September 2024

Next review due by: 1st September 2026

All policies are generated and reviewed with an awareness of equality and diversity in relation to pupils, staff and visitors. All policies are generated and reviewed placing safeguarding and wellbeing at the heart of all that we do.

1. Aims

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

2. Statutory requirements

This policy meets the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in line with the required statutory expectations and in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

- Review – the directors pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
- Staff consultation – school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
- Pupil voice – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE

4. Definition

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves

a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

5. Curriculum

Our RSE curriculum is set within our PSHE curriculum but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary to be age and stage appropriate and meet the needs of our pupils with a diverse range of special educational needs.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with pupils and staff, taking into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so they are fully informed and don't seek answers online.

There may be particular focus on:

- Preparing boys and girls for the changes that adolescence brings.
- How a baby is conceived and born?

6. Delivery of RSE

High quality, evidence-based and age appropriate teaching of RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum.

Biological aspects of RSE are also taught within the science curriculum. RSE teaching is sensitive, developmentally appropriate and delivered with reference to the law. Where possible, pupils may also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds including:

- Families
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media
- Being safe
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

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.

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

Physical health and mental wellbeing is embedded within the school ethos. Topics taught include Mental wellbeing, Internet safety and harms, physical health and fitness, Healthy eating, Health and prevention, Drugs, alcohol and tobacco, Basic First aid and the changing adolescent body are taught within specific subject areas and within the school whole school activities programme.

We will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal political activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property, hate crime, terrorism or the illegal use of drugs.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The directors

The directors will approve the RSE policy, and hold the school leader to account for its implementation.

7.2 The school leader

The school leader is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory/non-science components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 Staff

Staff – predominantly the PSHE teacher are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSE
- Modelling positive behaviour and avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and being conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the school's designated safeguarding lead

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the head teacher.

7.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

8. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 of this policy and addressed to the Education manager. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Education manager will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

In exceptional circumstances, for example because of a safeguarding concern or a pupil's specific vulnerability, the head teacher can refuse a request to withdraw the pupil from sex education.

9. Training

Relevant staff are trained on the delivery of RSE and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. The school will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the directors (Jane Cox and Penny Harris) through half termly visits to the school and including work scrutinies, learning walks and conversations with staff and pupils. Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

This policy will be reviewed by the directors annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the school leader.

Appendix 1: RSE Curriculum

Appendix 3: By the end of secondary school pupils should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<p>That there are different types of committed, stable relationships</p> <p>How these relationships might contribute to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children</p> <p>Why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples. The legal status of marriage that they carry legal rights, benefits and protections that are not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have had a non-legally binding religious ceremony</p> <p>That ‘common-law marriage’ is a myth, and cohabitants do not obtain marriage-like status or rights from living together</p> <p>That forced marriage and marriage before the age of 18 are illegal</p> <p>How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships</p> <p>The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising children, including the characteristics of successful parenting and the early years of a child’s life for brain development.</p> <p>How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed, including when pupils are in a relationship when they are unsure who to trust</p>
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<p>About the characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds, online and offline, including romantic relationships and friendships. Pupils should understand the role of consent, trust, mutual respect, honesty, kindness, loyalty, shared interests and outcomes, boundaries, privacy, and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships</p> <p>How to evaluate their impact on other people and treat others with kindness and respect, including in public spaces. Pupils should understand the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and that everyone is unique and entitled to respect</p> <p>The importance of self-esteem, independence and having a positive relationship with oneself, and how these relate to relationships with others. This includes developing one’s own interests, hobbies, friendship groups, and skills. Pupils should know that everyone means to be treated with respect by others</p> <p>What tolerance requires, including the importance of tolerance of other people’s beliefs</p> <p>The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships. This includes how to interact respectfully within relationships and with strangers, including in situations of conflict</p> <p>The different types of bullying (including online bullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders, and where to get help</p> <p>Skills for ending relationships or friendships with kindness and managing the difficult feelings that endings may bring, such as hurt or frustration</p> <p>The role of consent, including in romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils should understand that ethical consent involves kindness, care and attention to the needs and vulnerabilities of the other person, as well as an awareness of power. Pupils should understand that just because someone says ‘yes’ to doing something that doesn’t automatically make it ethical</p> <p>How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion, sexual orientation, and disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice). Pupils should be able to identify and challenge other forms of prejudice</p> <p>How inequalities of power can impact behaviour within relationships, including sexual relationships. For example, how those who are disempowered can feel they are not entitled to be treated with respect by others or how those who enjoy a relationship can, or without realising it, impose their preferences on others</p> <p>How pornography can negatively influence sexual attitudes and behaviours, including by normalising harmful sexual practices, disempowering some people, especially women, to feel a sense of autonomy over their own body and providing a false sense of entitlement to the bodies of others</p> <p>How some sub-cultures might influence our understanding of sexual ethics, including the sexual norms endorsed by incel communities (incels) or online influencers</p>
Online safety and awareness	<p>Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply online as in real life</p>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	<p>About online risks, including that any material they provide provides to another has the potential to be shared and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online. They should also understand the different types of online spaces and related safety issues</p> <p>Not to provide material to others that they would not want to be distributed further and not to pass on personal information. Pupils should understand that any material provided online might be circulated, and that once this has happened it is difficult to control where it ends up. Pupils should understand the serious risks of sending material to others, including the law</p> <p>About the characteristics of social media, including that some social media accounts are fake, and/or may be created with AI. They should also know that social media users may say things in more extreme ways than they would in person and that some users present highly exaggerated or idealised profiles of themselves online</p> <p>That keeping or forwarding indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime (even if the photo is of themselves, even if consented, and even if the photo was created by that child and/or using AI). That there are potentially serious risks associated with generating these images. That sharing indecent images of people over 18 without their consent is also a crime</p> <p>How to seek support. They should also understand that they will not be in trouble for asking for help, either if they have been involved or if themselves has been shared</p> <p>What to do and how to report when they are concerned about material that has been circulated, including how to report it and how to manage issues online</p> <p>About the prevalence of deepfakes including videos and photos, how deepfakes can be used maliciously as well as the risks that can be caused by deepfakes and how to identify them</p> <p>That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including unacceptable content, violence or use of weapons</p> <p>Where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that social media can present a picture of the world and normalise or glamourise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong</p> <p>That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help</p> <p>How to identify when technology and social media is used as part of bullying, harassment, stalking, coercive control and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour and how to seek support about concerns</p> <p>That pornography, and other online content, often presents a distorted picture of people and their sexual behaviour and how people behave towards sexual partners. That this can affect people who see pornographic content accidentally or deliberately. That pornography can also portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes which can negatively affect mental health</p> <p>How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online</p> <p>That websites may share personal data about their users, and information collected on their internet use, for example to enable targeted advertising)</p> <p>That criminals can operate online scams, such as using fake websites or emails to extort money or valuable information. That this can be used to the detriment of the person or wider society. About risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams and how to seek support if they have been scammed or involved in sextortion</p> <p>That AI chatbots are an example of how AI is rapidly developing, and that these can pose risks by creating false information</p> <p>That it is important to be able to critically think about new types of technology as they appear online and how to use them safely</p>
Being safe	<p>How to recognise, respect and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships, including in early romantic relationships (including online) and early sexual relationships that might involve kissing or touching. That kindness and caring are important for consent</p> <p>That there are a range of strategies for identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships from others, including peer pressure, and how to avoid putting pressure on others</p> <p>How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy, how to judge whether someone is trustworthy (and recognise this in the relationships of others); how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others</p> <p>How to increase their personal safety in public spaces, including when socialising with friends, family, the wider community and how to seek help when needed and how to report harmful behaviour. That there are strategies they can use to stay safe</p>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	<p>this does not mean they will be blamed if they are victims of harmful behaviour. About the importance of trust and how it doesn't feel right, and they should understand that in some situations a person might appear trustworthy but is not.</p> <p>What constitutes sexual harassment or sexual violence, and that such behaviour is unacceptable, emphasising the impact of experiencing it</p> <p>That sexual harassment includes unsolicited sexual language, attention or touching, taking and/or sharing intimate images without consent, public sexual harassment, pressuring other people to do sexual things, and upskirting</p> <p>About concepts and laws relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault ○ Harmful sexual behaviour, which includes all types of sexual harassment and sexual violence among young people, and other forms of concerning behaviour like using age-inappropriate sexual language ○ Domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, sexual, economic or physical abuse and psychological behaviour ○ Harms which are exploitative, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and abuse, grooming and child sexual exploitation ○ Forced marriage ○ Female genital mutilation (FGM), virginity testing and hymenoplasty <p>That fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviours can be criminal, and where to get help if needed</p> <p>That strangulation and suffocation are criminal offences, and that strangulation (applying pressure to the neck) can be fatal if it causes injury</p> <p>That any activity that involves applying force or pressure to someone's neck or covering someone's mouth can be a criminal offence causing serious injury or death</p> <p>That pornography presents some activities as normal which many people do not and will never engage in, some of which are physically harmful</p> <p>How to seek support for their own worrying or abusive behaviour, or for worrying or abusive behaviour they have experienced, including information on where to report abuse and where to seek medical attention when required, for example through a GP or a specialist helpline</p>
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<p>That sex, for people who feel ready and are over the age of consent, can and should be enjoyable and positive</p> <p>The law about the age of consent, that they have a choice about whether to have sex, that many young people do not, and that people of all ages can enjoy intimate and romantic relationships without sex</p> <p>About sexual consent and their capacity to give, withhold or remove consent at any time, even if initially given. That young people might take into account prior to sexual activity, such as the law, their faith and family values. That consent is more than just consent</p> <p>That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, including sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing</p> <p>That some sexual behaviours can be harmful</p> <p>The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available, including male and female condoms, pills, injectables, implants, IUDs, and emergency contraception, and where to get help to access them. The importance of, and facts about, medically accurate online information about sexual and reproductive health to support contraceptive decisions</p> <p>That there are choices in relation to pregnancy. Pupils should be given medically and legally accurate and impartial information about, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help</p> <p>How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted. How risk can be reduced (including through condom use)</p> <p>About the use and availability of the HIV prevention drugs pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and how to access them. The importance of, and facts about, regular testing and the role of stigma</p> <p>About the prevalence of STIs, the short and long-term impact they can have on those who contract them, and how to get help</p> <p>How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead people to take risks in their sexual behaviour</p> <p>How and where to seek support for concerns around sexual relationships including sexual violence or harms</p>

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
	How to counter misinformation, including signposting towards medically accurate information and further asexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

Appendix 3: Parent form: withdrawal from non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from non-statutory/non-science components of sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			

Parent signature	

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL

Agreed actions from discussion with parents	