SEX, RELATIONSHIPS & HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

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Sex, Relationships & Health Education Policy

This policy supports the aims outlined in Sussex Learning Trust's Sex and Relationship Statement.

Policy Statement- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

1. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is an important element in the programme of personal and social education which is received by all learners. At the primary level, our curriculum focuses on the building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships - focusing on family and friendships - and the biological facts of human growth and development as part of the National Curriculum for Science. As students progress into secondary education, the curriculum includes age-appropriate factual knowledge regarding sexual health, emotional wellbeing, and the legal and safety aspects of adult relationships. Across all age phases, our curriculum is designed to foster positive values and attitudes, guiding how learners approach and behave toward others with kindness and respect in a diverse society.

2. Our academies maintain an open-door policy and welcome families or interested parties to discuss the teaching materials and pedagogical approaches used within this curriculum area. We recognise that family backgrounds vary, with some parents or carers discussing these matters openly from an early age while others prefer a different approach. Consequently, parents or carers retain the right to withdraw their child from the specific Sex Education components of the curriculum that fall outside of the statutory Relationships, Health, or Science frameworks. To exercise this right or to discuss any concerns, parents or carers should contact the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Defining Sex, Relationships & Health Education (SRE & HE)

'It is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about promoting sexual activity.'(DfE)

1.Context

In England, the Department for Education's Statutory Guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) has been updated in July 2025 (for implementation by September 2026) to replace the previous 2020 guidance. This new guidance reflects lessons learned nationally over the past few years – including societal changes, online risks, and feedback from schools and parents. It brings changes in content, structure, expectations, and emphasis for both primary and secondary phases.

All state-funded primary schools are required by the government to teach Relationships and Health Education. Primary Schools can decide whether they also teach 'Sex Education' in addition to that already being addressed as part of the National Curriculum for Science, which we have chosen to do.

All state-funded secondary schools are required to deliver Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education. These subjects sit within a wider framework of Personal, Social, Health Education, which has been described by the Chief Medical Officer as 'a bridge between health and education.' RSHE is part of the basic curriculum and inspected through Ofsted Personal Development.

High quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. They can also enable schools to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and students at school and in society. Although these are important educational subjects in their own right, research evidence suggests that learning about relationships and health promotes wellbeing and can also improve academic attainment. These subjects represent a huge opportunity to help children and young people develop knowledge and attributes to support their own, and others', wellbeing and attainment and help them to become successful, and happy adults, who make a meaningful contribution to society.

2. Statutory Requirements and parental engagement

As a maintained primary and secondary all-through school, we must provide 'Relationships Education' to all primary pupils, and 'Relationships and Sex Education' to all Secondary pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social work act 2017.

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996. Further guidance surrounding the teaching of RSE from the DfE will be reviewed within a term of it being released, and lessons amended accordingly.

This policy, and the school PSHE curriculum, have been developed with WSCC Education 4 Safeguarding (E4S) planning tool, and is reviewed annually through consultation with staff, governors, pupils and parents. The policy will be up for review next in July 2025

This policy is shared with parents annually, with further clarity to the parental right to withdraw process, as outlined in section 5. The school is always open to parental engagement with regards to the content and themes taught within RSE and PSHE, with particular consultation on this sought during Summer Term.

Termly content for PSHE lessons are shared through the schools reporting cycle, especially in Secondary. Parents are also made aware, via email or YouTube videos, of specific workshops that have an element of sex education being covered in good time. The PSHE specific roadmap and long-term plans can be seen on the school's website. Resources for particular lessons can be viewed by requesting to see them through the school office.

3.Defining

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. This will often involve a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values, but it is not the promotion of sexual activity.

The term 'relationships' incorporates the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and adults. These areas of learning are taught within the context that family relationships can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, foster parents/carers, whilst reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

In primary, learning revolves around putting key building blocks in place for healthy, respectful relationships, focussing on family and friendships, in all contexts, including online; including an essential understanding of how to be healthy.

In secondary, learning builds on this and develops pupils' understanding of health, with an increased focus on risk areas such as drugs and alcohol, as well as introducing knowledge about intimate relationships and sex, and how to have positive and healthy sexual relationships in adulthood.

4. The teaching of RSE & HE

The teaching of Sex and Relationships will be undertaken within Science, RE and PSHE/RSHE. Each phase of the all-through school will undertake age-appropriate themed teaching based upon the aims and framework within this overarching policy. The planning of this teaching is also spiral in its approach; building on previous learning from year to year. Teaching of RSE will be undertaken within a mixed sex setting, both in the primary and secondary phase. In Primary, PSHE is primarily taught by their class teacher, and in Secondary, is taught by subject specific staff.

Monitoring and Evaluation of teaching

Monitoring and Evaluation will be undertaken by those responsible for the specific department the content is delivered within. Consideration of DfE statutory guidance from Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (HE) is ongoing, and the schools curriculum aligns with E4S West Sussex (Education for Safeguarding).

SEND

Lessons are inclusive in their nature; PSHE education plays an important role for learners with SEND, rehearsing and embedding the practical skills and understanding needed to lead independent and fulfilling lives, and enjoy safe and healthy relationships. Pupils may be affected by issues discussed in lessons; internal support or time with a trusted adult might be requested for. Those pupils who may struggle to regulate their emotions will be directed towards safe spaces and given short time out.

Safeguarding and Disclosures

The curriculum is safeguarding-led, at the heart of its design, and an accurate teaching of UK law. Where appropriate, lessons have clear signposting to help and support. Language used in resources, and in lessons, avoids victim-blaming and normalisation of harm. The resources chosen for both primary and secondary are aligned with KCSIE, Prevent Duty, Equality Act 2010 and the Domestic Abuse Act of 2021.

Ground rules are set at the beginning of each academic year, and are displayed at the front of PSHE teaching spaces; often referred to in lessons when required to do so. These consider the safeguarding of young people. Pupils can discuss examples but must not use names or descriptions that identify anyone, including themselves. Disclosures or concerns that are raised in lessons are dealt with in line with the school's child protection policy. Any disclosures that might happen during a lesson will be dealt with immediately by someone who knows them well.

British Values and Protected Characteristics

Several RSE lessons touch on core British Values of rule of law, individual liberty, democracy and mutual respect for and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; alongside referring to Protected Characteristics as outlined within the Equality Act of 2010. Planning, teaching and delivery of RSE will always consider the safeguarding of children at its core. Further themes associated around British Values and Protected Characteristics are also taught through the secondary Citizenship curriculum.

External groups supporting RSE delivery

In addition to the timetabled PSHE/RSHE lessons, the school uses a local charity to support teaching around RSE topics, called Options Chichester. Workshops in Year 6 focus on relationships, puberty, menstrual wellbeing and reproduction; each an hour in length during Autumn Term. Workshops in Year 9 focus on consent, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, the dangers of pornography, and sextortion; each lasting an hour in length. These take place during Autumn and Summer Term. The workshop in Year 10 focuses on the pregnancy timeline, lasting two hours during Summer Term. Parents are made aware of these sessions in good time and are invited to find out more about the contents of them. Reports are shared with the school after sessions are concluded.

Managing pupil questions

We encourage our pupils to be curious and ask questions; in RSE this may occasionally mean the questions may be deemed as inappropriate or not age-appropriate to the individual or class. Our intention is to answer pupils' questions factually and without judgement, with safeguarding always being our priority. These questions will be handled as discreetly as possible but will not go unanswered. With technology being so easily accessible, if we choose to avoid the question, we run the risk of the child(ren) turning to the internet to gain the answer they ask, potentially exposing them to harmful content.

5. Parental Right to withdraw child from Sex Education

From September 2020, there is no longer a parental right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education (at primary nor secondary stage) as the contents of these- such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety) – are important for all children to be taught.

Parents do have the right to withdraw their child from the components of sex education, which are taught predominantly in Summer Term across the school (other than those aspects which form part of the science curriculum), up to and until three terms before the age of 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school will arrange to provide sex education teaching during one of those terms.

Parents who wish to exercise this right should contact the Head of Primary or Head of Secondary, who will either directly discuss the matter with you, or delegate to the relevant member of staff leading on PSHE/RSHE in that phase to do so. The school will document the process and ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. It should be noted that the school believes that children should not be removed from this education as it enables them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing as they grow up.

6. The aim of Sex, Relationships & Health Education at CFS

All elements of Sex, Relationships and Health Education are incorporated into subject based Curriculum Roadmaps and Long-Term Programmes of study (most noticeably through RSHE and Science based curriculums). These can be viewed on the school's website or alternatively through requesting them.

The school aligns with the DfE's clarity that schools must make sure all content being used is factual and age-appropriate. The PSHE/RSHE curriculum is thematic in both primary and secondary phases. It is designed as a progressive curriculum where each year group learns at an age-appropriate level. The curriculum considers statutory and PSHE Association guidance, alongside the use of West Sussex's Education 4 Safeguarding planning tool to tailor the correct curriculum for our pupils.

The overarching aims include; (note: these themes are taught at an age-appropriate stage; the specifics for primary and secondary are outlined in more detail below)

- To provide knowledge of human reproductive processes
- To develop skills for a healthier and safer lifestyle
- To enable a better understanding to the nature of human relationships and the types of discrimination and prejudice that exist
- To prepare pupils for the changes which occur to their bodies, minds, and emotions as a consequence of growth from childhood to adulthood.
- Make informed, reasoned and responsible decisions about personal values they will adopt both while they are at school and in adulthood.

- Emphasise the skills, attitudes and insights that young people need in order to form loving and caring relationships
- Foster self-esteem, self-awareness and the skills of assertiveness that will enable them to resist and avoid unwelcome peer or social pressures.
- To explicitly cover consent and its implications across different situations
- To empower pupils to make informed choices about sex and contraception, whilst understanding the risks associated with unprotected sex
- To appreciate the pregnancy timeline from conception through to birth; and to sensitively explore associated themes such as miscarriage and abortion
- To inform with regards to law, and where appropriate, signpost to specific support should it be needed

Specifically, within Primary:

Sex, Relationships and Health Education is incorporated into the schemes of work for science and PSHE. Within science lessons children learn about reproduction. Within PSHE lessons the focus is on the importance of friendships, relationships, and family life. The core content of primary relationships education remains focussed on friendships, families, respect, and safety, with the new guidance covering the importance that there are different family structures (including single-parent and same-sex parent families and friendships. The three-key primary PSHE themes are: Relationships, Health and Wellbeing, and Living in the Wider World. The resources revolve around a thematic approach to learning, created by Cre8tive Curriculum , which is written around the PSHE Association's framework for PSHE and the statutory DfE content for RSE, and have been updated for September 2026. CPD is sought for those delivering the PSHE curriculum and external charities support with the delivery of some topics in Year 6.

Specific focus on sex and health education as outlined below;

Year 1: Body Safety Lessons

- Correct names for body parts (external only, age appropriate)
- Understand that bodies are private and belong to them
- The NSPCC PANTS rules (Privates are private, always remember your body belongs to you, No means no, Talks about secrets that upset you, Speak up someone can help)
- What to do if they feel unsafe
- Identify trusted adults who can help

Year 2, 3 and 4: Similar themes to Year 1 and age-specific in delivery

Year 5: Puberty and Body Safety Lessons

- Physical and emotional changes during puberty for all genders
- Menstruation and the menstrual cycle
- Correct names for body parts (age-appropriate)
- Understanding personal boundaries and consent
- The NSPCC body safety principles (Your body belongs to you, Trust your feelings, Talk to a trusted adult)
- Recognising and responding to harassment

- Online safety and personal protection

Year 6: to be confirmed once resources and scheme of work released by Cre8tive Resources

Specifically, within Secondary:

Statutory Content Coverage (DfE, 2025) explicitly covers all required secondary RSHE areas, including:

Respectful and healthy relationships, sexual consent and the law, sexual harassment and sexual violence, online safety, pornography, AI and deepfakes, domestic abuse and coercive control, exploitation and grooming, forced marriage, FGM, virginity testing & hymenoplasty, contraception, STIs, pregnancy choices, mental health, self-harm and suicide awareness.

Sex, Relationships and Health Education is incorporated into the schemes of work for science and RSHE in the main. Within science lessons pupils learn about reproduction. Within the RSHE lessons the focus depends upon the specific year group as outlined below. The aim of RSHE is to help young people;

- Build **healthy, respectful relationships**
- Understand **consent, boundaries and the law**
- Stay **safe online and offline**
- Look after their **physical and mental health**
- Be prepared for **adult life and future relationships**
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- The resources revolve around the thematic curriculum offered by Cre8tive RSHE Resources, updated for September 2026. Where possible, external trainers are brought into school to support RSE teaching (local charitable organisation working with several local schools) and CPD is sought for those delivering the curriculum. Whereby RSE curriculum objectives have not been covered in previous years due to unforeseen circumstances, current PSHE curriculum is amended to catch up on missing content. Lessons build gradually from Year 7 to 11, revisiting topics as pupils mature and deepen understanding over time. The RSHE Curriculum lessons are age-appropriate and carefully sequenced, taught in as safe and respectful classroom environment, based on facts, the law and medical accuracy, and also sensitive to pupils' backgrounds, beliefs and needs.

Science

Year 7 – Reproduction – a three-week programme which covers body changes in puberty, the males and female reproductive system, fertilisation, gestation, contraception and the menstrual cycle.

As an overview, pupils learn the following themes in an age-appropriate manner, across the five years of secondary:

Relationships & Respect: Friendships, kindness and empathy; Healthy and unhealthy relationships; consent, boundaries and communication; respect for others and equality

Online Safety: Social media and digital behaviour; Online grooming, exploitation and harassment; Pornography, AI, deepfakes and misinformation; Managing online pressure and reputation

Sex & Sexual Health: The law around consent and sexual activity; Contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs); Pregnancy choices and sexual health services; Recognising abuse and knowing where to seek help

Health & Wellbeing: Mental health, stress and coping strategies; Puberty and body changes; Self-harm and suicide awareness (taught sensitively); Healthy lifestyles and risk-reduction

Some topics may feel challenging, but they are statutory and safeguarding led, including: Sexual harassment and sexual violence; Domestic abuse and coercive control; Online pornography and exploitation; Forced marriage, FGM, virginity testing and hymenoplasty; Sharing sexual images (sexting), Sexual Health, Sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and the law relating to all of these. These are taught carefully and age-appropriately, with a focus on keeping young people safe, understanding the law and knowing how to seek help and support.