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Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

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We must provide relationships and sex education to all students as per section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and in line with the DfE's Statutory Guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education.

Relationships Education is compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools. Health Education is also compulsory in all state-funded Primary and Secondary Schools.

In teaching RSE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996. This guidance informs us what we should and must comply with when teaching relationships, RSE and health education.

This policy has been comprehensively updated to reflect the Department for Education's (DfE) revised Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance (July 2025).

This policy also aligns with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, and the *Equality Act 2010*.



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1. Aims

The aims of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place;
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene;
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy;
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships;
- Educate students on sexual harassment and abuse within and external to school;
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies;
- Make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects.

The objectives of RSHE at our school are to:

- To provide the knowledge and information to which all students are entitled;
- To clarify/reinforce existing knowledge;
- To raise students' self-esteem and confidence, especially in their relationships with others;
- To help students understand their sexual feelings and behaviour, so they can lead fulfilling and enjoyable lives;
- To help students develop skills (language, decision making, choice, assertiveness) and make the most of their abilities;
- To provide the confidence to be participating members of society and to value themselves and others;
- To help gain access to information and support;
- To develop skills for a healthier, safer lifestyle;
- To develop and use communication skills and assertiveness skills to cope with the influences of their peers and the media;



- To respect and care for their bodies;
- To be prepared for puberty and adulthood (including parenthood).

2. Statutory requirements

At Primary and secondary level, we must provide RSHE to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This legislation also requires us to provide RSHE to all pupils at our secondary academies. We must also teach health education.

We do not have to follow the National Curriculum, but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including requirements to teach science. This would include the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum at primary level.

In teaching RSHE, we're required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 404 to 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At Reach Schools we teach RSHE as set out in this policy.

3. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and families. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:



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1. Governor Consultation - The Governing Board holds ultimate legal accountability for the safety, compliance, and strategic direction of our school. Engaging our Safeguarding Governor during the policy-drafting phase provides a vital layer of objective and rigorous oversight.

2. DSL & SENCo Consultation - RSHE is a cornerstone of our school's proactive safeguarding and inclusion frameworks. Consulting our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) ensures our policy is protective and accessible to every learner.

3. Parent Consultation - We firmly believe that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children, particularly when it comes to relationships, values, and personal growth. Meaningful parental consultation is not just a statutory checkpoint; it is fundamental to the success of our RSE program. Consulting with parents ensures that families are fully aware of **what** is being taught, **when** it is being taught, and **why**, eliminating misconceptions and ensuring trust is built.

4. Staff & Student Consultation - Consulting our pupils ensures our curriculum is responsive, relevant, and grounded in their actual experiences. By listening to students across all key stages, we identified real-world knowledge gaps, particularly regarding fast-evolving online spaces, digital safety, and peer cultures, ensuring our lessons are preventative rather than reactive. Our teaching staff are the frontline deliverers of this policy. Engaging them in the consultation process guarantees that our spiral curriculum is logistically sound, pedagogically robust, and seamlessly aligned with our safeguarding (KCSIE) and SEND frameworks.

This document should be read alongside the [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education](#) which is statutory guidance for schools:

4. Definition

At our school, RSHE is recognised as an essential, lifelong learning process concerning physical, moral, social, and emotional development. It is fundamentally about understanding the vital importance of stable, loving, and caring relationships, alongside a factually accurate, age-appropriate understanding of sex, sexuality, and sexual health.



Research consistently demonstrates that high-quality, age-appropriate relationships and sex education does not encourage young people to become sexually active at a younger age; rather, it equips them with the knowledge and critical thinking required to make safe, deliberate, and informed choices.

We view RSHE as a core component of our statutory safeguarding duty and our broader commitment to student wellbeing, fostering an open dialogue grounded in mutual respect.

At Primary level, relationships and health education will:

- Teach the skills and knowledge that form the building blocks of all positive relationships
- Support children from the start of their education to grow into kind, caring adults who have respect for others, know how to keep themselves safe and have emotional awareness.
- Highlight the benefits and importance of physical activity, good nutrition, sufficient sleep and time spent outdoors
- Emphasise the relationship between physical health and mental wellbeing
- Aim to reduce stigma attached to health issues, in particular relating to mental health, and discourage the pejorative use of language related to ill health.

At Secondary level, relationships, sex and health education will:

- Provide young people with the information they need to develop healthy, safe and nurturing relationships of all kinds
- Focus on pupils having respect for themselves and others
- Not normalise early sexual experimentation
- Cover a range of topics, including topics related to abusive behaviour, along with teaching pupils how to stay safe, including online
- Combine sharing information with exploring issues and values
- Emphasise the relationship between physical health and mental wellbeing
- Aim to reduce stigma attached to health issues, in particular relating to mental health, and discourage the pejorative use of language related to ill health
- Support pupils to understand their changing bodies and their feelings, how to protect their own health and wellbeing, and when a physical or mental health issue requires attention
- Build on the primary health and wellbeing curriculum content



5. Curriculum

Our comprehensive PSHE curriculum map is detailed in Appendix 1; however, we reserve the right to dynamically adapt and refine this sequence in response to emerging localised safeguarding data, the specific developmental readiness of individual cohorts, and any immediate shifts in digital or peer cultures.

PSHE, referred to in our school as 'Team Reach,' is timetabled systematically across all key stages. Both our Primary and Secondary phases focus on a dedicated theme each half-term.

RSHE is a core component of this provision. To maximise impact and reinforce learning, we utilise a robust, cross-curricular approach where statutory elements are mapped into complementary subjects:

Science: Biological facts, human reproduction, and physical development are delivered through a rigorous, scientifically accurate framework.

Religious Education (RE): Ethical considerations and diverse cultural heritages.

Our weekly Team Reach curriculum is delivered by a team of educators who understand our pupils' academic, emotional, and social development. To ensure continuity of pastoral care, our delivery model is structured across phases as follows:

Primary: Lessons are delivered directly by Class Teachers, who possess a holistic understanding of their pupils' emotional maturity and specific learning needs.

Secondary: Lessons are predominantly facilitated by Form Tutors, ensuring that these sensitive topics are navigated within an established environment of safety, trust, and regular contact.

These members of staff hold a detailed, day-to-day knowledge of every student, therefore they are uniquely positioned to expertly differentiate content, ensuring that lessons are fully accessible, supportive, and appropriately paced for all learners, including those with SEND. Teachers will make sure that all pupils' views are listened to, and will encourage them to ask questions and

engage in discussion. Teachers will answer questions sensitively, honestly and appropriately for the ages of the pupils. Pupils will be introduced to protective and preventative content in



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a way that does not cause unreasonable alarm and does not appear to normalise risky behaviours or activities. RSHE complements several other curriculum subjects. Where appropriate, we will look for opportunities to make links between the subjects and integrate teaching. The

We employ a diverse range of evidence-based, participatory teaching methods designed to secure full engagement while maintaining safe learning boundaries. RSHE is never taught passively; instead, we use high-impact, interactive strategies including:

Structured Discussion and Debate: To foster critical thinking, legal literacy, and the articulation of personal boundaries.

Case Studies and Scenarios: Allowing pupils to safely deconstruct complex social and digital dilemmas at a psychological distance.

Age-Appropriate Media and Video Components: To visually illustrate real-world scenarios and modern online risks.

Our curriculum is built upon high-quality, professional frameworks provided through our formal membership with the **PSHE Association** and our strategic partnership with **Wellio**. In line with updated statutory expectations, all external resources are strictly vetted by school leadership to ensure complete alignment with our values of ideological neutrality and age-appropriateness. Where highly specialised topics demand deeper expertise, we intentionally supplement our curriculum with targeted resources created by recognised, expert organisations in those relevant fields.

Our curriculum design is heavily informed by national thematic reviews into peer-on-peer abuse, most notably the landmark **Ofsted Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges**. This urgent review was triggered by thousands of anonymous testimonies detailing pervasive sexual harassment and violence posted on platforms like **Everyone's Invited**.

A critical finding of that review was that RSHE provision nationally was failing to equip pupils with the practical information, legal literacy, and safety advice they urgently required. Consequently, a significant number of young people reported turning to unvetted social media platforms or misinformed peer networks for their education.

In direct response to these findings, and in strict alignment with the updated DfE Statutory Guidance, we ensure that our pupils are explicitly taught:



- The clear definitions, legal boundaries, and reality of sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- The mechanics of grooming, online exploitation, and the risks associated with harmful digital cultures (including misogynistic and incel ideologies).
- Clear, uncompromised, and safe pathways to report any instances of abuse or harassment immediately.

Teachers will make sure that pupils understand the importance of equality and respect and learn about the law. This will include learning about the rights and protections from discrimination relating to the protected characteristics, including gender reassignment as set out in the Equality Act 2010, by the end of their secondary education.

We will:

- Make sure that all pupils are taught the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment, recognising that people have legal rights by virtue of their biological sex which are different from the rights of those of the opposite sex with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Pupils will also be taught to recognise that people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, as with the other protected characteristics, have protection from discrimination and should be treated with respect and dignity
- Be mindful in teaching the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment that beyond the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment there is significant debate
- Not endorse any particular view or teach this as fact – for example, the school will not teach as fact that all people have a gender identity
- Avoid:
 - Any language or activities that repeat or enforce gender stereotypes
 - Any suggestion that social transition is a simple solution to feelings of distress or discomfort.

It is important for secondary pupils to know what the law says about certain topics covered in RSHE, particularly in relation to the law and young people. This will help pupils identify what is right and wrong, and can provide a foundation of knowledge for deeper discussion. These topics include, but are not limited to:

- Marriage, including forced marriage and civil partnerships
- Consent, including the age of consent



- Domestic abuse, stalking, rape, sexual offences, female genital mutilation (FGM), 'virginity testing' and hymenoplasty
- Sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation, including public sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour, and online behaviours
- Online behaviours including image and information sharing (including sexual imagery, making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes, and including AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes). Pupils should understand the law about online sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, including grooming and sextortion
- Pornography
- Abortion
- The protected characteristics
- The age of criminal responsibility

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 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/carers 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 trust, we will also be mindful of the law and legal requirements, taking care not to condone or encourage illegal activity, such as violent action against people, criminal damage to property or hate crime.

6. Delivery of RSHE

RSHE is typically delivered within mixed-gender classroom environments, reflecting the school's co-educational reality and preparing pupils for respectful, collaborative interactions in adult life.

However, we recognise that on specific occasions, partitioning into single-gender groupings may be more appropriate and instructionally relevant. This responsive approach is utilised during highly sensitive topics, such as specific aspects of pubertal development, reproductive health, or when creating a targeted space to address gender-specific peer cultures, ensuring that all pupils feel entirely secure and comfortable when asking questions and engaging with the material.

To facilitate meaningful learning on sensitive topics, staff ensure that the classroom environment is consistently established as a safe, predictable, and secure space. This is achieved through a structured approach to boundaries, delivery, and support:

Co-Produced Ground Rules: At the outset of every RSE unit and individual session, staff work collaboratively with pupils to establish clear, mutually agreed ground rules (such as mutual respect, non-judgment, and the principle of keeping personal disclosures private). This contractual framework ensures boundaries are maintained by all participants.

Immediate Safeguarding Signposting: To bridge the gap between classroom learning and pastoral protection, every single RSE lesson concludes with an explicit visual slide displaying the names and photographs of our Safeguarding Team. This serves as a continuous, universal reminder to all pupils of exactly who they can securely speak to if any content triggers a personal concern or disclosure.

Our schools will ensure that:

- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of manageable size
- The required content is communicated to pupils clearly, in a carefully sequenced way and within a planned scheme of work
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge, so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations
- “Over blocking” by the school’s filtering and monitoring system doesn’t lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught

Inclusivity

To ensure equity of access, teaching methodologies and curriculum resources are proactively adapted to meet the diverse cognitive, communication, and emotional needs of our pupils. This targeted approach guarantees that all learners, including those with Special



Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), can fully access, comprehend, and engage with the essential safeguarding content of the RSE curriculum without barriers.

Our schools will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them
- Is accessible to pupils with SEND
- Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences
- During lessons, makes pupils feel safe and supported / able to engage with the key messages

They will also:

- Make sure that pupils learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them, for example in a whole class setting, small groups, 1 to 1 discussions and digital formats.
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

Our schools will consider whether any resources they plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSHE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age and maturity of the pupils
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fit into our curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and won't provoke distress

We will make sure that when we consult parents/carers we provide a representative sample of the resources that the school plans to use.

We will ensure that parents/carers are able to view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE on request.

Parents/carers are not able to veto curriculum content.



We will comply with any applicable copyright laws when sharing resources with parents or carers, and will include a statement that parents agree to as a condition of access that the content should not be copied or shared further except as authorised under copyright law.

Equal Opportunities

Our school is uncompromised in its commitment to providing an inclusive, accessible, and high-quality RSHE curriculum for every pupil. In strict accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, every child is fully entitled to receive comprehensive relationships, sex, and health education. Access to this vital protective curriculum is guaranteed to all pupils regardless of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, language, socioeconomic disadvantage, or Looked After status (LAC).

7. Use of external organisations and materials

Whilst we may work with external organisations to deliver the curriculum, we remain responsible for the content and the way in which pupils are taught. Across our trust, we will make sure that any agency and any materials used are accurate, age and stage-appropriate and unbiased and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

Our schools will:

Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSHE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:

- Are age-appropriate
- Are in line with pupils' developmental stage
- Are accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND
- Are sensitive to pupils' needs

Comply with:

- This policy
- [Teachers' Standards](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [The Education Act 1996](#)



Only work with external agencies where they have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses

Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum

Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with

Be clear on:

1. What they're going to say
2. Their position on the issues to be discussed
3. Ask to see in advance any materials and lesson plans that the agency may use
4. Know the named individuals who will be there, check the credentials of the visitor and/or visiting organisation, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people

Make sure the visitor understands and agrees in advance:

1. How confidentiality will work in any lesson
2. How safeguarding reports should be dealt with, in line with our trust policies.

Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to the school, or to parents and carers

Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session

Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session

Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers

Inform all external organisations that the school is legally obliged to share all content with parents and carers

Share all external materials with parents and carers

Consult parents/carers on the content of external resources on the topic of biological sex and gender reassignment in advance and make all materials available to them on request

Avoid materials that use cartoons or diagrams that oversimplify the topics of biological sex and gender reassignment, that could be interpreted as being aimed at younger children, or that perpetuate stereotypes or encourage pupils to question their gender

We won't, under any circumstances:

1. Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
2. Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme
3. Work with agencies who don't allow their material to be shared with parents and carers. The school will communicate to agencies that it is legally obliged to have regard to the expectation that all content can be shared with parents and carer

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body (LGB)

The Board of Trustees has delegated approval of this policy to the Local Governing Body. They will hold the CEO to account for its implementation across the schools.

The governing board will ensure that:

- All pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes • teaching is accessible to all pupils with SEND
- Curriculum content and teaching materials are aligned with the guidance
- Clear information is provided for parents on the subject content, teaching materials and external providers, and on the right to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education

The LGB will also monitor the implementation of this policy within the school, providing advice, challenge and support to the co-headteachers and receiving regular updates at its meetings.



8.2 CEO

The CEO will:

Approve the policy

Work with co-headteachers to make sure they can implement the policy in their school

Report to the board of trustees on any issues with its implementation across the trust

8.2 The Co-Headteachers

Co-headteachers are responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-statutory/non-science components of RSHE.

8.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSHE in a way that is sensitive, high-quality and appropriate for each year group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSHE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the [non- statutory/non-science] components of RSHE
- Modelling positive behaviour and avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and being conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment derogatory behaviour and stereotypes
- Where misogynistic ideas are expressed at school, challenging the ideas, rather than the person expressing them. Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) [Elly Grantham or Georgia Strong]

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

8.4 Students

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

9. Right to Withdrawal

In accordance with DfE statutory guidance, parents and carers hold a legal right to request that their child be withdrawn from the Sex Education components of our curriculum.

There is no legal right to withdraw a child from any element of statutory Relationships Education (Primary Phase), statutory Relationships Education (Secondary Phase), or statutory Health Education (All-Through).

These modules are legally mandatory as they form a critical part of the school's universal preventative safeguarding framework. **Furthermore, parents cannot withdraw children from any biological reproductive content delivered via the national Science Curriculum.**

Sex Education is a statutory component of the secondary curriculum. Parents may still request that their child be excused from these specific lessons.

Upon receiving a [withdrawal request in writing](#), the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team will invite the parents/carers to a formal, documented meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure the parents' wishes are fully understood, to clarify exactly what content will be covered, to explain the protective safeguarding benefits of the lessons, and to discuss any potential social or emotional impacts on the student (such as hearing about the content from peers outside the classroom).

Except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect and grant the parents' request up until the statutory age threshold detailed below. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.



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

The 'Three Terms' Rule (Secondary Phase)

The right of a parent to withdraw their child from statutory secondary Sex Education changes as the pupil approaches adulthood. Once a pupil reaches three academic terms before they turn 16 years of age (typically during Year 11), the legal right to choose whether to receive sex education shifts entirely from the parent to the young person.

If the student explicitly wishes to receive Sex Education lessons at this stage, the school holds a statutory obligation to overrule the parents' original withdrawal request and provide the student with high-quality, safe instruction.

10. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSHE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

The co-headteachers will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSHE.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSHE is monitored by the Team Reach Curriculum Leads. RSHE is monitored and evaluated regularly to assess the effectiveness of the aims, content and methods in promoting students' learning by lesson observation, sampling teachers planning, questionnaires to teachers and children and feedback from families.

As a result of this process, changes will be made to the RSHE education programmes as appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed by Team Reach Curriculum Leads annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the LGB. During the annual review, families will have an



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opportunity to provide any feedback and recommendations. This interim review has been deliberate in light of the new statutory guidance taking effect on the 1st of September 2026.

Documents that inform the school's RSHE policy include:

[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education - Statutory Guidance \(2025\)](#)

[Education Act \(1996\)](#)

[Learning and Skills Act \(2000\)](#)

[Education and Inspections Act \(2006\)](#)

[Equality Act \(2010\)](#)

[Keeping children safe in education – Statutory safeguarding guidance \(2025\)](#)

[Children and Social Work Act \(2017\)](#)

12. Links to relevant resources

1. [Primary PSHE Map & RSHE Mapping](#)
2. [Secondary PSHE Map & RSHE Mapping](#)
3. [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(for introduction 1 September 2026\)](#)