

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy



Approval and review dates

Policy	Date of last review	Date of next review
SVS RSE Policy	September 2025	September 2026

RSE, as part of the PSHE education curriculum, is vital to the development of the young people in our schools. The planned programmes are designed to help them deal with the difficult moral, social and health-related issues that arise in their lives and in society. They also help them to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy, independent lives as individuals, parents, workers and members of society. Effective RSE is a key component in our approach to safeguarding our pupils through the curriculum.

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. Legislation and guidance

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, require all schools from September 2020 to deliver Relationships Education (in primary schools) and Relationships and sex education (in secondary Schools). Health Education is compulsory in all schools except independent schools.

The Sandwell Valley School values PSHE as one way to support children's development as human beings, to enable them to understand and respect who they are, to empower them with a voice and to equip them for life and learning.

This programme's complimentary update policy ensures we are always using the most up to date teaching materials and that our teachers are well-supported. Documents that inform this RSE policy include:

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- Education Act (1996) Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (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
- Keeping children safe in Education – Statutory safeguarding guidance (2024)
- Relationships and Sex Education RSE Secondary- Statutory Guidance July 2019

3. Policy Development

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

- Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
- Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
- Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy
- Pupil consultation – we investigated what exactly pupils want from their RSE through Student Council
- Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

We are committed to working with parents and carers. Parents and carers are invited to contact the school directly with any queries or concerns. The resources used are also available on request. Parents and carers have a right to withdraw their children from Sex Education content by letter to the Head of PSHE education (See appendix 2 for the form). This does not include the content covered within the Science curriculum nor does it cover PSHE or Relationships content.

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.

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5. Curriculum

Our RSE curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1, but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents/carers, pupils and staff, and taking into account the age, developmental stage, needs and feelings of our pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner so that pupils are fully informed and don't seek answers online. See Appendix 3 for Letter to parents.

We will share all curriculum materials with parents and carers upon request.

5.1 What we teach

Our curriculum is set out as per Appendix 1 but we may need to adapt it as and when necessary.

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

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).

We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, 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.

Controversial topics will be covered with sensitivity and respect for all viewpoints. The programme is not aimed to tell what is right and wrong but to take into account different perspectives and provide pupils with the information to make their own decisions.

5.2 How we teach it

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RSE is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE).

Every young person in Key Stages 3 and 4 has access to the full RSE provision, through their timetabled PSHE education lessons. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education which is not part of the statutory national curriculum.

The programmes are led by the Head of PSHE education within the respective school. It is taught by staff who have all received specialist training in RSE.

Pupils also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by a trained health professional.

Monitoring and evaluating

The RSE and PSHE education coordinators will monitor the planning, teaching and learning of RSE and PSHE education regularly. Planning will be monitored termly, and observations of teaching will take place in accordance with the respective schools monitoring cycle. Feedback will be given to teachers. The schemes of work and policy will also be reviewed according to the review cycle.

6. Inclusivity

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of pupils will relate to them
- Is sensitive to all pupils' experiences
- During lessons, makes pupils feel:
 - Safe and supported
 - Able to engage with the key messages

We 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 or targeted sessions
 - 1-to-1 discussions
 - Digital formats
- Give careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed

6.1 Use of resources

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We will consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory RSE guidance
- Would support pupils in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our 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

7. Use of external organisations and materials

We will make sure that an agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

The school remains responsible for what is said to pupils. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We will:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
 - Are age-appropriate
 - Are in line with pupils' developmental stage
- Comply with:
 - This policy
 - The Teachers' Standards
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where we 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:
 - What they're going to say
 - Their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use

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- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, 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
- Share all external materials with parents and carers

We won't, under any circumstances:

- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions
- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the principal to account for its implementation.

4.2 The principal

The principal 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).

4.3 Staff

Staff 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

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 principal.

4.4 Pupils

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

4.5 Parents' right to withdraw

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 3 of this policy and addressed to the principal.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The principal will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

5. Training

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

The principal 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.

6. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by head of curriculum, Carolin Benzigar through planning scrutinies, learning walks, pupil survey.

This policy will be reviewed by annually by SLT. At every review, the policy will be approved by Governors.

6. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy
- PSHE Policy

Appendix 1: By the end of secondary school pupils should know

TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That there are different types of committed, stable relationships - How these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children - What marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony - Why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into - The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships - The roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting - How to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and, how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed
Respectful relationships, including friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship - Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships - How stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (e.g. how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice) - That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including people in positions of authority and due tolerance of other people's beliefs - About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying and how and where to get help - That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable - The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal

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TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Online and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online - About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online - Not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further and not to share personal material which is sent to them - What to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online - The impact of viewing harmful content - That specifically sexually explicit material e.g. pornography presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others and negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners - That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail - How information and data is generated, collected, shared and used online
Being safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships - How people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online)

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TOPIC	PUPILS SHOULD KNOW
Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship - That all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing - The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women - That there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure and not pressurising others - That they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex - The facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy and options available - The facts around pregnancy including miscarriage - That there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help) - How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing - About the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them and key facts about treatment - How the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour - How to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment

Appendix 2: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Year	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from 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	

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Appendix 3: RSHE: Letter for parents and carers

Sandwell Valley School- Our PSHE and RSHE curriculum.

Dear *[name of parent or carer]*,

We believe that promoting the health and wellbeing of our pupils is an important part of their overall education. We do this through our personal, social, health and emotional (PSHE) curriculum. PSHE covers many topics including all kinds of relationships, physical/emotional health and the skills needed to live in the wider world. The aim of our PSHE curriculum is to help pupils make safe and informed decisions during their school years and beyond.

Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) is the statutory element of our PSHE curriculum and all schools in England are required to teach. We will be teaching lessons about RSHE as part of time tabled Personal Growth and Wellbeing lessons which will include topics such as: naming body parts; families; online safety; puberty; relationships and communication skills; pregnancy; contraceptives; prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; prevention of sexual abuse; body image; sexting and social media; pornography; consent; LGBTQ+. During these lessons, pupils will be able to ask questions, which will be answered factually in an age-appropriate manner. Each pupil's privacy will be respected, and no one will be asked to reveal personal information. Students will also have the opportunity to speak in private to a member of teaching staff, the mentor team or the school nurse, should they wish.

RSHE is a statutory subject and although parents can withdraw their child from the sex education element, we want to assure parents that our curriculum is taught in an age-appropriate manner and provides pupils with the time to ask questions in a safe environment and ultimately receive factual information, rather than hearing content second hand or via online platforms. In the 21st century pupils are exposed to so many of the incorrect messages about their bodies, relationships and expectations. The prevalence of sexual images in social and other media make it important that all young people have a place to discuss pressures, check facts, dispel myths and ultimately feel safe.

RSHE is a carefully planned curriculum and is there to ensure our pupils can navigate the world around them safely. An un-informed child is often a child left vulnerable and we want to empower our pupils here at Sandwell Valley School.

Parents and carers are the most important educators of children and young people in personal issues and many welcome the support that school can offer to supplement their home teaching.

You may find that your child starts asking questions about the topic at home, or you might want to take the opportunity to talk to your child about issues before the work is covered in school. If you have any queries about the content of the programme or resources used, please do not hesitate in contacting me at school. All materials used are available for you to browse through should you so wish.

Yours sincerely,