# LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

# RELATIONSHIP & SEX EDUCATION POLICY

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| Our Relationship & Sex Education policy has been written and approved by a team with a range of experience, and will be reviewed annually. |
| Previous Review Date: August 2025 |
| Next Review Date: August 2026 |

**Please Note** The Department for Education (DfE) has published updated statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (the Guidance) which comes into force on 1 September 2026. Our policy and curriculum will be updated accordingly to reflect these changes.

## INTRODUCTION

In updating our RSE policy and curriculum, we have focused on ensuring it reflects.

- The age, maturity and diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of our students.
- The values of our school community.
- The learning needs of all of our students
- The knowledge and skills needed for students to be healthy and safe both in school, in their personal relationships, and in the wider world.

Learning Opportunities RSE policy outlines the legal framework around relationships and sex education for secondary school students and explains how the curriculum content will be determined and quality assured.

This policy helps ensure that the whole school community (students, parents/carers, and staff) have a shared understanding of this important area of the curriculum. It is accessible to all stakeholders on the school website or by request.

This is a working document which provides guidance and information on all aspects of RSE and aims to provide a secure framework within which staff can work.

Learning Opportunities recognise that relationship and sex education (RSE) is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the importance of stable and loving relationships including marriage for family life, and about respect, love and care.

RSE provides students with factual knowledge and an understanding of the influences on young people, ensuring they are equipped to make informed, safe, and healthy choices as they progress to adult life. It encourages the development of personal and interpersonal skills, the awareness and respect of self and others and encourages reflection and responsibility.

Relationships and sex education is giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. It should enable them to know what a healthy relationship looks like and what makes a good friend, a good colleague and a successful marriage or other type of committed relationship. It should also cover contraception, developing intimate relationships and resisting pressure to have sex (and not applying pressure). It should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This will help students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

Health Education is teaching students about physical health and mental wellbeing (and that they are interlinked) to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. It should enable them to recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others and, when issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

## AIMS

The aims of RSE at our school are:

- To promote inclusivity, as established in the Equality Act 2010
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place and opportunities for students to ask questions in a safe environment.
- To teach students to be safe.
- 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, resilience and empathy.
- Teach the principles of consent in-line with our safeguarding responsibilities and more widely what is a healthy and respectful relationship and what constitutes harmful sexual behaviour.
- Create a positive and open culture around issues of sexuality and relationships.
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- Support and promote the ethos and values of the school, in particular:
    - diversity and inclusion,
    - a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and sexual violence
    - student wellbeing and
    - the development of personal attributes including kindness, respect, integrity, and generosity

**DEFINITION**

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, 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.

Some aspects are taught in science, and others are taught as part of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE).

A comprehensive programme of RSE provides accurate information about the body, reproduction, sex, and sexual health. It also gives students essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline.

**LEGISLATION**

The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 are made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and provide that students receiving primary education must be taught Relationships Education, students receiving secondary education must be taught RSE and that all primary and secondary students must be taught Health Education.

The regulations and guidance in relation to Health Education do not apply to independent schools – they will continue to make provision for the health education element of PSHE under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations.

Schools must make statements of policy in relation to the education to be provided, and to make the statements available to parents or other persons.

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all students. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility.

Schools retain freedom to determine an age-appropriate, developmental curriculum which meets the needs of students.

## EQUALITY

The Equality Act 2010 covers the way the curriculum is delivered. Learning Opportunities ensures that issues are taught in a way that does not subject students to discrimination.

Schools have a duty under the Equality Act to ensure that teaching is accessible to all children and young people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) and any other groups, however they choose to identify. Inclusive RSE will foster good relationships between students, tackle all types of prejudice, including homophobia, and promote understanding and respect. Learning Opportunities considers the needs of different groups within the school, such as boys and girls, varying home backgrounds, sexuality, SEND, LAC, Faith, ethnicity and culture. The programme is differentiated at point of delivery by trained staff, so that it is appropriate to students' age, ability, gender and maturity.

We aim to ensure all students are treated fairly, with no discrimination or bullying on grounds of gender, race, religion, colour, language, culture, social circumstances, appearance, sexuality, ability or disability.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

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

- Review – the Senior Leadership Team work together to ensure all information including relevant national and local guidance is incorporated.
- Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations.
- The policy is shared with parent/carers – they are invited to make suggestions / contributions.
- Student consultation – views are sought through school council meetings.
- The Proprietor ratifies the policy.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Our aim is to present a caring and developmental RSE programme which helps and supports students through their physical, emotional and moral development. We believe that a successful programme will help students to learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence through adolescence into adulthood.

We recognise that some of our students will grow into adulthood but remain dependent on others, needing support to enjoy interaction and to make their needs known. With appropriate experiences and skilled teaching, we believe that we can reduce the risks of exploitation and improve all our students' chances of establishing positive relationships now and later in their adult lives.

***Learning Opportunities aims to help students understand:***

- Characteristics of a healthy family (commitment, stability, care, security etc) and how to recognise/respond if a family relationship is making them feel unhappy/unsafe.
- Respecting differences in others' families.
- That marriage (civil or religious) is a formal/legal commitment intended for life.
- The importance of friendships and its characteristics (caring, respect, trust, loyalty, kindness etc); and how to recognise/respond if a friendship is making them feel unhappy/unsafe.
- Respect and respecting difference (including self-respect, bullying, cyberbullying, stereotyping, permission-seeking/giving).
- Online risks (people, relationships, data) and how to stay safe online/report concerns.
- Being safe through boundaries, privacy, a person's body belonging to them, responding appropriately to adults, how to recognise/report feeling unsafe and abuse.
- The importance of their physical, emotional and moral development.
- How to develop skills to enable them to make healthy responsible choices about their health and wellbeing (including mental health).
- How to move more confidently and responsibly into adolescence and adulthood.
- Basic first aid.
- The facts/risks with smoking, alcohol and drugs.
- Different types of committed relationships and why marriage must be freely entered into.
- Characteristics of successful parenting.
- How to determine whether sources of information are trustworthy.
- Managing conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships.
- How stereotypes can cause damage (e.g. normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice);
- Tolerance of others' beliefs.
- Violent behaviour, coercive control, sexual harassment and why these are always unacceptable.
- Risks with sharing online material, the impact of viewing harmful content, how data is collected/shared/used online.
- The concepts and laws of a range of safeguarding risks (i.e. sexual consent, exploitation, grooming, domestic abuse, honour-based abuse, FGM);
- Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health and the increased risks with alcohol and drugs.

This policy is fully considered in conjunction with Keeping in Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and it is a key aspect of safeguarding through raising students' awareness and providing an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues.

**CURRICULUM CONTENT**

Our science and computing curricula support topics set within our PSHE medium-term planning which is based on the Jigsaw Framework. Teachers identify relevant learning objectives and activities for their students, taking account of the students' age, developmental level, and level of understanding.

Teachers ensure that their objectives and resources reflect the range of cultures represented in the school and the range of family units in which students live.

If students ask questions outside the scope of this policy, teachers will respond by providing information and/or directing students to further sources of information/advice, so they are fully informed and don't seek answers from inappropriate sources.

**INTENT / DELIVERY OF RSE**

We recognise that much of the literature published is not easily accessible to students with SEND, therefore we ensure that our teaching and learning resources are all tailored to meet the needs of all of our students. We recognise the importance of providing appropriate vocabulary and language, in addition to knowledge and the skills appropriate to their level of maturity and developmental needs.

By using the Jigsaw PSHE scheme flexibly (see attached), we ensure that all students—regardless of their cognitive ability, learning need, or age, access a consistent, high-quality PSHE curriculum. Grouping students by ability or need rather than age allows us to match content to developmental readiness, which increases engagement, personal relevance, and emotional impact. This directly supports the quality of education and contributes to students' broader development.

The Jigsaw PSHE scheme is designed as a spiral curriculum. This means core themes—such as relationships, mental health, celebrating difference, and managing risk—are revisited each year, allowing us to tailor content to students' developmental stage, not just their age.

Our intent is to ensure that every student, regardless of ability or background, can access the core PSHE learning in a meaningful way, supporting emotional development, decision-making and self-regulation. This is particularly important in our setting, where students may be working at different academic or social-emotional levels than their chronological age would suggest. Grouping by ability or need, rather than year, ensures that PSHE is relevant, accessible, and impactful.

Jigsaw's structure enables us to deliver the same whole-school themes (e.g. "Dreams and Goals", "Relationships", "Being Me in My World") across all groups, while using materials that are developmentally appropriate for each class or group.

Lessons include a variety of formats such as visual aids, role play, discussion, creative activities, and mindfulness—all of which support mixed-ability access. We differentiate by:

- Task – allowing multiple response formats (drawing, speaking, acting).
- Support – providing scaffolds, adult support, or pre-taught vocabulary.
- Outcome – encouraging all students to reflect, but with expectations suited to their ability.
- Challenge – deeper moral or emotional questioning is built in for more able students.

The proposed content of the programme of relationship and sex education from Year 7 to Year 11 will be overseen by the Heads of School, who will ensure it is age / needs appropriate, meets all statutory guidance and is taught well.

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 (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents and 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 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.

Staff will ensure clear ground rules are set when teaching sensitive topics. Examples include: safeguarding, confidentiality, respect, listening and non-judgemental.

We have high expectations of the quality of students' work within relationships education. We will build on the knowledge that students have previously acquired and obtain regular feedback to assess and capture progress.

Where appropriate, we use external agencies/organisations to support delivery and coverage. Learning Opportunities will ensure appropriate checks are completed on any visitors to ensure their credentials and delivery of information is in line with the planned programme, and that any agency and materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

**INCLUSIVITY**

We will teach about these topics in a manner that:

- Considers how a diverse range of students will relate to them.
- Is sensitive to all students' experiences.

During lessons, makes students feel:

- Safe and supported.
- Able to engage with the key messages.

We will also make sure that students learn about these topics in an environment that's appropriate for them giving careful consideration to the level of differentiation needed, for example in:

- A whole-class setting
- Small groups or targeted sessions
- 1-to-1 discussions
- Digital formats

**Use of resources**

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 students in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings.
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our students.
- 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 students' experiences and won't provoke distress.

**ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

The **Proprietor** will approve the RSE policy and hold the Senior Leadership to account for its implementation.

The **Heads of School** 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.

**Staff** are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory/non-science components of RSHE.

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 Heads of School.

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

**ROLE OF PARENTS / CARERS**

We recognise that parents / carers are usually the key people in teaching their children about sex and relationships and in supporting PSHE/RSE education. We also recognise that some parents / carers find it difficult to discuss sensitive matters with their children and that these difficulties may be exacerbated where the child has special educational needs. Parents / carers may face particular issues where their children behave inappropriately within the wider community.

Class teachers are the first point of contact in keeping parents / carers informed of individual programmes and discussing parents' / carers' preferences and concerns.

Work on topics linked to family life will also recognise that our students come from a variety of backgrounds and reflect family patterns in what is taught and recorded (for example, a display about 'our families' will be inclusive in nature). Staff are respectful of different faiths and cultural perspectives and expect students to show the same respect to one another's views.

We aim to build a positive and supporting relationship with our parents / carers through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective, we:

- Inform parents / carers about the school's RSE policy and practice.

- Answer any questions that parents / carers may have about the RSE of their child.
- Take seriously any issue that parents / carers raise with teachers about this policy or the arrangements for RSE in the school.
- Encourage parents / carers to be involved in reviewing the school policy and making modifications to it as necessary.
- Ensure learning is culturally appropriate and inclusive of all students. For example, addressing any particular issues in single sex groups.
- Inform parents / carers about the best practice known with regard to RSE so that the teaching in school supports the key messages that parents and carers give to children at home.

We believe that, through this mutual exchange of knowledge and information, students will benefit from being given consistent messages about their changing body and their increasing responsibilities.

Parents' Right to Withdraw

There is no right to withdraw from any component which forms part of the national science curriculum or from any other component of relationships education or health education. However, parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn 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 and addressed to the Heads of School.

The Heads of School will discuss the request with the parents / carer (and where appropriate the student) to:

- Share the curriculum and to clarify the nature, purpose and benefits of the sex education curriculum.
- ensure that their wishes are understood.
- consider any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have.

A record of the discussion of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

**CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING**

Central to the RSE programme is the growth of self-esteem and taking responsibility for oneself and one's actions. In teaching about safety and safe touch, we acknowledge that there is inevitably an increased possibility of disclosure of abuse. Should such disclosures arise, staff will adhere to Learning Opportunities Safeguarding Policy in order that appropriate actions are taken to ensure the safeguarding of individual students.

Students with special educational needs are known to be more vulnerable to child abuse and exploitation and may be less clear about what is acceptable public behaviour. We provide explicit teaching in these areas and provide guidance for staff on ways to protect themselves and their students.

Learning Opportunities will ensure the school meets its statutory Safeguarding / Child Protection duties through: staff training and awareness, daily support in school to students, parents/carers and staff, and liaison with external agencies.

Staff will follow the school's policy with regard to confidentiality. Students will be made aware of the boundaries of confidentiality should they choose to make a disclosure to a member of staff. A member of staff cannot promise confidentiality if concerns exist.

## TRAINING

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as appropriate to their role. They will receive training that equips them with the knowledge and understanding to deliver the programme of relationships and sex education lessons effectively.

Designated staff responsible for leading RSE provision also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

Learning Opportunities also works closely with parents and carers: providing information through its communications; in areas such as online safety and adolescent emotional wellbeing and mental health; and signposting external sources of further information and support.

Staff wellbeing will be considered at all times. Staff will discuss with the SLT if they have any personal experience or views that need to be considered to ensure delivery is appropriate and effective for all.

## MONITORING & COMPLIANCE

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will work with staff to review compliance of this policy and provide an evaluation to the Proprietor about implementation, including the quality of staff training and engagement with parents/carers.

The Heads of School take the lead in monitoring the delivery of RSE. This is achieved through:

- Curriculum reviews
- Subject meetings
- Learning Walks
- Book / Planning scrutinies,
- Routine curriculum quality assurance

Students' development and the effectiveness of the curriculum in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems, knowledge checks are completed at the end of each unit and student feedback sought on the content.

Outcomes and student voice are then used to review and shape the curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed annually or in the event of any statutory updates.