



St Swithun's
WINCHESTER

St Swithun's Prep School Relationships & Sex Education Policy

Policy History	
Reviewed	January 2026
Date of next Review	January 2027

This policy is linked to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- [PSHEE schemes of work](#)
- [PSHEE policy](#)
- [Safeguarding](#)
- [Behaviour policy](#)
- [Prevention of Bullying policy](#)
- [Relationships and Sex Education Policy](#)

Rationale and requirement in law

The Department of Education (DfE) has issued statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

The DfE guidance is compulsory in all primary schools, including those in the independent sector, in England. The guidance states:

- Schools are free to decide how to deliver the RSE content through a balanced and comprehensive curriculum;
- Teaching will also include opportune and well-chosen moments and contexts to instil knowledge in pupils;
- Pupils should develop self-confidence and esteem, assisting in their decisions to make well informed choices regarding their own personal wellbeing and wider social community issues;
- Schools should promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

Relationships and Sex Education formed part of our curriculum prior to becoming statutory in 2020, however this policy is now in its second edition of its current form as a result of the 2020 and 2021 DfE updates to [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education guidance](#).

In the 2020 RSE guidance, the DfE stated that *“it will be for primary schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to meet the needs of their pupils. Many primary schools already choose to teach some aspects of sex education and will continue to do so, although it is not a requirement. It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils’ ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department continues to recommend therefore*

that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils.'

Our policy also pays due regard to the following statutory guidance:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Equality Act 2010 and schools](#)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#)

At St Swithun's Prep School we believe that the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education is essential in order for our pupils to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives as they grow.

Definition of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

RSE is defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as, "learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, [at secondary level] sex, human sexuality and sexual health...A comprehensive programme...also gives children and young people essential skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships and staying safe both on and offline." [DfE '*Sex and relationships education for the 21st century*', 2014].

The key focus of RSE at a Primary level is on relationships and aims to help pupils understand different types of relationships and to recognise, understand and build healthy relationships, as well as to be prepared for the physical and emotional changes that puberty brings. This also places emphasis on knowing ways to maintain mental and physical health and wellbeing. At its core, RSE at primary level endeavours to ensure that children know how to be a good friend and a supportive member of their community.

Developing our policy

The policy has been developed in consultation with teaching staff before being scrutinised by SLT and approved by our council. We welcome feedback and discussion with parents about our RSE curriculum and wish to build positive and supportive relationships with our parents through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. The school's RSE policy is therefore shared with parents prior to ratification in order to show transparency throughout the process and to receive feedback. We aim to respond sensitively to any comments or questions should they arise. The policy is also shared with parents on the school website once it has been approved.

Our RSE programme reflects our school values, Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education (PSHEE) and Citizenship programmes. It is taught in the context of developing healthy relationships (in a variety of contexts with a significant focus on friendships and how to be a good friend) and learning about the changes that happen at puberty together with managing the feelings that come with these changes in a safe, secure and supportive environment.

Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught through both the PSHEE and science curricula. **The Science curriculum ensures that children are taught about the biological aspects of RSE, including reproduction and puberty, with the PSHEE curriculum developing the children's knowledge and understanding of emotional aspects, including healthy relationships and the emotional changes that come with puberty.**

The two themes within the PSHEE curriculum in which aspects RSE are located are 'Relationships' and 'Health and Wellbeing'. These themes are taught in a planned and progressive programme throughout the children's lifetime at the school, underpinning the more overt **biological aspects of RSE** taught in Years 5 and 6 of the science curriculum. RSE may be introduced, gently, to Year 4 should a cohort require delivery early. We believe in the importance of RSE focusing on the development of skills and attitudes, not just the acquisition of knowledge.

Aims and Objectives for Relationships and Sex Education

The aim of RSE is to provide children with progressive, age-appropriate information enabling them to explore attitudes and values and develop skills to empower them to make positive decisions about their relationships and health-related behaviour.

Therefore, the overall objectives of our RSE curriculum are:

- **to provide the knowledge and information to which all pupils are entitled at an age-appropriate level as detailed below;**
- **to clarify/reinforce existing knowledge;**
- **to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, especially in their relationships with others;**
- **to develop skills for a healthier, safer lifestyle;**
- **to develop skills to make appropriate choices;**
- **to develop and use communication skills and assertiveness skills to cope with the influences of their peers and the media;**
- **to encourage children to respect and care for their bodies;**
- **to be prepared for puberty and adulthood.**

RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION

The focus is on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of **positive relationships**, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, relationships with other children and relationships with adults. This is taught through our PSHEE curriculum.

EYFS

In ongoing PSHEE work, children in the EYFS develop skills to form friendships, to think about relationships with others as well as how to keep themselves safe.

Children develop:

- a sense of responsibility and membership of the community;
- an understanding of what makes a good friend;
- language and communication skills necessary keep themselves safe;
- a positive sense of self;
- the ability to build positive relationships based on respect and inclusivity.

KS1

In PSHEE and Religious Education (RE) children reflect on family relationships, different family groups and friendship. They learn about rituals and traditions associated with birth, marriage and death and talk about the emotions involved, both with regards to Christianity and other major faiths. They co-operate with others in work, play more extensively and begin to recognise the range of human emotions and ways to deal with them – particularly with regard to friendships. They also learn about personal safety alongside the importance of mental health and wellbeing.

KS2

Children are taught about the physical, emotional and social changes at puberty, which include personal hygiene. In PSHEE and RE, they continue to develop an understanding of different relationships within a family, between friends and in the community. They also learn that there are different patterns of friendship and diversity of lifestyle, including sexual orientation. Children develop skills needed to form relationships and to respect other people's emotions and feelings. They consider how to make simple choices, consider the influence that media and social media can have, and exercise some basic techniques for resisting pressures.

There is also an emphasis on looking after our mental and emotional health, social wellbeing and being safe both on and offline. These elements are discussed within our PSHEE lessons in line with DfE guidance (2019) which states *“the focus in primary school should be on teaching the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. Teachers should be clear that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health”*.

By the end of Y6 pupils should know:

Families and people who care for me

- that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability;
- the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other’s lives;
- that others’ families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children’s families are also characterised by love and care;
- that stable, caring relationships (which may be of different types) are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children’s security as they grow up;
- that marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be life-long;
- how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.

Caring friendships

- how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends;
- the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.
- that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded;
- that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right;
- how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed.

Respectful relationships

- the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs;
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships;
- the conventions of courtesy and manners;
- the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness;
- 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 those in positions of authority;
- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help;
- what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive;
- the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

Online relationships

- that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not;
- that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous;
- the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them;
- how to consider their online friendships and sources of information critically including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met;
- how information and data is shared and used online.

Being safe

- what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context);
- about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe;
- that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact;
- how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know;
- how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult;
- how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard;
- how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so;
- where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.

Physical health and mental wellbeing

This focuses on teaching the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. Teachers should be clear that taking care of one's mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.

Pupils across the key stages are taught about the benefits and importance of daily exercise, good nutrition and sufficient sleep, and are given the language and knowledge to understand the normal range of emotions that everyone experiences. This should enable pupils to articulate how they are feeling, develop the language to talk about their bodies, health and emotions and to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate for the situations that they experience.

Emphasis is placed on the positive two-way relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing, as well as the benefits to mental wellbeing of physical exercise and time spent outdoors.

Please refer to our PSHEE policy for greater depth of curriculum content.

Changing adolescent body

- key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes;
- about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.

SEX EDUCATION

Education about changes and development of humans over time (including puberty) is taught as part of the National Curriculum for **science**.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from any part of this statutory coverage.

EYFS

Through 'real life' experiences such as growing plants, hatching chicks and 'growing' butterflies' children learn about the concept of male and female and about young animals. Topics cover their personal growth and different stages in life: from baby to child to teenager to adult to elderly.

KS1

Through work in science children learn about life cycles of some animals, understand the idea of growing from young to old and learn that all living things reproduce. They learn about the importance of personal hygiene to maintain good health.

Pupils are taught to:

- identify, name, draw and label basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense;
- notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults;
- describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food, and hygiene (including oral health.)

KS2

In science children build on their knowledge of life cycles and learn about the basic biology of human reproduction, including puberty in Year 5 and the conception, development and birth of a baby in Year 6. In line with the science curriculum, correct terminology relating to anatomy should be used by all teachers in order to reduce confusion and misconceptions.

Pupils are taught to:

- describe the changes as humans develop to old age;
- describe the process of reproduction in some plants and animals.

In addition to the National Curriculum requirements outlined above, we also follow the ISEB science curriculum.

Year 3

Pupils are taught:

- that the life processes common to plants include growth, nutrition and reproduction.

Year 5

Pupils are taught:

- about the main stages of the human life cycle;
- about the physical and emotional changes which take place during adolescence.

Year 6

Pupils are taught:

- a revision of puberty as covered in year 5;
- a brief overview of conception, development of the unborn baby and childbirth.

The full content of the RSE curriculum has been agreed in consultation with governors, parents and teaching staff as part of the consultation process prior to the ratification of this policy.

Equal opportunities (including SEND)

- In line with the [Equality Act \(2010\), every child is entitled to receive RSE regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, culture, disability, sexuality, language or special needs;](#)

- It is our intention all children have the opportunity to experience a programme of RSE at a level which is appropriate for their age and physical development with differentiated provision, if required, to children with special educational needs to facilitate full access to the curriculum;
- Any specific teaching methods required by individual children, such as those detailed to Education Health and Care plan, will be incorporated, as required, in to RSE lessons, as they would in any other lesson;
- The needs of all pupils are appropriately met and all pupils understand that there is a need for sensitivity, equity, equality and respect.

Role of parents

The role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents are the first teachers of their children. They have the most significant influence in enabling their children to grow, to mature and to form healthy relationships.

Parents are given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships and Sex Education. Prior to the teaching of RSE to a cohort of children, Year 5 parents are invited into school to listen to the content of the curriculum in order to ask questions and understand the school's approach. This can also be an important opportunity to talk about wider support in terms of wellbeing and keeping children safe. Reading material recommendations that can support parents and children at home are also provided regarding managing conversations on these curriculum issues. We strive to reach out to all parents, recognising that a range of approaches may be needed.

Parental consultation and right to withdraw from sex education

Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of the PSHEE curriculum but **not** the statutory science curriculum.

We encourage parents to engage in dialogue with the school regarding any concerns. Therefore, before any right to withdraw request is granted, parents and (where appropriate) the child should meet with the Head to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum.

During this meeting the following will be discussed:

- benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This may include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher (although the detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead).

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances:

- the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child;
- the request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered in PSHEE lessons, not that delivered as part of the science curriculum, will be granted;
- this process is the same for pupils with SEND, however there may be exceptional circumstances where the head teacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision;
- if a pupil is excused from sex education, school will ensure that the pupil/s concerned are set appropriate, purposeful work in other subject areas;
- a written record of such meetings will be kept by the school.

There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

Environment and managing difficult questions

- RSE is taught in a safe learning environment where all children are encouraged to treat each other with respect, sensitivity and dignity. Ground rules are agreed with the children; these are essential

in order to provide an agreed structure when answering sensitive or difficult questions. Children's questions are answered with great care and sometimes in consultation with other staff members where appropriate;

- Teachers will endeavour to answer questions as honestly as possible but if faced with a question they do not feel comfortable answering within the classroom, appropriate alternative provision will be made;
- Teachers will consider the context of the question, the possible intention of the pupil's question and what may have prompted this, as well as the amount of time and space needed for responding to a pupil's question both respectfully and appropriately;
- Children are offered the opportunity to ask questions confidentially, for example through the use of an anonymous question box, as a distancing technique, and these can be addressed individually or raised anonymously in class lessons.

The organisation of Relationships and Sex Education and teaching responsibilities

The Head of PSHEE is the designated teacher with responsibility for coordinating and overseeing the content of the RSE curriculum.

RSE is delivered through timetabled science and PSHEE lessons by the specialist science teacher and form teachers. Where appropriate, visitors such as the school nurse are invited to speak to the children with the guidance of the science or form teacher.

A range of teaching methods which involve children's full participation is used to teach RSE. These include use of video, discussion, looking at case studies, drama and role play.

Resources to teach RSE include fiction, reference books, leaflets and extracts from videos. Materials are available for parents to review upon request.

Safeguarding

Keeping children safe is at the heart of our RSE curriculum. Teachers communicate closely with parents or guardians if there are any matters that arise through discussions or questions that teachers feel they need to be informed about. Teachers need to be aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, may lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. Should any matters arise that highlight Safeguarding concerns, these will be addressed in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead confidentially, in a timely manner, and in accordance with our Safeguarding policy. A member of staff cannot promise confidentiality if concerns exist. In the absence of the DSL, a DDSL will be informed.

Monitoring, evaluation and assessment

Monitoring of the RSE curriculum coverage is the responsibility of the Head of PSHEE and the Head.

The Head of PSHEE will assess the effectiveness of the aims, curriculum content and methods in promoting students' learning by lesson observation and sampling teachers' planning. As with other subjects, lessons should be planned to ensure that pupils of differing abilities, including the most able, are suitably challenged. Whilst there is no formal assessment in PSHEE/RSE, we have the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in these subjects as for other curriculum areas. The Head of PSHEE will carry out regular sampling of the children's work (including written assignments and self-evaluations) to capture progress, pupil interviews and will use questionnaires to gain feedback from teachers, children and parents.

This more informal assessment of the children's learning will enable the Head of PSHEE to evaluate the effectiveness of the RSE programme, to track pupil progress, provide pupil feedback, to identify where pupils need extra support or intervention and to assess the need of the implementation of any changes or updates that may be required. Staff training will be provided to staff through INSET training or staff meetings.

Role of the governing body

The governing body should ensure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes;
- the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned;
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn;
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

St Swithun's Prep School policies are approved, ratified and reviewed regularly by SLT, staff and the Governing Body in the light of statutory requirements.

This policy has due regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is informally reviewed every year (or as events or legislation changes require) and formally reviewed every three years in line with the government guidance.

Reviewed & updated January 2026	F Webb	Head of PSHEE
	K Brown	Head of Science
	K Grosscurth	Deputy Head and DSL
	L Norris	Prep Head
Ratified by Governors January 2026		Chair of Education Committee