



Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

1. Introduction

St Edmund's School recognises that high-quality Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) contributes significantly to the School's commitment to personal development, wellbeing, equality and preparation for life in modern Britain. The school believes that relationships, wellbeing, and personal development are fundamental to educational success. Pupils who feel safe, valued, and informed are better able to learn, flourish, and contribute positively to society. RSHE enables pupils to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and values they need to build healthy, respectful relationships, make informed decisions, safeguard their physical and mental health, and become responsible members of society.

St Edmund's delivers RSHE within the context of its Christian vision and values. The School believes every individual is created with inherent dignity and worth and that all pupils should be treated with compassion, respect and kindness. Our teaching encourages pupils to value themselves and others, appreciate diversity, exercise personal responsibility and develop the confidence to make safe, healthy and ethical decisions.

The School is committed to providing RSHE that is age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate; evidence-informed and medically accurate; inclusive and accessible to all pupils; sensitive to the faith, cultural backgrounds and beliefs of pupils and their families; delivered within a safe, supportive and respectful learning environment; and underpinned by safeguarding and pupil wellbeing.

RSHE contributes significantly to safeguarding by helping pupils to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships, understand consent and personal boundaries, identify abusive or exploitative behaviour, manage online interactions safely, and know when and how to seek help.

Teaching reflects current statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education and supports pupils in developing resilience, critical thinking and responsible decision-making both offline and online. It reflects the school's ethos and values, including respect for the dignity of all

individuals, the promotion of equality, and the preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life.

This policy should be read alongside the School's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- SEND Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

The policy is reviewed annually or sooner where changes in legislation or statutory guidance require amendment.

2. Members of Staff Responsible

Overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy rests with the Head.

Operational responsibility is delegated to:

- Deputy Head (Pastoral), Senior School
- Deputy Head, Junior School
- Heads of PSHE/RSHE
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Medical Centre Manager
- Heads of School
- Form Tutors and House Staff

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with statutory obligations relating to RSHE and safeguarding and will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through regular reports from senior leaders.

All staff delivering RSHE will receive appropriate induction, safeguarding and curriculum training and undertake continuing professional development.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy has been prepared with reference to:

- Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 (as amended)
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Department for Education Statutory Guidance on RSHE (2025, effective September 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6970e7e67e827090d02d42e0/Relationships_education_relationships_and_sex_education_RSE_and_health_education_for_intro_1_September_2026_.pdf
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- The Prevent Duty Guidance
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

Parental Right to Request Withdrawal from Sex Education

Junior School (Primary Age Pupils)

Relationships Education is statutory for all primary-age pupils and forms an essential part of the School's curriculum. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education or from the statutory Science curriculum.

Where the School provides any sex education that is additional to the statutory Science curriculum in the Junior School, parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from that additional content. Requests should be made in writing to the Head and will be granted. The school will discuss the request with parents to ensure they understand the nature and purpose of the teaching and will make appropriate supervised educational provision for pupils who are withdrawn.



Senior School (Secondary Age Pupils)

Relationships, Sex and Health Education builds on pupils' earlier learning and prepares them for adult life through age-appropriate teaching about relationships, sexual health, consent, the law and personal wellbeing.

Parents may request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education elements of RSHE that are additional to the statutory Science curriculum. Requests should be made in writing to the Head. Before reaching a decision, the Head, or an appropriately delegated senior member of staff, will meet with the parent and, where appropriate, the pupil to discuss the request, explain the educational purpose and content of the curriculum. This is likely to include discussing the benefits of sex education, and any detrimental effects of withdrawal, including social and emotional impacts on the child, and the likelihood that the child will hear their peers' version of what was said in class, which may not be accurate.

Where a pupil is withdrawn from sex education, the school will ensure that appropriate, purposeful supervised educational provision is made for the duration of those lessons. Pupils will continue to receive all statutory Relationships Education, the statutory Science curriculum, Health Education delivered through the School's PSHEE curriculum, and all safeguarding education.

In accordance with statutory guidance, pupils in senior school from three terms before a pupil turns 16, can choose to opt back into sex education even if their parent has requested withdrawal. For example, if a pupil turns 16 during the autumn term, the pupil can opt back into sex education at anytime after the start of the previous autumn term. Statutory guidance states Schools should ensure that pupils know they have this option.

Safeguarding

The School cannot permit withdrawal from teaching that forms part of its statutory safeguarding responsibilities. All pupils will receive age-appropriate teaching that enables them to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships, understand personal safety and consent, identify abuse and exploitation, including online harms, and know how and when to seek help. Such teaching is an essential element of the School's safeguarding duty and applies to all pupils.

4. Description of the Setting

St Edmund's School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school providing education for pupils aged 3–18 years through the Junior and Senior Schools. The School is committed to academic excellence alongside the personal development, wellbeing and character education of every pupil.



The School's Christian foundation shapes its approach to education, pastoral care and relationships. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate compassion, integrity, respect, service and responsibility within an inclusive community that welcomes pupils from a wide range of faiths, cultures and backgrounds.

RSHE is delivered within the wider Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) curriculum and complements safeguarding, pastoral care, chaplaincy, boarding provision and the wider curriculum. Teaching reflects the age, maturity, SEND needs and lived experiences of pupils and is designed to prepare them for life in modern Britain while respecting the School's Christian ethos.

The School maintains accurate pupil demographic information through its Management Information System, enabling curriculum planning that reflects the needs of the pupil population whilst complying with data protection legislation.

5. General Aims and Objectives

The School aims to provide an RSHE curriculum that enables pupils to:

- develop healthy, respectful and positive relationships;
- understand the importance of family life in its different forms recognised in law;
- recognise healthy and unhealthy behaviours, including coercive and controlling behaviour;
- understand consent, personal boundaries and respectful communication;
- recognise and respond safely to abuse, exploitation and online harms;
- develop resilience, emotional literacy and positive mental wellbeing;
- understand puberty, reproduction, sexual health and the law in an age-appropriate manner;
- respect diversity and uphold the dignity of every individual;
- know how and where to seek help for themselves or others;
- develop the confidence to make informed, responsible and ethical decisions.

6. Values Framework

RSHE is delivered within the context of the school's vision and values. Teaching promotes dignity, compassion, honesty, forgiveness, justice, responsibility, and mutual respect. Pupils are encouraged to recognise that healthy relationships are characterised by kindness, equality, trust, consent, and respect.



The school recognises and respects the protected characteristics contained within the Equality Act 2010 and teaches pupils to value diversity while encouraging respectful discussion where differing beliefs and opinions are held. Teaching is factual, balanced, and sensitive to the religious and cultural backgrounds of pupils and their families.

7. Definitions

Relationships Education equips pupils with the knowledge and skills needed to develop safe, healthy, and respectful relationships.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) builds upon Relationships Education by including age-appropriate learning about puberty, reproduction, sexual health, consent, the law, online safety and emotional wellbeing.

Health Education enables pupils to understand how to maintain good physical and mental health, reduce risks, access support, and make informed decisions throughout life.

Teaching is progressive across all phases of the school, ensuring that new learning builds appropriately on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding.

8. Curriculum Intent

RSHE is delivered through a planned, progressive curriculum that builds knowledge and skills from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Sixth Form. Teaching is age-appropriate, evidence-informed, and responsive to pupils' developmental needs. The curriculum supports pupils to develop healthy relationships, recognise risk, safeguard themselves and others, and prepare confidently for adulthood.

Learning is sequenced so that pupils revisit key themes with increasing depth and maturity. Content is adapted where appropriate to meet the needs of pupils with SEND while maintaining high expectations for all learners.

The curriculum is designed to be:

Ambitious - All pupils access a broad and challenging curriculum.

Progressive - Learning builds systematically from Pre-reception to Year 13.

Inclusive - All pupils are represented and supported.

Safeguarding-Focused - The curriculum addresses contemporary risks.

Evidence-Informed - Teaching is based on current research and guidance as well as local and national statistics.

Future-Focused - Pupils are prepared for life in a rapidly changing world.



Spiral Curriculum Model - Key concepts are revisited and developed over time.

9. Curriculum Content

Early Years Foundation Stage

Relationships Education is embedded through the EYFS and Key Stage 1 curriculum. Teaching focuses on:

- building positive relationships and friendships;
- recognising and expressing emotions;
- understanding family life and caring relationships;
- developing independence, resilience and self-confidence;
- keeping safe, including personal safety and trusted adults;
- healthy lifestyles, hygiene, physical activity and wellbeing;
- respect for others and appreciation of differences.

Junior School

The Junior School curriculum progressively develops understanding of:

- healthy friendships and respectful behaviour;
- family relationships and caring responsibilities;
- personal boundaries and consent in everyday situations;
- bullying, prejudice and discrimination;
- online safety, digital citizenship and responsible technology use;
- puberty and emotional development;
- physical and mental wellbeing;
- recognising unsafe situations and seeking support.

Senior School

The Senior School curriculum builds upon earlier learning through age-appropriate study of:

- healthy intimate relationships and effective communication;
- consent and the law;
- sexual health, contraception and sexually transmitted infections;
- pregnancy, parenthood and reproductive health;



- online relationships, image sharing, pornography and digital safety (deep fakes, AI-generated sexual imagery, sextortion, online misogyny, incel ideology, financial exploitation online, digital consent)
- coercive and controlling behaviour, sexual harassment and exploitation (including online);
- violence against women and girls, misogyny and respectful relationships (including harassment, stalking, sexual violence)
- mental health, resilience and accessing support services; recognizing normal emotions, resilience, suicide prevention
- preparing for university, employment and independent living.

Detailed curriculum maps are available to parents on request from head@stedmunds.org.uk

Teaching Approaches

RSHE is delivered primarily through the PSHEE curriculum and is complemented by Science, Computing, Religious Studies, assemblies, tutor programmes, visiting speakers and pastoral provision.

Teaching uses discussion, case studies, scenario-based learning, reflection, age-appropriate resources and opportunities for anonymous questions. All teaching is conducted within an agreed framework of respect, confidentiality (within safeguarding limits) and inclusion.

Ground rules are established to create safe learning environments.

Assessment

Assessment is formative and designed to evaluate pupils' understanding, confidence and application of learning. Staff use questioning, discussion, reflection and appropriate classroom activities to monitor progress and inform future teaching.

Assessment within RSE focuses on knowledge, understanding and skills rather than personal beliefs or experiences.

Assessment Methods Teachers may use:	Monitoring Monitoring activities include:	Evaluation Evaluation considers:
• Baseline and end of lesson assessment – what you knew at start of topic and end of topic. • Reflection activities. • Discussion. • Quizzes. • Scenario work. • Student voice exercises.	• Lesson observations. • Learning walks. • Curriculum reviews. • Work scrutiny. • Pupil discussions.	• Curriculum coverage. • Student outcomes. • Pupil and staff Questionnaires • Parent feedback. • Safeguarding trends. • Inspection priorities.

10. Organisation of Sex and Relationships Education

RSHE is delivered through a planned, developmental curriculum that builds progressively on pupils' prior learning from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Sixth Form. The curriculum is designed to be age-appropriate, evidence-informed and responsive to pupils' developmental needs, enabling pupils to acquire the knowledge, skills and values necessary to form healthy relationships, safeguard their wellbeing and prepare for adult life.

RSHE is delivered primarily through the School's PSHEE curriculum and is supported by learning within Science, Religious Studies, Computing, assemblies, tutor programmes, pastoral provision and other relevant curriculum areas. The Science curriculum addresses the biological aspects of human development and reproduction in accordance with the National Curriculum, whilst RSHE provides opportunities to explore the emotional, social, ethical and legal aspects of relationships, sexual health, consent and personal wellbeing.

The Head of PSHEE/RSHE in the Junior and Senior School is responsible for planning, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of the curriculum. Teaching is delivered by appropriately trained members of staff, including teachers, pastoral staff and, where appropriate, suitably qualified healthcare professionals or external specialists. All external contributors are appropriately vetted, work under the supervision of school staff and comply with the School's safeguarding, visitor and curriculum requirements.



Teaching is delivered using a range of evidence-informed approaches, including discussion, scenario-based learning, case studies, structured reflection, collaborative activities, and opportunities for anonymous questions. Lessons are conducted within an agreed framework that promotes respect, inclusion, confidentiality (within safeguarding limits) and open, age-appropriate discussion.

Teaching materials are selected to ensure they are accurate, current, medically and scientifically accurate, age-appropriate and free from unlawful discrimination or stereotyping. Resources are regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect current statutory guidance and the needs of the School's pupils.

RSHE is delivered in a manner that reflects the School's Christian ethos whilst fulfilling its statutory duties under equality and safeguarding legislation. Pupils are taught about healthy relationships, consent, personal boundaries, online safety, sexual health, reproductive health, the law relating to relationships, and the importance of treating all people with dignity and respect. Teaching about biological sex, protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including gender reassignment, and related legal rights is factual, balanced and age-appropriate. Where topics involve differing beliefs, values or viewpoints, these are presented impartially. Staff distinguish clearly between established facts, legal requirements and matters of opinion or belief and do not present contested viewpoints as established fact.

Where appropriate, learning is adapted to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), ensuring that all pupils are able to access the curriculum while maintaining high expectations for learning and personal development.

The effectiveness of the RSHE curriculum is reviewed annually through curriculum evaluation, pupil voice, staff feedback and monitoring by senior leaders. Findings inform curriculum development, staff training and the annual review of this policy.

Teaching about Biological Sex, Gender and the Law

The School teaches Relationships, Sex and Health Education in accordance with current statutory guidance and the law. Teaching is based on accurate, evidence-informed, and age-appropriate information. Pupils are taught about biological sex, the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, including gender reassignment, and the legal rights and responsibilities that apply in England. Where topics involve differing beliefs, values or viewpoints, these will be presented in a balanced and impartial manner that encourages respectful discussion and critical thinking. Staff will distinguish clearly between established facts, legal requirements and matters



of opinion or belief, and will not present contested views as though they were established fact. Teaching reflects the School's Christian ethos whilst fulfilling its statutory duties to promote respect, inclusion and the dignity of every individual.

11. Consultation, Communication & Support

The school will consult parents annually by sending this Policy, with a request for comments, with a general mailing to all parents and by making this Policy available on the school's website. These communications will emphasise the rights of parents to see materials and resources that will be used. Such materials and resources can be seen, in the first instance, by making a specific request in writing to the Head of PSHEE in either Junior or Senior School. Parents are encouraged to view teaching materials and curriculum plans on request.

Parents of secondary pupils have the absolute right in England and Wales to withdraw their children from sex education that is not part of the National Curriculum. When a parent exercises the right to withdraw their child from sex and relationships education, a meeting will be arranged between the parent (ideally, with both parents) and the Head of PSHEE and Head of Pastoral Support. This is not to question the legal rights of parents, in this respect, but, rather, to ensure that the implications for the child's well-being of missing RSHE are fully understood. It may be possible for alternative provision to be offered, as for pupils who unavoidably miss those lessons. Such children as are formally withdrawn from RSHE will be cared for in supervised study provision during RSHE lessons. In Junior School please contact the headteacher who will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from RSE, however, content that is taught as part of the science curriculum parents do not have the right to withdraw their child.

The School's child abuse and protection procedures are detailed in a separate Policy document, fully available to pupils, parents and all staff, who receive regular training in these matters from the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs. The DSL and Deputy DSLs work closely with the Head, and, as appropriate, with the Designated Governor.

This RSHE Policy is linked, operationally, with other school Policies; for example, Anti-Bullying and Equality.

The school is committed to enabling all pupils to easily access confidential support. Form tutors or housemasters are a first point of reference in overall pastoral care, as is the School Chaplain. However, for specific professional advice on confidential matters relating to RSHE, the Medical Centre staff will gladly answer any questions e.g. about sexuality, sexual health advice, HIV/AIDS and STIs, abortion, contraception (including emergency contraception) and where such services can be obtained. These questions might, in the first instance, be addressed to a RSHE teacher,



who might well refer the pupil to the Medical Centre. Medical Centre Staff have been trained to offer confidential contraceptive and sexual health advice. This may include confidential Chlamydia testing. It may also include offering condoms, in accordance with Kent Sexual Health Department's 'C-Card' scheme.

Confidentiality: It is only in exceptional circumstances that schools should have to handle information without parental knowledge. In all cases, the involvement of parents will be sought at an early stage, unless there is a specific request that this should not be so from a young person under the age of 16 who is considered by medical staff to be 'Gillick competent'; that is, if medical staff consider that the young person is competent to understand the consequences of the advice/treatment they believe it is necessary to offer.

The DfE guidance advises teachers that when they believe a person under the age of 16 is engaging or about to engage in sexual intercourse they should attempt 'wherever possible to persuade' the young person to talk to their parent or carer.

Staff cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality where safeguarding concerns arise. Any disclosures will be managed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Safety: Children have a right to expect schools to provide a safe and secure environment. This school is fully committed to providing just such an environment for all its pupils, including those who have passed the age of 18.

Regular training will make all staff aware that effective sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a safeguarding issue. Teachers and non-teaching staff will, therefore, all know the reporting procedures if they know, or suspect, that a child is a victim of abuse. All staff will be alert to signs of abuse.

The school's Safeguarding Policy and its Policy for Staff facing an allegation of abuse or inappropriate behaviour make clear to staff their responsibilities and what should be done under these circumstances.

The needs of children with SEN will be met by the Heads of PSHE liaising closely with the respective SEN coordinators.

All pupils and parents are made aware that pupils have access to an independent school listener and a school counsellor. All other visitors to the school who participate in delivery of the RSHE provision will be DBS cleared and appropriately trained.

12. Resources

The Heads of PSHE for Junior and Senior School will take responsibility for selecting RSHE resources and checking them for stereotyping, bias and prejudice. Many of these resources have been approved by the PSHE Association, an independent body who provide PSHE guidance and resources to schools.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

This Policy will be monitored and evaluated annually in both Junior and Senior School in two meetings, each including all who teach RSHE in that school, including representatives of the school's Medical Centre.

One meeting, in October each year, will look towards the planning of RSHE teaching as it is integrated into PSHE provision in the forthcoming Lent and Summer Terms. This meeting will implement recommendations for enhancement of the RSHE provision made at the previous Summer Term's monitoring and evaluation meeting.

The second meeting will be in May each year and will evaluate the recent RSHE teaching provision. In the light of this evaluation, this meeting will make recommendations for the annual review of this Policy. If substantial changes are proposed, colleagues, pupils and parents will be involved in the review process. The results and recommendations of the annual review process will be presented to the full Summer Term meeting of the Governing Body, for discussion, amendment as necessary, and adoption.

Pupil-identified needs and evaluation outcomes will be sought annually in PSHE lessons or in Form Tutor periods.

14. Dissemination of the policy

This policy will be made available on the school's website. It will be sent, with a general mailing to all parents, annually.

Staff teaching RSHE will be expected to upgrade their knowledge and skills with regular training, as required.



This Policy is based upon Kent County Council's Sex and Relationships Education policy and guidance which can be accessed on the Kent County Council website.

APPENDIX A

FULL CURRICULUM PROGRESSION MAP (YEAR 1–13)

Yr 1	Yr 2
Relationships Friendship Kindness Families Health Feelings Hygiene Healthy choices Safety Trusted adults Personal space	Relationships Family roles Respect Health Growing and changing Online Safety Sharing safely

Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6
Relationships Belonging Inclusion Health Healthy lifestyles Safety Bullying prevention	Relationships Respect Diversity Health Puberty introduction Online Safety Digital literacy	Relationships Consent Boundaries Health Emotional wellbeing Online Safety Online friendships	Relationships Healthy relationships Health Puberty Reproduction Online Safety AI awareness

Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Yr 12	Yr 13
Friendship challenges Identity Media Influence Emotional wellbeing	Healthy relationships Diversity Online influence Personal safety	Consent Sexual Harassment Healthy relationships Deepfakes	Exploitation Pornography Sexual health Radicalisation	Contraception Fertility Family life Financial wellbeing	Adult relationships Parenthood Online harms Student finance	Independent living Employment Adult Wellbeing Long-term relationships



Success Criteria

The School will know the policy is effective when:

- Pupils feel safe.
- Pupils understand healthy relationships.
- Safeguarding concerns are identified early.
- Parents are engaged.
- Governors receive positive impact evidence.
- Inspection outcomes recognise strong Personal Development provision.

15. Monitoring

The policy is reviewed annually by Governors.

V1	September 2019
V2	September 2020
V3	September 2021
V4	September 2022
V5	September 2023
V6	September 2024
V7	September 2025
V8	September 2026

Review September 2027

Edward O'Connor

Head