



Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Policy

(to be read in conjunction with the Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) policy)

Policy owner	MAT Subject Lead for RSE and PSHE
Policy approved by	ELT
Policy last approved	September 2026
Review frequency	Annual
Policy next approved	September 2027

Aims

The aims of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at our schools are to:

- Provide a nurturing, respectful environment in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty and give them an understanding of physical and emotional development, including the importance of health and hygiene
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe their bodies and emotions
- Help pupils develop self-respect, confidence, empathy and resilience
- Create a positive culture around relationships, respect and family life
- Help pupils understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within relationships
- Enable pupils to recognise unsafe situations, protect themselves and seek help and support

St Barnabas MAT considers Relationships and Sex Education to be an integral part of the PSHE curriculum. Underpinned by our Trust vision and values, our RSE curriculum celebrates that every child is unique and aims to enable all pupils to experience 'life in all its fullness'. We aim to offer pupils a carefully planned programme on human development, relationships, safety and family life within a safe and supportive environment. Teaching is matched to pupils' age and level of maturity. These aims complement those of the science curriculum in KS1 and KS2 and contribute directly to pupils' Personal Development, as outlined in the Ofsted Inspection Framework.

Statutory requirements

Primary schools are not required to provide non-statutory sex education. However, all primary schools must teach statutory **Relationships Education** and **Health Education** (under Section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017), alongside the statutory **National Curriculum for Science**.

- **Relationships and Health Education** (including puberty, body changes, emotional wellbeing, and digital safety) is compulsory.
- **Science** (including biological lifecycles, naming body parts, and animal reproduction) is compulsory.
- **Non-Statutory Sex Education** (specifically human conception) is optional, and parents maintain the legal right to opt their children out of these specific lessons.

In teaching RSE, we have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 403 of the Education Act 1996, including:

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE, 2019)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026)

This policy also adheres to the July 2025 Revised Statutory Guidance on RSHE and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026. We recognise that these updates prioritise parental transparency and age-appropriate content 'floors'.

At our schools, RSE is taught as set out in this policy.

Definition

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils. It involves learning about:

- Relationships and friendships
- Family life and different family structures
- Personal identity and respect
- Physical and emotional wellbeing
- Keeping safe, including online safety

In line with national guidance, the school does not teach the concept of 'gender identity' as a factual concept. We maintain a neutral stance on contested beliefs and focus on biological sex as defined by the Equality Act 2010. We ensure all pupils are treated with dignity and respect while focusing on the facts of biological development. We want our children to learn, understand and respect our common humanity, diversity and differences along with the nine protected characteristics so that they can go on to form the effective, fulfilling relationships that are an essential part of life and learning.

RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring values and attitudes. It is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Curriculum

To ensure full curriculum coverage without repetition and to protect the emotional and developmental needs of all pupils, a two-Year rolling curriculum cycle is implemented. Planning follows the PSHE Association Programme of Study, ensuring that knowledge, skills and understanding are built progressively across each Key Stage regardless of class entry point. Where appropriate, teachers carefully differentiate learning outcomes within mixed cohorts. While shared themes (e.g., friendship, online safety, managing feelings) are taught whole-class, tasks, questioning and discussion depth are adapted to match the developmental readiness of each year group. For specific, mature topics—such as statutory puberty, changing bodies and

non-statutory sex education—pupils may be split into specific year-group cohorts or maturity groupings across the key stage to receive age-appropriate instruction.

The curriculum is structured around three core themes:

Key Stages 1 and 2

Core Theme 1: Health and wellbeing

- What is meant by a healthy lifestyle?
- To maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing
- To manage risks to physical and emotional health and wellbeing
- ways of keeping physically and emotionally safe
- About managing change, including puberty, transition and loss
- To make informed choices about health and wellbeing and to recognise sources of help with this
- To respond in an emergency
- To identify different influences on health and wellbeing
 - Health Habits & Hygiene: Dental health, sleep patterns/hygiene, sun safety, and physical exercise routines.
 - Substance Education: Safe use of household products and medicines; risks associated with smoking, vaping, alcohol, and legal/illegal drugs.
 - Physical Safety & Emergencies: Safety in the home, road safety, rail safety, water/canal safety, firework safety, calling 999, and age-appropriate First Aid (allergies, bites, asthma, head injuries).

Core Theme 2: Relationships and safety

- To develop and maintain a variety of healthy relationships, within a range of social/cultural contexts
- To recognise and manage emotions within a range of relationships
- To recognise risky or negative relationships including all forms of bullying and abuse
- To respond to risky or negative relationships and ask for help
- To respect equality and diversity in relationships.
 - Body Safety & Consent: Understanding personal boundaries, comfortable/uncomfortable touch, seeking and giving permission, and age-appropriate safeguarding rules (including NSPCC Talk PANTS).
 - Addressing Discrimination: Recognising and challenging stereotypes, prejudiced views, and radicalisation/extremism (Year 5).
 - Digital Safety & Media Literacy: Identifying manipulated media (deepfakes/AI generation), recognizing targeted online advertising, and safely managing online relationships and cyber-risks.
 - Navigating Friendships: Falling out, resolving conflict, managing peer pressure/influence, addressing bullying, and celebrating diverse family structures and family changes.

Core Theme 3: Living in the wider world

- About respect for self and others and the importance of responsible behaviours and actions
- About rights and responsibilities as members of families, other groups and ultimately as citizens
- About different groups and communities
- To respect equality and to be a productive member of a diverse community
- About the importance of respecting and protecting the environment
 - Media & AI Literacy: Critical evaluation of online content and news stories (fake news), understanding AI literacy (chatbots, generative AI, AI ethics), and the impact of media on self-image.

- Economic & Financial Harms: How money is earned and managed, distinguishing needs vs. wants, understanding online financial harms (in-game spending, targeted advertising, and gambling awareness).
- Career-Related Learning: Exploring personal strengths, career choices, job skills, and transitioning to secondary school.

The curriculum has been developed with regard to pupils' age, needs and maturity. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy, staff respond in an age-appropriate, factual and sensitive manner, ensuring pupils do not seek answers online.

Primary sex education

Non-statutory Sex Education (specifically the mechanics of human reproduction) is not taught before Year 5. In Years EYFS-4, the curriculum focuses exclusively on Relationships, Health and the statutory Science curriculum.

Where included, primary sex education focuses on:

- Sexual difference and correct naming of body parts
- Preparing boys and girls for the changes of puberty
- Understanding the importance of physical hygiene
- Menstruation and wet dreams as a normal part of growing up
- How a baby is conceived and born, taught in the context of relationships
- Knowing where to find help and support

Further information about our curriculum can be found in the school's curriculum statement of intent.

Delivery of RSE

RSE is taught primarily through PSHE lessons, but is also supported through learning in Science, RE, PE and Computing, where appropriate.

Teaching:

- Reflects that families and relationships take many forms
- Promotes respect and inclusion
- Avoids stigma based on home circumstances
- Encourages discussion in a safe and respectful environment

RSE also takes place beyond discrete lessons, through the wider life of the school, including behaviour expectations and relationships in the playground. All staff share responsibility for promoting the aims of this policy.

Science curriculum

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children learn about life cycles and relationships through ongoing personal, social and emotional development.

Key Stage 1

Pupils learn to:

- Identify and name basic body parts and senses
- Understand that humans and animals grow and change

- Learn about basic needs for survival
- Understand the importance of exercise, diet and hygiene

Key Stage 2

Pupils learn to:

- Describe changes across the human life cycle
- Understand puberty and physical development
- Learn about reproduction in plants and animals
- Understand the impact of lifestyle choices on the body

Teaching and learning

In Key Stage 2, pupils are taught about puberty and body changes in a carefully managed and age-appropriate way. Opportunities may be provided for single-sex discussions. Staff answer questions sensitively and ensure pupils know how to seek help.

By the end of KS2, pupils understand:

- How bodies change during puberty
- What menstruation is and how it affects women
- How babies are born

Relationships education focuses on:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe

Teaching reflects diverse family structures and recognises that some pupils may have different experiences of care and support.

Roles and responsibilities

Board of Trustees

- Approves and reviews the policy

Headteacher / Head of School

- Ensures consistent delivery
- Manages parental withdrawal requests
- Ensures staff training and monitoring

All staff

- Deliver RSE sensitively
- Model positive attitudes
- Respond appropriately to pupil questions
- Follow safeguarding procedures

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE.

Parents' right to withdraw

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education. Parents may request withdrawal from the non-statutory elements of sex education. Requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher.

Right to Transparency: Parents have an absolute right to review all curriculum materials, including slides, handouts, and video content. The school will not use materials from external providers who attempt to restrict parental access via copyright or non-disclosure agreements. Current DfE guidance confirms that sharing materials with parents for transparency does not breach copyright law. Alternative supervised work will be provided. There is no right to withdraw from statutory science content.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

RSE is delivered within a strong safeguarding framework. Staff follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026). RSE education provides a safe space for pupils to explore sensitive issues. Because of the nature of the topics discussed, lessons may occasionally lead to a pupil disclosure. All staff delivering PSHE adhere strictly to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 guidance). If a teacher or staff member suspects a child protection risk during a PSHE discussion, they will immediately follow standard reporting protocols and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If a pupil asks an unprompted question that falls outside the planned age-appropriate curriculum or raises potential safeguarding concerns, staff will maintain boundaries by acknowledging the question and seeking advice from the DSL/Senior Leadership Team before responding (using response phrasing such as: "That is an important question, and I want to give you a proper answer, so let me think about it and get back to you").

Special Educational Needs

Pupils with SEND are fully included in RSE lessons. Teaching is adapted where necessary to ensure understanding and inclusion.

Equal opportunities

RSE is delivered to ensure equality of access for all pupils, regardless of gender, race, disability, religion or family background.

Complaints procedure

Concerns about RSE should be raised with the class teacher in the first instance. Parents may follow the school or Trust complaints procedure if needed.

Monitoring arrangements

RSE is monitored through:

- Planning scrutiny
- Learning walks
- Pupil voice
- Work scrutiny
- Subject leader review

The policy is reviewed annually by the PSHE/RSE MAT lead and approved by trustees.

Linked policies

- PSHE Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

- Online Safety Policy
- Equality Policy