



Relationships and Sex Education Policy

This policy applies to the whole school including the EYFS at Copthorne Prep.

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Date Reviewed by Authors	September 2026
Next Review Date	September 2027

Introduction

This policy sets out our school's approach to statutory Relationships Education and non-statutory Sex Education.

The school's relationships and sex education policy is based on the statutory guidance document "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education" (DfE, July 2025, effective from 1 September 2026).

Department for Education guidance states that all primary schools must teach Relationships and Health Education. The teaching of Sex Education in primary schools remains non-statutory, except for the elements of sex education contained in the science national curriculum including the main external body parts, the human life cycle (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. Other related topics that fall within the statutory requirements for Health Education, such as puberty and menstrual wellbeing, will be included within PSHE (Wellbeing) curriculum lessons.

Within the statutory guidance document for RSE and Health Education, the DfE also encourages schools to deliver age-appropriate sex education if they feel their pupils need this information:

"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. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and – drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born"

Within this policy, as in the DfE guidance, Relationships Education is defined as teaching about the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and with adults. Our definition of Relationships Education includes all those elements defined within this statutory topic.

Sex Education is defined as teaching children how human reproduction occurs, including how a baby is conceived. This draws on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science. For the purposes of this policy, we specifically identify any non-statutory Sex Education that falls outside of Science and those related elements (the physical changes associated with puberty) within statutory Health Education.

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Aims

The aims of our RSE curriculum are to:

- Provide accurate and age-appropriate information.
- Include all children
- Help children make informed choices.
- Develop knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place amongst pupils and staff
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Prepare children for the next stage of education and adulthood.
- Prepare pupils for puberty, give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Develop positive and inclusive attitudes to everyone, particularly to those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010

Roles and Responsibilities

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) forms part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) and Wellbeing education curriculum in our school. The RSE programme is overseen by the Pastoral Lead with the support of the Senior Leadership Team, and is taught by Form Tutors.

Teaching staff are responsible for delivering RSE & PSHE in a sensitive way, modelling positive attitudes, monitoring progress, responding to the needs of the individual child and responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from non-statutory components of RSE.

Teaching staff receive training in the delivery of the RSE curriculum through dedicated staff meetings, led by the Pastoral Lead, with the support of external experts as required.

As a school we recognise the need to work with parents and carers to ensure a shared understanding of RSE and to deliver an effective programme that meets the needs of our pupils.

The content of this policy was developed in relation to the needs of our pupils and in consultation with school staff and governors. Parents were consulted on the relevant content within the policy. We believe that this process ensured that the curriculum we provide for our pupils is reflective of the requirements placed upon us and of the needs of our school community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Wellbeing policy
- Online safety policy

Governors receive updates on the RSE programme and monitor implementation and impact annually as part of their oversight of pupil wellbeing and safeguarding.

The RSE Curriculum

Effective Relationships and Sex Education contributes to the development of the personal skills needed by pupils to establish and maintain positive, healthy relationships. It enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

At Copthorne Prep School, we use the Kapow Primary RSE Scheme of Work, which is fully aligned with statutory guidance and provides age-appropriate content across all year groups.

The programme is organised into nine key areas: six statutory areas and three further areas that extend beyond the statutory minimum, in line with the current Kapow Primary RSE & PSHE scheme:

- My Healthy Self
- Connecting with Others
- The Online World
- Health Protection
- Staying Safe
- Growing Up
- Citizenship
- First Aid
- Sex Education (Year 6 only)

My Healthy Self, Connecting with Others, The Online World and Citizenship are revisited every year to build on prior learning. Health Protection, Staying Safe and Growing Up are taught at developmentally appropriate points across the primary years. First Aid and Sex Education are taught in Year 6 only; Sex Education is the only unit from which parents may request to withdraw their child.

Themes of personal safety, mental health and emotional wellbeing are developed in an age-appropriate way and apply across all topics. These include: personal boundaries and privacy; safety networks and skills; feelings and emotions; self-awareness; resilience and self-worth; and positive mental and emotional health. RSE contributes to pupils' resilience, self-esteem, and preparation for future transitions, supporting their overall wellbeing.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC)

The RSE curriculum supports SMSC development and the teaching of British Values across all year groups.

Pupils learn to:

- Respect and value differences
- Embrace diversity and challenge discrimination
- Recognise and respect feelings and boundaries
- Develop healthy relationships
- Understand rules, rights and responsibilities in school, family and wider society

Content within the Connecting with Others and Citizenship areas of the curriculum explores the diversity of family structures, challenges stereotypes, and promotes inclusion – for example, Year 2 pupils learn how families and communities can be similar and different, Year 4 and Year 6 pupils examine how stereotypes and discrimination can negatively affect people and communities, and Year 6 pupils explore human rights and fairness in society.

Puberty and Reproduction (Statutory Health Education)

As part of statutory Health Education, children are taught in an age-appropriate way about puberty and the associated physical and emotional changes from Year 3 onwards.

Correct, specific vocabulary is used throughout, and menstrual wellbeing is covered before pupils are likely to experience it, in line with DfE statutory guidance.

As part of the science curriculum, children learn in Year 5 about how reproduction occurs in some plants and animals.

This content is statutory. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from puberty education, menstrual wellbeing content, or the science curriculum.

Sex Education (Non-Statutory)

In addition, we provide non-statutory sex education covering how human reproduction and conception occurs.

This is included in the Year 6 Kapow unit: Sex Education, which covers conception, pregnancy and birth.

This content is taught separately from the statutory puberty content above and is clearly identified to pupils and parents as non-statutory.

Parents may request that their child be withdrawn from this content only – see Parental Engagement and Right of Withdrawal below.

If younger pupils ask questions that relate to content taught in older year groups, teachers will respond by explaining that they will learn about that when they are older.

Delivery

RSE is delivered weekly in mixed-gender form groups, with some content taught separately where appropriate (e.g. puberty). Lessons are age-appropriate, inclusive, and sensitive to pupils' backgrounds and experiences.

External visitors may support delivery if appropriate. All visitors are briefed on the school's RSE policy and safeguarding protocols. Teachers retain responsibility for content, safeguarding, and classroom management.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

We aim to provide an environment where pupils feel safe, relaxed, and confident to engage in age-appropriate discussions around sensitive topics.

Ground rules are established and revisited regularly. These include:

- Listening respectfully
- Avoiding personal disclosures
- Using correct terminology
- Respecting the right to pass
- Understanding confidentiality and safeguarding boundaries

Additional strategies include:

- Distancing techniques (e.g. role play, case studies)
- Anonymous question boxes
- Encouraging third-person language ("someone I know...")
- Depersonalised responses from staff

Staff are supported by the Pastoral Lead, Deputy Head and Head of Academic Excellence and may refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if concerns arise.

Managing Difficult Questions

Pupils are encouraged to ask questions during RSE lessons. Teachers use professional judgement to respond appropriately, considering age and maturity. Ground rules clarify boundaries and safeguard disclosures. Personal questions are not permitted, and pupils are reminded not to share personal information in class. If a question is inappropriate or raises safeguarding concerns, teachers will follow up individually and refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if necessary.

Parents are encouraged to speak with staff if they have concerns or wish to support their child's learning at home.

Recording and Assessment

Pupils reflect on their learning within lessons and at the end of each unit. Teachers assess progress through observation, discussion, and informal quizzes.

Science-based RSE content is assessed through recorded work in line with curriculum expectations. Assessment may focus on skills such as empathy, listening, and respectful communication.

Safeguarding

RSE supports safeguarding by helping pupils understand healthy relationships and boundaries, including online safety, image-sharing and the risks of AI-generated content, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026). Teachers are alert to disclosures and follow the school's Safeguarding Policy, referring concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Any external visitors are briefed on safeguarding protocols and must follow agreed ground rules. A class teacher is always present during external sessions.

Inclusivity

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

All pupils are included in RSE. Lessons are adapted to meet individual needs, with a focus on communication, assertiveness, and self-esteem. Teachers use a range of approaches to ensure accessibility and engagement.

Equality and Diversity

RSE is taught without bias and in line with the Equality Act 2010. Pupils explore diverse views and values, challenge stereotypes, and learn to respect differences. Resources reflect the diversity of our community and promote inclusivity. Staff delivering RSE do not allow personal beliefs to influence teaching. Pupils are encouraged to form their own informed opinions and respect others.

Parental Engagement and Right of Withdrawal

We recognise parents as the primary educators in RSE. We aim to build trust and cooperation through:

- Sharing the RSE policy and curriculum
- Enabling parents to view any RSE materials used in lessons, on request
- Answering questions and addressing concerns

Parents may not withdraw their child from statutory Relationships or Health Education, or from science curriculum content.

However, they may request withdrawal from non-statutory sex education, specifically:

- Year 6: Sex Education unit (conception, pregnancy and birth)

Parents will be informed in advance of these lessons. Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Deputy Head and Pastoral Lead, and suitable alternative arrangements will be made.

Parents who withdraw their child from these lessons assume responsibility for discussing related content at home.

Monitoring and Review

The RSE curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

Monitoring includes:

- Lesson observations
- Pupil voice
- Staff and parent feedback
- Review of planning and resources

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect statutory changes and school priorities. Parents will be informed of any significant revisions.