



Local Procedure/Protocol	
School/Home Name:	The Secret Garden
Local Procedure/Protocol Title:	Relationships and Sex Education Protocol
Linked to Group Policy Title & Code:	Relationships and Sex Education Policy
Date Reviewed:	April 2026
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Procedure/Protocol Lead:	Kimberley Ellis - PSHE Lead
Procedure/Protocol Sponsor:	Kelly Berry - School Development Lead
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT Witherslack Group is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure that it can be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics and all will be treated with dignity and respect.	
ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL, GOVERNANCE (ESG) STATEMENT Witherslack Group is committed to responsible business practices in the areas of: Environmental Stewardship, Social Responsibility, Governance, Ethics & Compliance. An ESG impact assessment has been completed on this procedure/protocol to ensure it can be implemented successfully without adverse implications on our Group goals.	
To ensure that this procedure/protocol is relevant and up to date, comments and suggestions for additions or amendments are sought from users of this document. To contribute towards the process of review, please email the named policy lead.	

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1. RATIONALE AND CONSULTATION

- 1.1 1.1 This protocol sets out the framework for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at our school providing clarity on how our RSE curriculum is informed, organised and delivered. This links directly to the Witherslack Group Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy which is a statutory requirement.
- 1.2 At The Secret Garden School, we continue to be committed to liaising with parents and carers about all aspects of their child's education. As such, we understand the importance of the role of parents and carers in the development of their child's understanding about relationships, sex and health. From September 2020, the law required schools to consult with parents and carers on their approach to RSE. The updated RSHE statutory guidance (from September 2026) also **formalises expectations around parental engagement**, requiring schools to meaningfully **consult parents when reviewing RSHE policies** and to **share curriculum materials on request**, including those from external providers.
- 1.3 Our school will notify and engage with parents and carers when developing and reviewing our local procedure RSE policy and listen to views raised as part of that consultation. Opportunities will be provided for parents and carers to view RSHE resources and curriculum materials, including those related to the teaching of sensitive topics, including those from external providers. During the Summer Term schools/learning centres will provide an opportunity for parents to read and feedback on their draft local protocol policy document before it is published ahead of implementation in September and uploaded to the school website.
- 1.4 We will provide additional opportunities for parents/carers to be informed and ask questions about the delivery and content of the RSE curriculum by providing:
 - Notification of when RSE topics are to be taught and a summary of the content to be covered
 - Opportunities to view and discuss examples of RSE teaching and learning resources and curriculum materials, including those related to the teaching of sensitive topics, including those of external providers
 - Information about parents' right to withdraw their child from non-statutory elements of RSE
 - Parents/carers are able to contact their child's pastoral leader at any time to discuss concerns or ask questions relating to RSE or wider wellbeing
 - Teachers' email contacts are available for parents/carers who wish to ask questions or seek clarification about curriculum content
 - Opportunities to discuss the RSE curriculum during parents' evenings and other scheduled information events
 - Key information about the RSE curriculum is shared through the school newsletter and is also available on the school website
 - Opportunities to discuss the RSE curriculum during parents' evenings and other scheduled information events
 - Key information about the RSE curriculum is shared through the school newsletter and is also available on the school website.
- 1.5 Parents/carers of new pupils will be provided with all of the above information at the point of admission, regardless of the time of year they join the school. Parents/carers will be provided with opportunities to find out about the progress of their children

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in RSE related topics; for example, as part of Annual Reviews of EHCPs, during parents' evenings and within termly progress reports.

- 1.6 We understand that parents and carers may have concerns about some aspects of RSE and all views will be listened to and carefully considered. However, the school will ultimately make the final decision about what is to be taught and when, and this will be informed by our statutory obligations as well as parental views and the needs of our pupils.
- 1.7 This policy reflects the **updated statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)** issued by the Department for Education. The revised guidance was published following a government review and **comes into force for schools from September 2026**.
- 1.8 This policy was reviewed and developed in response to the guidance referenced in Section 13.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Within the parameters of this protocol, the following definitions apply:

- **PSHE:** Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.
- **RSHE:** Relationships, sex education and health education
- **Health education:** Health education is learning about physical health and mental wellbeing
- **Relationships education:** Relationships education is learning about the physical, social, legal, and emotional aspects of human relationships including friendships, family life and relationships with other children and adults
- **RSE:** Relationships and sex education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health
- **Sex education:** Sex education is learning about reproduction, pregnancy and birth, preventing pregnancy and STIs

3. AIMS AND INTENT

- 3.1 At The Secret Garden School, our over-arching aims for RSE are as follows:

- To deliver high-quality, age-appropriate and developmentally sequenced RSE as part of a planned, inclusive curriculum that reflects our school ethos and meets statutory requirements.
- To work in partnership with parents and carers through effective consultation and transparent communication, while retaining responsibility for the statutory curriculum.
- To provide pupils with accurate, factual and reliable information from trusted sources, tailored to the strengths and needs of individual pupils,
- To ensure RSE is safeguarding-led, enabling pupils to understand risk, keep themselves safe, and know how and where to seek help.
- To provide a safe and supportive environment in which pupils can engage confidently in sensitive discussions, ask questions and address misconceptions.
- To promote respectful, healthy relationships, including understanding consent, equality and personal responsibility.
- To support pupils to recognise, challenge and report harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment, sexual violence and online harms.
- To support pupils' ongoing personal development and preparation for future life.
- To enrich RSE learning through the involvement of appropriately qualified external professionals and agencies, where appropriate, to provide specialist input and enhance pupils' understanding of key themes.

- 3.2 In order to achieve our aims, we will plan and teach the RSE content set out by the DfE and provided in **Appendix 1** of this policy.

4. LEGAL OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

- 4.1 The Relationships, Sex and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, introduced compulsory requirements for Relationships, Sex and Health Education in schools from September 2020. From this date, Health Education became compulsory for all pupils in primary and secondary schools. Relationships Education is compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education.
- 4.2 It is important to note that primary schools have the option to decide whether or not pupils are taught 'Sex Education'. In order to support pupils' ongoing emotional and physical development effectively, we will offer this for our primary-aged pupils at our school where the teaching and learning is appropriate for the age and maturity of each pupil. However, the vast majority of what is taught as part of 'Sex Education' for our primary-aged pupils, is already covered as part of the National Curriculum for Science or as part of Health Education in PSHE.

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4.3 RSE is an important part of our curriculum and it is hoped that all pupils will participate in all aspects of these lessons. However, the school acknowledges the rights of parents/carers as described below:

- From September 2020, parents of both primary and secondary-aged pupils will not be able to withdraw their children from any aspect of Relationships Education or Health Education (which includes learning about the changing adolescent body, puberty and developing and nurturing healthy friendships and relationships).
- Parents of both primary and secondary-aged pupils will not be able to withdraw their child from any aspect of the National Curriculum for Science (which includes subject content such as {PRIMARY} the names of external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age, and reproduction/off-spring in some plants and animals AND {SECONDARY} reproduction in humans and plants, hormones in reproduction, hormone and non-hormone methods of contraception communicable diseases including sexually transmitted infections in humans).
- Parents will be able to withdraw their child (following discussion with the school and providing notification to the Headteacher in writing) from any or all aspects of Sex Education (other than those provided as part of the Science curriculum) up to and until three terms before the age of 16.
- In line with the statutory guidance, where pupils are withdrawn from Sex Education, we will keep a record of this (including discussions/requests from parents/carers) and we will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.
- In line with the statutory guidance, if any secondary-aged pupil wishes to receive Sex Education rather than be withdrawn, we will make arrangements to provide the pupil with Sex Education during one of the three terms before the age of 16.
- At Post 16, we will continue to offer Sex Education to our pupils as part of their non-qualification activities linked to the development of character, broader skills, attitudes and confidence and in preparation for transition to life beyond school. Parents/carers will not have the right to withdraw pupils from this.

4.4 For further clarity, please see Appendix 2 of this protocol for an overview of the compulsory aspects of RSE at the different stages of education as set out by the DfE.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 At The Secret Garden School, the Head Teacher, assumes overall responsibility for ensuring that the organisation and delivery of RSE lessons are carried out by staff who have an appropriate level of expertise and knowledge and that all pupils make progress in achieving the expected outcomes. The Headteacher is also responsible for managing any requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory sex education lessons and organising alternative appropriate education.

5.2 Kimberley Ellis PSHE Lead, is responsible for ensuring that RSE is well planned and sequenced, both as part of an overall long-term plan and specific schemes of work. With the support of the Senior Leadership Team, the

PSHE Lead is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently well across the school and is suitably resourced. This may include liaising with and supporting other staff members/external professionals who deliver some/all of the RSE lessons at our school.

The PSHE Lead is expected to work closely with the Clare Robinson Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as well as colleagues in related curriculum areas to ensure the curriculum is suitable for individual pupils and complements content covered in National Curriculum subjects.

5.3 Teachers who are given responsibility for delivering RSE lessons must recognise the importance of RSE. They must seek support, advice and additional professional development wherever necessary to ensure that teaching continues to be well-prepared and of a high standard at all times.

5.4 The governance structure provided by Witherslack Group will ensure that the school complies with the provisions of the RSE policy and local protocol and that legal obligations related to RSE are fulfilled.

6. TRAINING AND CPD

6.1 At The Secret Garden School, we recognise the importance of ensuring teachers of RSE have an appropriate level of expertise and knowledge. This is achieved through internal and external training (eg. from the Sex Education Forum), attendance at Witherslack Group PSHE and Citizenship Network Meetings, National College Training, External CPD, and support from the school's PSHE Lead and DSL.

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7. IMPLEMENTATION (ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY)

7.1 At The Secret Garden, RSE is carefully planned and delivered primarily through our PSHE curriculum. PSHE lessons are given a high priority and are timetabled every week for all Key Stages. Some aspects of RSE feature across several topics, yet discrete RSE topics are also planned and delivered, giving full consideration to the timing of this as related to the age and emotional maturity of our pupils. Additional teaching may also take place within assemblies, Science lessons, RE lessons and other areas of the curriculum, but these will be part of our carefully planned approach to RSE and not simply an 'add-on'. Please see Appendix 3 of this policy for an overview of RSE within our curriculum.

7.2 Through effective organisation and delivery of RSE, all Witherslack Group schools and learning centres ensure that:

- RSE is delivered in a non-judgemental, age-appropriate, factual and inclusive way that allows pupils to ask questions in a safe environment. Approaches such as distancing techniques and use of classroom question boxes (encouraging pupils to use their names) will allow pupils to raise issues or ask questions which they may find embarrassing.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' views are listened to and will encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion. Ground rules are developed and shared with pupils as part of best practice. Ground rules help to ensure discussions and personal questions/comments are managed appropriately and sensitively, along with those questions which are more challenging.
- Core knowledge is sectioned into units of a manageable size.
- Taught content provides opportunities to revisit previous content and allows clear progression. Topics and lessons are carefully sequenced, within a planned scheme of work, and where relevant are linked to other areas of the curriculum.
- Teaching includes sufficient and well-chosen opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge so that it can be used confidently in real-life situations.
- The curriculum proactively addresses issues in a timely way in line with current evidence on pupils' development as well as their age.
- Groupings are carefully considered by teachers and senior leaders (including the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate) - some classes may be taught in gender-specific groups, on a one to one basis or within a whole class setting - dependent on the nature of the topic being delivered at the time, the cultural, religious or personal background of pupils, their age and SEND.
- All resources are selected carefully and are suitable for the needs of the pupils being taught - inappropriate/illegal images, videos and other materials are not be used in any circumstances and all related school policies will be followed.
- Care is taken to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of any pupil based on their home circumstances and needs, to reflect sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them; e.g. children in care or young carers.
- There is an awareness that some pupils are more susceptible to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND and appropriate actions will be taken to mitigate this.
- There is a balance between teaching pupils about making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online), whilst being clear it is never the fault of any child who is abused and why victim blaming is always wrong.
- It is recognised that pupils may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity and all pupils should feel that the content is relevant to them and explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner.
- Content related to LGBTQ+ is fully integrated into a range of topics, rather than delivered as a stand-alone unit or lesson.
- There is a focus on challenging perceived derogatory views about the legally protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation, through exploration of, and developing mutual respect for, those different to themselves.
- Steps are taken to foster healthy and respectful peer-to-peer communication and we provide an environment which challenges sexual violence and harassment as well as perceived limits on pupils based on their gender or any other protected characteristic.
- There is awareness of issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia, gender stereotypes, sexual violence and harassment (including online), with pupils taught to recognise, challenge and report such behaviours, and with positive action taken to build a school culture within which these are not tolerated. Teaching is underpinned by clear messages about consent, respect, equality, safeguarding, and the law, and avoids reinforcing gender stereotypes.
- Awareness of the issues of sexting and youth produced sexual imagery are not taught in isolation and instead are taught as part of a carefully sequenced, age-appropriate and developmental PSHE programme. Teaching is

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safeguarding-led, reflects the legal context, and is informed by current government guidance, including Sharing nudes and semi-nudes. Pupils are taught about consent, coercion, online risk, and how to report concerns and access support.

8. WORKING WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS

- 8.1** Working with external agencies can sometimes enhance our delivery of some aspects of RSE, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging pupils. For example, our school may consider accessing support from the NHS or local specialist services who may be able to provide advice and CPD for teachers. Alternatively, we might introduce pupils to the School Nurse or a representative from the NSPCC Speak Out/Stay Safe Programme via a workshop.
- 8.2** Our school only uses visitors to enhance teaching provided by our school staff, not to replace it. Staff employed by the school will be present during any RSE session delivered by an external visitor commissioned by the school. It will be agreed with any visitor how confidentiality will work in any lesson and how safeguarding reports are to be dealt with in line with the school Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Similarly, the school will consider whether information-sharing is necessary and will comply with the provisions of the school's Data Protection Policy.
- 8.3** Where external experts are invited to assist from time-to-time with the delivery of RSE, they will be expected to comply with the provisions of this protocol and any related policies. In line with the usual procedures and policies of our school, we will check the credentials of all external agencies and we will ensure the teaching delivered by any external experts fits with the planned curriculum and provisions of this protocol. The school/learning centre will discuss with the visitor the details of how they intend to deliver their sessions and ensure that content is age-appropriate and accessible for all pupils. The school/learning centre will request copies of the materials and lesson plans the visitor will use, to ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs and ensure it is available for parents to access.
- 8.4** Where a pupil has involvement from specialist external agencies, discussions between those agencies and appropriate senior staff in school, including the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), are important in order to ensure that RSE lessons are delivered in a way that is most appropriate for the individual child.

9. SAFEGUARDING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 9.1** At The Secret Garden School there is a focus on keeping our pupils safe, and the RSE curriculum plays an important role in our preventative education. All pupils are taught about keeping themselves safe, including how to stay safe online and how to stay safe within the community, as part of our over-arching curriculum. Teachers are made aware of common 'adverse childhood experiences' or ACEs (such as family breakdown, bereavement and exposure to domestic violence). Teachers should understand that pupils who have experienced problems at home may depend more on schools for support.
- 9.2** The PSHE/Citizenship Lead liaises with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in anything that is safeguarding-related within the context of PSHE and Citizenship, including RSE and keeping safe. The DSL is likely to have knowledge of trusted, high quality local resources that could be engaged, as well as knowledge of any particular local issues which may be appropriate to address in lessons. The DSL liaises with the PSHE and Citizenship Lead about the circumstances of individual pupils if felt to be required, including when and how adverse childhood experiences may be affecting any individual pupil and so may be influencing how they experience these subjects topics. Additional professional advice will be sought if needed as related to those pupils, including support and advice from our on-site clinical services staff.
- 9.3** Our good practice allows pupils to have an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues and it is recognised that such discussions could lead to increased safeguarding reports. The school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures must be adhered to at all times and without exception, concerns or disclosures made within or as a result of PSHE and Citizenship lessons must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Pupils are made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This includes processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer. Staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

10. Managing Difficult Questions

- 10.1** At The Secret Garden School, the PSHE Lead will provide advice to staff on the type of questions which are appropriate and inappropriate to ask and answer within a whole-class setting and the use of Ground Rules with pupils will support this process. Depending on the nature of the questions asked, staff will use their skill and discretion to determine whether a question will be answered at the time. They may decide to explain to a pupil that their question will be returned to at a later time and they may decide to discuss possible responses to questions with a parent/carer, the PSHE Lead, pastoral staff, the DSL or a member of

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the Senior Leadership Team. Answers to questions may then be followed-up with individuals, small groups or a whole class as deemed to be appropriate.

11. IMPACT AND ASSESSMENT

11. Our school has the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in RSE as for other curriculum areas. Our curriculum
1 builds on the knowledge pupils have previously acquired, including in other subjects, with regular feedback provided on pupil progress. We recognise that impact of the RSE curriculum may not ever be observed in school or indeed until adulthood, but every effort will be made to track destination data which will provide us with some impact information. We will also make efforts to find out if pupils have been able to apply learning in the community or at home as appropriate eg. through discussions with parents, carers and other professionals
11. Learning is assessed and assessments are used to identify where pupils need extra support, intervention or additional challenge.
2 Whilst there is no formal examined assessment for RSE, teachers will assess all outcomes to capture progress.

Strategies include assessment against the school's own assessment system (see Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy), as well as additional tests/quizzes, written assignments, self/peer evaluations, use of structured questioning, mind-maps, presentations/role-play, pupil interviews and learning portfolios.

12. MONITORING AND REVIEW

12. Supported by the Senior Leadership Team, the PSHE Lead is responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in
1 RSE.

The quality of RSE provision is also subject to regular and effective self-evaluation as part of termly subject reports for PSHE and Citizenship.

Information to be taken into account includes feedback from lesson visits and learning walks, planning and work scrutiny, pupil and parent feedback and pupil progress.

12. Factors to be considered as part of this process are outlined below:
2

- Is the curriculum effectively managed and are staff teaching RSE suitably skilled and knowledgeable?
- Does the RSE curriculum reflect national guidance, local priorities and pupils' needs?
- Are all pupils being taught the curriculum as intended?
- Is the quality of teaching consistent across all classes and does it exemplify best practice?
- Are the RSE resources used suitable and accessible?
- Does there need to be changes made following feedback received from the parents or carers?

12. Our school will review this local protocol annually to ensure it continues to reflect its best practice and that it meets the
3 requirements of the Witherslack Group Relationships and Sex (RSE) Policy.

13. REFERENCES

- [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2024 to 2025 academic year - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
- [Regulating independent schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [\[Withdrawn\] Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [Preventing bullying - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [Three steps to RSHE success | sexeducationforum.org.uk](https://sexeducationforum.org.uk)
- [Advice & Guidance | sexeducationforum.org.uk](https://sexeducationforum.org.uk)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

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- National curriculum in England: framework for key stages 1 to 4 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

15. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Key Content

APPENDIX 2: Compulsory Aspects

APPENDIX 3: Curriculum Map

APPENDIX 4: RSE Letter to Parents

APPENDIX 1

The Secret Garden School's curriculum is planned and carefully sequenced so that key content is taught at an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate stage for each pupil. The statutory content outlined below is drawn from the Department for Education's guidance Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (Revised July 2025, effective from September 2026).

This appendix outlines content specific to Relationships Education and RSE. It does not include related statutory content taught through the National Curriculum for Science or Health Education, which are referenced separately.

Primary phase -Relationships Education. By the end of primary school, 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, including commitment, care, protection and support for children and other family members.
- That families may look different to each other, but that families of all forms can provide a nurturing environment built on love and care.
- That stable, caring relationships of different types are central to children's wellbeing and security.
- That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment intended to be lifelong, and that in England and Wales marriage is available to both opposite-sex and same-sex couples.
- How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice.

Caring friendships

- The importance of friendships in supporting happiness, wellbeing and a sense of belonging.
- The characteristics of positive friendships, including kindness, trust, honesty, loyalty, generosity, shared interests and support.
- That healthy friendships are inclusive, respectful and do not involve isolation or exclusion.
- That friendships may experience difficulties and that conflict can be managed without resorting to violence.
- How to recognise trust, manage conflict, and seek help or advice when friendships are problematic.

Respectful relationships

- The importance of respecting others, including those who are different or who hold different beliefs or preferences.
- Practical ways to build and maintain respectful relationships in different contexts.
- The importance of self-respect and how this contributes to wellbeing.
- That everyone should expect and show respect, including towards those in positions of authority.
- Different forms of bullying (including cyberbullying), their impact, and the importance of reporting concerns.
- What stereotypes are and how they can be harmful or unfair.
- The concept of permission-seeking and giving in everyday interactions and relationships.

Online relationships

- That people may behave differently online and may misrepresent themselves.
- That the same expectations of respectful behaviour apply online as offline.
- How to keep safe online, including recognising risks, harmful content and unwanted contact.
- How to critically evaluate online friendships and information, particularly where people are unknown.
- How information and data are shared and used online.

Being safe

- Appropriate boundaries in friendships and other relationships, including online contexts.
- The concept of privacy and understanding when it is right to share concerns.

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- That each person's body belongs to them, including correct terminology for body parts to support safeguarding and communication.
- The differences between appropriate and inappropriate physical or other contact.
- How to respond safely to adults and others they do not know, both online and offline.
- How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or uncomfortable.
- How to seek help for themselves or others and continue to ask for help until they are heard.
- Where to access advice and support, including from family, school and external services.

Sex Education (Primary)

In line with the Department for Education statutory guidance, Sex Education is not compulsory in primary schools beyond the content taught through the National Curriculum for Science. However, schools are encouraged to provide age-appropriate sex education that prepares pupils for adolescence and supports their understanding of healthy relationships and personal development.

At The Secret Garden School, we recognise that our pupils may require a personalised and carefully adapted approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). Therefore, we provide a tailored Sex Education programme that reflects the age, developmental stage, individual needs and SEND profiles of our students.

Our Sex Education provision aims to:

- Prepare pupils for the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty.
- Develop an age-appropriate understanding of conception, pregnancy and birth.
- Equip pupils with knowledge and understanding that will support a successful transition into secondary education.
- Promote personal safety, body awareness, consent and appropriate boundaries.
- Support pupils to recognise and report concerns, contributing to their overall safeguarding and wellbeing.

Sex Education at The Secret Garden School is closely linked to our safeguarding responsibilities. Curriculum content is planned and delivered in collaboration with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and safeguarding team to ensure that learning is appropriate, accessible, and responsive to the needs of individual pupils. Particular consideration is given to supporting pupils to understand personal safety, healthy relationships, privacy, and how to seek help if they are worried or unsafe.

Statutory Science Curriculum Content

All pupils will receive the statutory Science curriculum, which includes aspects of Relationship and Sex Education that cannot be withdrawn from. These areas include:

- Naming body parts.
- Human growth and development.
- Reproduction in some plants and animals.
- The physical and emotional changes experienced during puberty, including those taught within Upper Key Stage 2.

At The Secret Garden School, these topics are delivered through our Science and PSHE curriculum and are reinforced, where appropriate, through other curriculum areas including Religious Education (RE). Learning is sequenced to ensure that pupils build knowledge progressively and access content at a level appropriate to their understanding and communication needs. Further detail can be found in **Appendix 3: RSE Curriculum Map**.

Parents/carers cannot withdraw their child from the statutory elements of Relationships Education or the National Curriculum Science programme. However, they may request that their child be withdrawn from any non-statutory Sex Education content delivered by the school. Requests will be considered and discussed with parents/carers in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's RSE Policy.

Secondary phase (and Post-16 where applicable)

At secondary school (and Post-16 where applicable), pupils should build on primary learning and also know:

Families

- That there are different forms of committed, stable relationships and their role in human happiness and child-rearing.
- The legal status of marriage and other long-term relationships
- Why marriage must be freely entered into and why it is an important choice for many
- The roles and responsibilities of parenting
- How to assess trustworthiness, identify unsafe relationships, and seek help or advice for themselves or others.

Respectful relationships, including friendships

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- The characteristics of healthy friendships and non-sexual relationships, including boundaries, consent, trust and mutual respect.
- How to challenge stereotypes, including those linked to sex, gender, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation.
- That everyone has the right to respect and equality under the law.
- Different forms of bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- That some behaviours within relationships are criminal, including coercive control, exploitation and violence.

Online and media

- Rights and responsibilities in online spaces.
- Risks associated with online activity, including sharing images or information.
- The impact of harmful and sexually explicit content, including pornography.
- That sharing or viewing indecent images of children is a criminal offence.
- Emerging online risks, including misinformation, AI-generated content and deepfakes.
- How data is generated, collected and used online.

Being safe

- The legal framework around consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, harassment, domestic abuse and harmful practices.
- How consent is given, recognised and withdrawn in all contexts, including online.
- How to report concerns and access appropriate support.

Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health

- The characteristics of healthy intimate relationships.
- The impact of relationships and sexual choices on physical, emotional and mental health.
- Reproductive health, fertility and menopause.
- Contraceptive choices and effectiveness.
- Pregnancy, miscarriage and available options, taught with medically and legally accurate, impartial information.
- Sexually transmitted infections, transmission, prevention and testing.
- How alcohol and drugs can affect decision-making and risk.
- How and where to access confidential advice and healthcare.

APPENDIX 2

Please see below an overview of the compulsory aspects (as set out by the DfE) of RSE, within the different stages of education.

DfE Statutory Requirement (September 2026)	Where taught within topics	Subject	Year/Term
Families and caring relationships	Families, important people, caring relationships, family structures	PSHE	Y1 Summer 1; Y2 Summer 1
Marriage and long-term commitment	Christian marriage; Islamic marriage; Sikh marriage; Marriage Law	RE; PSHE	Y2 Summer 1; Y4 Autumn 1; Y4 Autumn 2; Y10 Summer 1
Caring friendships	Respect, kindness, friendship, anti-bullying, empathy	PSHE; English	Y1-Y11
Respectful relationships	Respect, equality, empathy, healthy relationships, values	PSHE; English; RE	Across the curriculum
Respect, equality and protected characteristics	Diversity, equality, discrimination, gender identity, sexual orientation	PSHE; RE; English	Y1-Y11 (explicitly Y9 Autumn 2; Y10 Discovery Spring 2)
Consent and personal boundaries	Wanted/unwanted touch, consent, permissions, personal boundaries, coercion	PSHE	Y1 Summer 1; Y2 Summer 1; Y3 Spring 2; Y5 Summer 1; Y6 Spring 1; Y7 Summer 2; Y8 Spring 2; Y9 Spring 2; Y10 Spring 1

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Online relationships	Online safety, cyberbullying, online gaming, image sharing, pornography, sextortion, digital consent	PSHE	Y1-Y11
Being safe	Safeguarding, trusted adults, reporting concerns, exploitation, abuse, online safety	PSHE	Y1-Y11
Healthy intimate relationships	Healthy/unhealthy relationships, respectful relationships, peer pressure	PSHE	Y7 Spring 1; Y10 Discovery Spring 1; Y11 Summer 1
Unhealthy and abusive relationships	Domestic abuse, unhealthy relationships, coercive behaviour	PSHE	Y7-Y11
Coercive and controlling behaviour	Coercion, coercive control	PSHE	Y9 Spring 2; Y10 Spring 2; Y10 Discovery Spring 1; Y11 Summer 1
Domestic abuse	Domestic abuse	PSHE	Y9 Summer 1; Y10 Discovery Summer 1
Sexual harassment	Sexual harassment	PSHE	Y8 Spring 2; Y9 Spring 2; Y11 Summer 1
Sexual violence	Sexual violence	PSHE	Y8 Spring 2; Y11 Summer 1
Grooming and exploitation	Grooming, exploitation, safeguarding	PSHE	Y7 Summer 1; Y8 Summer 1; Y9 Spring 2; Y10 Spring 2
Child sexual exploitation	Child sexual exploitation	PSHE	Y9 Summer 1
County lines	County lines	PSHE	Y8 Summer 1; Y9 Summer 1
Forced marriage	Forced marriage	PSHE	Y7 Summer 2; Y8 Summer 1; Y9 Summer 1; Y10 Discovery Summer 1
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	FGM awareness	PSHE	Y8 Summer 1; Y9 Summer 1; Y10 Discovery Summer 1
Violence against women and girls	Sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic abuse, coercive control	PSHE	Y8-Y11
Misogyny and harmful online influences	Equality, discrimination, healthy relationships, online influences <i>(if covered within schemes of work)</i>	PSHE	Y9-Y11
Pornography	Pornography and its influence	PSHE	Y8 Summer 2; Y10 Spring 1; Y10 Discovery Summer 2
Image-based abuse / digital consent	Image sharing, image-based abuse, digital consent	PSHE	Y7 Summer 2; Y8 Summer 2; Y9 Summer 2; Y10 Discovery Summer 2
Sextortion	Sextortion	PSHE	Y9 Summer 2
Puberty	Physical and emotional changes	PSHE; Science	Y4 Spring 2; Y5 Spring 1; Y6 Autumn 2; Y7 Autumn 2; Y10 Discovery Autumn 1; Y11 Discovery Autumn 1
Human reproduction	Reproduction, fertilisation, pregnancy	Science	Y5 Summer 1; Y7 Summer 2; Y10 Discovery Autumn 1;

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			Y11 Discovery Autumn 1
Contraception	Methods of contraception and informed choices	Science; PSHE	Y8 Summer 2; Y10 Spring 1; Y10 Discovery Autumn 1 & Summer 2; Y11 Spring 1
STIs	Sexually transmitted infections	PSHE	Y8 Summer 2; Y9 Summer 2; Y10 Spring 1; Y11 Spring 1
Pregnancy and pregnancy choices	Pregnancy, pregnancy choices, birth	PSHE; Science	Y8 Summer 2; Y9 Summer 2; Y10 Spring 1; Y11 Spring 1
Sexual health services	Accessing sexual health services and support	PSHE	Y9 Summer 2; Y11 Spring 1
Mental wellbeing	Feelings, emotions, resilience, self-harm awareness, mental health	PSHE; English	Y1-Y11
Internet safety and online harms	Online safety, cyberbullying, digital privacy, online risks	PSHE	Y1-Y11
Physical health and healthy lifestyles	Healthy eating, exercise, hygiene, sleep, disease prevention	Science; PSHE	Y1-Y11
Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vaping	Substance misuse, alcohol, smoking, drugs and addiction	Science; PSHE	Y6-Y11

Post-16 / Key Stage 5 Pupils

The Independent School Standards require schools to provide Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and to ensure that, where pupils are above compulsory school age, there is a programme of activities appropriate to their needs that prepares them for adult life. While Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is not statutory for post-16 pupils, schools are expected to support pupils' personal development, wellbeing and readiness for adulthood.

The Department for Education's 16–19 study programme guidance states that all students should take part in meaningful non-qualification activity, tailored to individual need, which may include activities that develop confidence, character, resilience and life skills. These principles apply equally to students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

In line with the SEND Code of Practice (0–25), some young people aged 16 and over may have RSE-related outcomes identified within their EHCPs, particularly as part of their preparation for adulthood. The Code of Practice also clarifies that from the end of compulsory school age, the legal right to make decisions and requests under the Children and Families Act 2014 applies to the young person themselves, rather than their parents.

Schools within the Witherslack Group have therefore chosen to continue to offer RSE for post-16 pupils, as part of a broader PSHE programme, to reflect pupils' developmental needs, support SEND outcomes, and ensure progression from secondary education.

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APPENDIX 3

Please see below our Curriculum Map which shows when RSE related content is taught within this academic year:

Year Group	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 1	PSHE - Health & Wellbeing 1: Likes/dislikes, changes and growing up, feelings, change and loss, staying safe (Safeguarding & Relationships); Science -Human body: Identify and name body parts; draw and label body parts	PSHE - Relationships 1: Respect, manners, sharing, kindness, behaviour and anti-bullying (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Wider World 1: Rules, internet safety, inclusivity, diversity, community roles (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Health & Wellbeing 2: Hygiene, teeth cleaning, healthy diet, exercise, sun safety (Health Education)	PSHE - Relationships 2: Families, important people, wanted/unwanted touch, consent, personal boundaries (Sex Education & Safeguarding); Science -Humans: Exercise, food, hygiene, teeth, parent and offspring	PSHE - Wider World 2: Caring for living things, recycling, responsibilities, community support (Relationships & Community)
Year 2	PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Good health, healthy routines, physical and mental health, dental health, sleep, medicines, feelings and managing emotions (Health Education & Safeguarding); Science -Healthy lifestyles: Exercise, food, hygiene	PSHE - Relationships: Respect, friendships, kindness, behaviour, anti-bullying (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Wider World: Rules, online safety, diversity, community and responsibilities (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Hygiene, healthy eating, exercise, safety (Health Education)	PSHE - Relationships: Families, safe and unsafe touch, consent, personal boundaries (Sex Education & Safeguarding); Science -Growth and offspring RE - Christianity Rights of Passage - Christany ceremonies of marriage and belonging. (Relationships)	PSHE - Wider World: Environment, caring responsibilities, community helpers (Relationships & Community)

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	Year 3	Science - Healthy eating and nutrition: Food groups, balanced diet, healthy choices (Health Education) RE- Signs and Symbols- Identity and belonging through religious symbols (Relationships & Community)	RE- Diwali- Family, community and celebrations (Relationships & Community)		PSHE - Relationships: Consent/permissions, boundaries, bullying prevention (Safeguarding & Relationships)			
	Year 4	RE- Islamic rites of passage- Birth and naming ceremonies, marriage traditions etc (Relationships & Community)	PSHE - Relationships: Online risks, cyberbullying, secrets (Safeguarding & Relationships) RE- Sikh rights of passage- Sikh marriage traditions (Relationships & Community)		PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Puberty - girls, boys, emotional changes (Sex Education)	English- Book reviews- Character feelings and motives (Relationships & Community)	Science -Teeth and oral hygiene	
	Year 5	PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: FGM awareness (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Relationships: Gender identity, online risks, stranger danger (Safeguarding & Relationships)	Science -Human life cycle: Babies and children, adolescence and puberty, adults and elderly English- Aesop's fables- character feelings (Relationships & Community)		Science - Reproduction: Sexual reproduction in mammals; PSHE - Relationships: Consent boundaries, peer pressure (Safeguarding & Relationships)		

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						English- The Butterfly Lion- Friendship/ empathy Relationships & Community)	
Year 6		PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Puberty - girls, boys, emotional changes (Sex Education) English- Emotional Menagerie- complex emotions, empathy, acceptance and recognising people react differently. Relationships & Community)	Science -Diet, drugs and lifestyle: Diet, drugs, cigarettes	Science -Variation: Inheritance and characteristics; PSHE - Relationships: Safe relationships, online gaming risks, consent (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Wider World: Online privacy, digital safety (Safeguarding & Relationships)	RE- What happens when we die- Loss, bereavement, respect for different beliefs and personal reflection Relationships & Community)	
Year 7		PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Puberty, menstrual cycle (Sex Education) English- The Boy at the back of the class- exploring friendship, empathy and different cultures		Science - Health and lifestyle: Human diet, lifestyle choices; PSHE - Relationships: Healthy/unhealthy relationships, stereotypes (Safeguarding & Relationships)	Science -Gas exchange: Health and lungs; PSHE - Relationships: Grooming, bullying, discrimination, safeguarding reporting (Safeguarding & Relationships)	Science - Reproduction: Gametes, male reproductive system, female reproductive system, menstrual cycle, fertilisation, gestation and birth;	

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			Relationships & Community)				PSHE - Relationships: Consent, boundaries, relationships online, forced marriage, image sharing risks (Sex Education & Safeguarding)
Year 8	PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Self-harm awareness, supporting others safely (Safeguarding & Relationships)	Science - Health and lifestyle: Digestion, nutrition, healthy lifestyles and lifestyle choices (Health Education)	PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Substance misuse, first aid (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Relationships: Romantic relationships, sexual harassment, sexual violence, consent and the law (Sex Education & Safeguarding)	PSHE - Relationships: Child-on-child abuse, exploitation, county lines, online grooming, forced marriage, FGM (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Relationships: Contraception, STIs, pregnancy choices, pornography, digital consent, image-based abuse (Sex Education)	
Year 9	PSHE - Relationships: Healthy/unhealthy relationships, boundaries (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Relationships: Equality, discrimination, sexual orientation, gender identity (Safeguarding & Relationships) Science - Health and disease: Pathogens, immunity, communicable diseases and lifestyle impacts	PSHE - Relationships: Consent and the law, coercion, sexual harassment, grooming, exploitation (Sex Education & Safeguarding)	PSHE - Relationships: County lines, domestic abuse, forced marriage, FGM, child sexual exploitation (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Relationships: Online grooming, sextortion, pornography, digital consent, image-based abuse (Sex Education & Safeguarding) English- Contemporary poetry (love and relationships)- poems about love, loss, conflict and relationships.	PSHE - Relationships: Contraception, STIs, pregnancy choices, sexual health services (Sex Education) English- Romeo and Juliet- relationship and conflicts etc (Relationships & Community)	

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			on health (Health Education & Safeguarding); English- Blood Brothers- explore relationships, family identity etc (Relationships & Community)			Relationships & Community)	
Year 10 (Central)		Science -Lifestyle choices and digestion; PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Substance misuse, alcohol and consent (Safeguarding & Relationships)	Science -Health and disease: Heart disease, cancer, pathogens, immune system, vaccination, medicines, drug development; PSHE - Relationships: Consent, contraception, STIs, pregnancy choices, pornography influence (Sex Education)	PSHE - Relationships: Grooming, exploitation, coercive control (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Relationships: Marriage law, boundaries, respectful relationships (Sex Education & Relationships)		
Year 10 (Discovery)	Science - Homeostasis and control - Endocrine system - Diabetes - Menstrual cycle - Contraception - Sexual reproduction	PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Substance misuse, peer pressure, personal safety (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Relationships: Consent, coercive control, healthy/unhealthy relationships (Sex Education & Safeguarding) Science - Inheritance Characteristics passed from parents - offspring - Chromosomes & genes: what they do, 23 pairs in humans - Sexual vs asexual reproduction	PSHE - Relationships: Equality, discrimination, gender identity (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Relationships: Grooming, exploitation, domestic abuse, forced marriage, FGM (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Relationships: Contraception, STIs, pregnancy choices, pornography, digital consent (Sex Education)	

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				- Variation: genes / environment / both - Sex: XX = female, XY = male - Simple examples: eye colour, height				
	Year 11 (Central)				PSHE - Relationships: Contraception, STIs, pregnancy choices, sexual health services (Sex Education)			
	Year 11 (Discovery)	Science - Homeostasis and control - Endocrine system - Diabetes - Menstrual cycle - Contraception - Sexual reproduction	PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Low mood, self-harm awareness (Safeguarding & Relationships)	Science -Inheritance; Characteristics passed from parents - offspring - Chromosomes & genes: what they do, 23 pairs in humans - Sexual vs asexual reproduction - Variation: genes / environment / both - Sex: XX = female, XY = male - Simple examples: eye colour, height PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Substance misuse and addiction risks (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Health & Wellbeing: Spiking awareness, consent and impairment (Safeguarding & Relationships)	PSHE - Relationships: Healthy intimate relationships, coercion, sexual harassment, sexual violence (Sex Education & Safeguarding)		

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APPENDIX 4



Date: TBC

Dear families,

We are writing to update you about Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) at The Secret Garden School following the revised Department for Education statutory guidance, which came into effect on 1st September 2026. At The Secret Garden School, RSHE is an important part of our curriculum. It supports pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to build positive and respectful relationships, keep themselves safe and prepare for life beyond school.

As a specialist school, we recognise that every pupil is different. Our RSHE curriculum is carefully planned and adapted to take account of pupils' age, developmental stage, individual needs and level of understanding. During the Summer Term 2026, we held two parent and carer coffee mornings as part of our consultation on RSHE. The draft policy was available for parents and carers to view and families had the opportunity to find out more about our approach, discuss the curriculum, ask questions and provide feedback.

We would like to thank everyone who attended and contributed to the consultation. Following the consultation and our review of the revised Department for Education statutory guidance, our policy and RSHE provision have been reviewed and updated for the 2026/27 academic year. Our RSE Policy is available on the school website. The policy provides further information about our approach to RSHE, including an overview of the curriculum and how it is organised and delivered.

We are committed to being open with parents and carers about what is taught as part of RSHE. Parents and carers can request to view the curriculum materials and resources used to support the teaching of RSHE. Please contact the school office if you would like to arrange this.

Right to withdraw from Sex Education:

The arrangements for withdrawal from Sex Education are different for primary aged and secondary aged pupils.

For primary aged pupils, Relationships Education is compulsory. Primary schools may also choose to teach Sex Education in addition to the content taught as part of the Science curriculum. Where Sex Education is provided, parents and carers have the right to withdraw their child from Sex Education that is taught outside the National Curriculum for Science. A request to withdraw a primary aged pupil from this Sex Education will be granted.

For secondary aged pupils, Relationships and Sex Education is compulsory. Parents and carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from some or all of the Sex Education delivered as part of RSE. Before making a decision, the Head Teacher will discuss the request with the parent or carer and, where appropriate, with the pupil. A request may only be refused in exceptional circumstances. Parents and carers cannot withdraw their child from Relationships Education or from relevant content taught as part of the Science curriculum. For secondary aged pupils, from three terms before they turn 16, a pupil may choose to receive Sex Education even where a parent or carer has previously requested withdrawal.

If you would like to discuss withdrawal from Sex Education, please contact the Head Teacher. Further information about the right to withdraw and the arrangements in place at school can be found in our RSE Policy. We have also produced an RSHE Information for Parents and Carers booklet for the 2026/27 academic year, which provides further information about our approach to RSHE and the curriculum. If you have any questions about RSHE, would like further information about what your child will be learning or would like to view curriculum materials or resources, please contact the school office.

If you would like to request that your child is withdrawn from Sex Education, this request must be made in writing to the Head Teacher. Further information about the right to withdraw and the arrangements in place at school can be found in our RSE Policy.

We have also produced an RSHE Information for Parents and Carers booklet for the 2026/27 academic year, which provides further information about our approach to RSHE and the curriculum.

If you have any questions about the content of this letter, our RSHE provision, what your child will be learning, or if you would like to view any additional curriculum materials or resources, please contact Kimberley Ellis, PSHE Lead Kimberley.ellis@witherslackgroup.co.uk

Thank you for your continued support.

The Secret Garden School



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