

Local Procedure/Protocol

School/Home Name:	Meadow View Learning Centre
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:	Sarah Sells
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 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 our 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
 - School termly newsletter
 - Annual open day
- 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 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.

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- 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 our 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.
- 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.
- 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:

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- 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 our school, the Headteacher, 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 The PSHE and Citizenship 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 and Citizenship 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 may deliver some of the RSE lessons at our school. The PSHE/Citizenship Lead is expected to work closely with the 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 our 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 from the Sex Education Forum and PSHE Association, attendance at Witherslack Group PSHE and Citizenship Network Meetings, National College Training, External CPD, and support from the school's PSHE and Citizenship Lead and DSL.

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7. IMPLEMENTATION (ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY)

7.1 At our school RSE is carefully planned and delivered primarily through our PSHE and Citizenship curriculum. PSHE/Citizenship 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.

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- 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 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 our 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

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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 our school, the PSHE and Citizenship 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 and Citizenship Lead, the DSL or a member of 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

11.1 Our school has the same high expectations of the quality of pupils' work in RSE as for other curriculum areas. Our curriculum 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

11.2 Learning is assessed and assessments are used to identify where pupils need extra support, intervention or additional challenge. 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

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

12.2 Factors to be considered as part of this process are outlined below:

- 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?

12.3 Our school will review this local protocol annually to ensure it continues to reflect its best practice and that it meets the 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/government/consultations/keeping-children-safe-in-education)
- [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education)
- [16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2024 to 2025 academic year - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/16-to-19-study-programmes-guidance)
- [Regulating independent schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/regulating-independent-schools)

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- [Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges)
- [\[Withdrawn\] Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges)
- [Preventing bullying - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/preventing-bullying)
- [Three steps to RSHE success | sexeducationforum.org.uk](https://sexeducationforum.org.uk/three-steps-to-rshe-success)
- [Advice & Guidance | sexeducationforum.org.uk](https://sexeducationforum.org.uk/advice-guidance)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25-years)
- [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools)
- [National curriculum in England: framework for key stages 1 to 4 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4)

14. ASSOCIATED FORMS

None

15. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Key Content

APPENDIX 2: Compulsory Aspects

APPENDIX 3: Curriculum Map

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APPENDIX 1

The 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.
- 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.

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- 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)

Schools may choose to include additional age-appropriate sex education content beyond statutory requirements.

Secondary phase and Post-16

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

- 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.

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- How and where to access confidential advice and healthcare.

Related statutory content:

Related content in the National Curriculum for Science at Key Stages 2-4

Year 5

"Living things and their habitats": Focuses on the life cycles of a mammal, an amphibian, an insect, and a bird. Pupils look closely at the mechanics of sexual and asexual reproduction in plants and animals.

"Animals, including humans": This is the **primary puberty unit**. Pupils construct a timeline mapping human growth and development from birth to old age, learning the physical and emotional changes that happen during puberty.

Year 6

"Evolution and inheritance": Children learn that living things produce offspring of the same kind, and they explore how characteristics are inherited from biological parents.

Key Stage 3

Year 7

"Organisms and Health": Introduction to the human skeleton, muscles, and the immediate biological impacts of recreational drugs, smoking, and alcohol on bodily health.

Year 8

"Human Reproduction":

Male and female reproductive systems and the mechanics of the menstrual cycle.

Fertilisation, gametes (sperm and egg), and copulation.

Implantation, embryonic development, the role of the placenta, and stages of pregnancy/birth.

Year 9

"Genes and Selection": Preparation for GCSE. Pupils learn about the structure of DNA, chromosomes, inherited variation, and how genetic material passes to the next generation.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10–11 / GCSE)

Year 10

"Infection and Response": communicable diseases. This half term explicitly covers Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), focusing on the transmission, cellular impact, and prevention of HIV/AIDS and Gonorrhoea.

"Homeostasis and Response": The endocrine system block.

Hormonal control of the human menstrual cycle (including the interplay of FSH, LH, oestrogen, and progesterone).

The scientific mechanism, efficacy, and biological functions of hormonal contraceptives (like the pill) versus non-hormonal barrier methods.

Year 11

"Inheritance, Variation and Evolution": Advanced genetics. Students study the cellular mechanisms of **meiosis** (sexual reproduction) versus **mitosis** (asexual reproduction). They analyze the genetic advantages of variation and map out genetic inheritance via genetic crosses and Punnett squares.

Related content in the Health Education curriculum as part of PSHE and Citizenship at Key Stages 2-4

Key Stage 2

The focus in primary school should be on teaching the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. Teachers should be clear that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.

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

Teachers should go on to talk about the steps pupils can take to protect and support their own and others' health and wellbeing, including simple self-care techniques, personal hygiene, prevention of health and wellbeing problems and basic first aid.

Emphasis should be given to the positive two-way relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing, and the benefits to mental wellbeing of physical exercise and time spent outdoors.

Pupils should also be taught the benefits of hobbies, interests and participation in their own communities. This teaching should make clear that people are social beings and that spending time with others, taking opportunities to consider the needs of others and practising service to others, including in organised and structured activities and groups (for example the scouts or girl guide movements), are beneficial for health and wellbeing.

Pupils should be taught about the benefits of rationing time spent online and the risks of excessive use of electronic devices. In later primary school, pupils should be taught why social media, computer games and online gaming have age restrictions and should be equipped to manage common difficulties encountered online.

A firm foundation in the benefits and characteristics of good health and wellbeing will enable teachers to talk about isolation, loneliness, unhappiness, bullying and the negative impact of poor health and wellbeing.

Key Stage 3 and 4

It is important that the starting point for health and wellbeing education should be a focus on enabling pupils to make well-informed, positive choices for themselves. In secondary school, teaching should build on primary content and should introduce new content to older pupils at appropriate points. This should enable pupils to understand how their bodies are changing, how they are feeling and why, to further develop the language that they use to talk about their bodies, health and emotions and to understand why terms associated with mental and physical health difficulties should not be used pejoratively. This knowledge should enable pupils to understand where normal variations in emotions and physical complaints end and health and wellbeing issues begin.

Teaching about the impact of puberty, which will have started in primary school, should continue in secondary school, so that pupils are able to understand the physical and emotional changes, which take place at this time and their impact on their wider health and wellbeing.

Emphasis should continue to be given to steps pupils can take to protect and support their own health and wellbeing. They should know that there is a relationship between good physical health and good mental wellbeing and that this can also influence their ability to learn. Teachers should cover self-care, the benefits of physical activity and time spent outdoors. This should be linked to information on the benefits of sufficient sleep, good nutrition and strategies for building resilience.

Pupils should know the contribution that hobbies, interests and participation in their own communities can make to overall wellbeing. They should understand that humans are social beings and that outward-facing activity, especially that with a service focus (for example, work, volunteering and participation in organisations such as the scouts or the girl guiding movements, the National Citizen Service or the Duke of Edinburgh Award) are beneficial for wellbeing. This can also contribute to the development of the attributes for a happy and successful adult life. Pupils should be supported to recognise what makes them feel lonely. Self-focused or isolating lifestyle choices can lead to unhappiness and being disconnected from society for those who have greater need for companionship and relationships.

Pupils should also be taught about problems and challenges. This should include factual information about the prevalence and characteristics of more serious mental and physical health conditions, drugs, alcohol and information about effective interventions. Schools may also choose to teach about issues such as eating disorders.

Teachers should be aware of common 'adverse childhood experiences' (such as family breakdown, bereavement and exposure to domestic violence) and when and how these may be affecting any of their pupils and so may be influencing how they experience these subjects. The impact of time spent online, the positive aspects of online support and negotiating social media, including online forums and gaming, should also be

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included. Teachers should understand that pupils who have experienced problems at home may depend more on schools for support.

Pupils should be taught how to judge when they, or someone they know, needs support and where they can seek help if they have concerns. This should include details on which adults in school (e.g. school nurses), and externally can help.

Schools should continue to develop knowledge on topics specified for primary.

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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.

	KS1 (Years 1-2)	KS2 (Years 3-6)	KS3 (Years 7-9)	KS4 (Years 10-11)	KS5 (Years 12-13)
Relationship education	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	Not statutory, but schools are expected to support personal development and wellbeing
PSHE - Health education	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	PSHE remains compulsory in independent schools; personal development activity required in 16–19 study programmes
Science - reproduction education	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	Must be taught – no right to withdrawal	Not applicable (no statutory science curriculum requirement post-16)
Sex education (beyond the compulsory Health and Science aspects of the curriculum)	Schools can choose whether to teach this – parents can withdraw	Schools can choose whether to teach this – parents can withdraw	Must be taught – parents can withdraw	Must be taught – parents can withdraw until three terms before a child's 16 th birthday	Not statutory; may be offered as part of PSHE, enrichment or preparation for adulthood

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

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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 2026-2027:

Class / Year Group	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 3		PSHE/RSE: Safety First: Stranger Danger		PSHE/RSE: Health and Wellbeing: Friendships, being kind, bullying		
Year 4	PSHE/RSE: VIPS: Families, friends, falling out and working together		PSHE/RSE: It's My Body: Healthy food, sleep and personal hygiene			PSHE/RSE: Growing up: Physical changes and our bodies
Year 5	PSHE/RSE: Be Yourself Relationships with friends and resolving conflict	SCIENCE Comparative life cycles (mammals, amphibians, insects, birds). The process of sexual and asexual reproduction in plants and animals. [		PSHE/RSE: It's My Body: Caring for our changing bodies and healthy choices Your body is your own, how we feel about our bodies	SCIENCE Animals, including humans: This is the primary puberty unit. Pupils construct a timeline mapping human growth and development from birth to old age, learning the physical and emotional changes that happen during puberty.	
Year 6		PSHE/RSE: VIPS: Friends and family, secrets and false friends				PSHE/RSE: Growing Up: Physical and emotional changes, relationships

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						, sex and human reproduction SCIENCE Evolution and inheritance: Children learn that living things produce offspring of the same kind, and they explore how characteristics are inherited from biological parents.
Year 7	PSHE/RSE: Health and Wellbeing: Puberty – emotional, social and physical changes Health and hygiene My body, my rules Consent		SCIENCE Organisms and Health: Introduction to the human skeleton, muscles, and the immediate biological impacts of recreational drugs, smoking, and alcohol on bodily health.		PSHE/RSE: Consent, boundaries, friendships, Challenging stereotypes of male masculinity	
Year 8				PSHE/RSE: Healthy and unhealthy relationships	PSHE/RSE: Health and Wellbeing: Healthy choices, body image for	

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				Love and all its forms Conflict resolution	boys and girls, boundaries and abuse SCIENCE Human Reproduction: Weeks 1–2: Male and female reproductive systems and the mechanics of the menstrual cycle. Weeks 3–4: Fertilisation, gametes (sperm and egg), and copulation. Weeks 5–6: Implantation, embryonic development, the role of the placenta, and stages of pregnancy/birth.	
Year 9	PSHE/RSE: Body confidence Self-esteem in boys and girls Male/female reproductive system Healthy lifestyle	SCIENCE Genes and Selection: Preparation for GCSE. Pupils learn about the structure of DNA, chromosomes, inherited variation, and how genetic material passes to the next generation		PSHE/RSE: Consent in sexual activity, FGM, healthy relationships, stalking and harassment		PSHE/RSE: Sexual health, STIs, contraception,

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Year 10	PSHE/RSE: Health and Wellbeing: Sexual abuse and the law, emotional well-being			PSHE/RSE: Pleasure and masturbation FGM, sexting, nudes and pornography , laws around sexual violence, sexualisation within the media SCIENCE Infection and Response: communicable diseases. This half term explicitly covers Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), focusing on the transmission, cellular impact, and prevention of HIV/AIDS and Gonorrhoea .	SCIENCE Homeostasis and Response: The endocrine system block. Weeks 1–3: Hormonal control of the human menstrual cycle (including the interplay of FSH, LH, oestrogen, and progesterone). Weeks 4–6: The scientific mechanism, efficacy, and biological functions of hormonal contraceptives (like the pill) versus non-hormonal barrier methods.	
Year 11	PSHE: RSE: Peer on peer abuse, fertility, STIs, contraception SCIENCE Inheritance, Variation and		PSHE: Health and Wellbeing: Cancer screening, unplanned pregnancy options, laws around abortion, parenthood, positive			

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	Evolution: Advanced genetics. Students study the cellular mechanisms of meiosis (sexual reproduction) versus mitosis (asexual reproduction). They analyze the genetic advantages of variation and map out genetic inheritance via genetic crosses and Punnett squares.		and healthy relationships			
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