

Part of the Branches Education Group



RSE POLICY



Approved By	Will Riley	Head Teacher	June2026
Amendments Made			
Linked Policies	Curriculum Policy		
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1.0 BACKGROUND

This policy sets out the framework for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) at Maple n School. The aim is to provide clarity about how our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum is devised and delivered throughout the school.

1.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, these definitions apply:

- PSHCEE: Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education,
- RSHE: Relationships, sex and health education,
- Health education: is learning about physical health and mental well-being,
- Relationships education: is learning about the social, emotional, physical and legal aspects of human relationships. This includes friendships, family life and relationships with other children and adults,
- RSE: Relationships and sex education is learning about the social, emotional and physical aspects of growing up, including relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health,
- Sex education: Sex education is learning about adolescence, reproduction, pregnancy and birth, preventing unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

See also our **Curriculum Policy**.

1.2 Statutory Guidance

In September 2020, the DfE launched statutory guidance for the teaching of 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education'. The guidance on the 'Health Education' aspect does not apply to independent schools like ours*. However, we have found the sections on Health Education useful and may refer to these when planning both RSE and PSHCEE. There will be some inevitable overlap in the two subject areas, which are ultimately about helping pupils to learn to keep themselves safe and well. *We will also refer to the NSPCC, 'Talk Relationships Whole School Approach Framework', published 22 April 2024.*

**Our school must meet the Independent School Standards (ISS) as set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.*

1.3 Consultation with Parents/ Carers

Like all schools, we are required by law to consult with parents and carers about our approach to delivering RSE. We are committed to consulting parents and carers and helping them to understand when and what we cover as part of the relationships, sex and health education curriculum. We know that parents and carers are pivotal in shaping their child's knowledge and understanding about relationships, sex and health. Schools play a vital supporting role, ensuring children are well-equipped to live independently in our ever-increasingly complex world.

Ultimately, we want to work with our parents and carers to ensure that children are safe, healthy and able to manage their lives in a positive way. To support this, we will review our policy and curriculum offer annually, to ensure they remain effective in meeting pupils' needs and interests. Every September, we will let parents and carers know that when the policies have been reviewed, updated and the drafts are uploaded to our school website. We will build in a window of opportunity for all parents and carers to respond with their views before publishing the final versions.

Parents and carers will be given other opportunities to learn more and ask questions about how we decide on the content of the RSE curriculum, and how it is delivered. We will notify parents/ carers when RSE topics will be taught and provide a summary of the content we will cover. We will provide opportunities for viewing and discussing examples of RSE learning resources, including those related to teaching sensitive topics.

Parents/ carers will receive information setting out the parental right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory elements of RSE. Parents of pupils joining our school will receive the letter as part of their child's admission information during induction. This will help keep all parents/ carers fully informed. As the school becomes established, we will consider additional forms of communication, including newsletters and open evenings, providing parents and carers with further opportunities to discuss the subject matter and ask any questions.

We understand that parents and carers may have concerns about some aspects of RSE and we will listen and carefully consider beliefs, views and feelings. However, as a school, we will ultimately make the final decision about what will be taught and when. This will be informed by our statutory obligations as well as parental views and the needs of our pupils.

Progress updates will be provided during Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Annual Reviews, and as part of our annual reporting to parents/carers.

1.4 Legal Obligations and Parental Right to Withdraw

In 2020, the Government introduced some compulsory changes affecting all schools. The Relationships, Sex and Health Education Regulations (2019), under the Children and Social Work Act (2017) means that Relationships and Health Education are now compulsory for all pupils across the primary and secondary age range.

RSE forms an important part of the curriculum. We hope that all pupils will take part in all aspects of these lessons as they would for all other subjects. We acknowledge the rights parents and carers have, as below.

From September 2020, parents of primary and/ or secondary aged pupils will not be able to withdraw their children from any aspect of Relationships Education or Health Education. This includes learning about the changing adolescent body, puberty, and developing and nurturing healthy friendships and relationships.

Parents of primary and/ or secondary aged pupils will not be able to withdraw their child from any aspect of the National Curriculum for Science.

Following discussion with us and providing there is written notification to the Headteacher, parents will be able to withdraw their child from any or all aspects of Sex Education, except those elements above, provided as part of the Science curriculum, up to and until three terms before their child reaches 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 records of any discussions and/ or requests from parents and carers. We will provide the pupil with appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Further information can be found in **Appendix 2 – Compulsory Aspects of RSE**. This section provides a summary of the compulsory aspects of RSE at the different age ranges/ stages of education, as set out by the DfE.

1.5 Aims and Intent of our RSHE Curriculum

In developing and delivering our RSHE curriculum, our aims are to:

- deliver age appropriate, high-quality RSE content as part of the school's curriculum,

- meet our legal obligations relating to RSE,
- undertake effective consultation and take account of parents/ carers' views,
- use reliable sources of information are used to provide pupils with accurate information,
- use a range of resources appropriate to pupils' ages, needs and abilities,
- ensure pupils know how to keep themselves safe and well,
- ensure pupils know how to seek help if they need it,
- provide pupils with opportunities to engage positively in sensitive discussions, supporting them to have the confidence to ask questions. This should help them to gain a clear understanding, and dispel any "playground myths" or misconceptions,
- support pupils to build on and remember learning to help them to be well prepared for their future lives as adults.

See Appendix 1 – Summary of how we plan to deliver the RSHE curriculum, in line with DfE guidance.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that:

- staff have an appropriate level of expertise and knowledge to organise and deliver RSHE lessons,
- all pupils are making good progress and achieving expected outcomes,
- requests from parents/ carers to withdraw a child from non-statutory sex education lessons are managed effectively with suitable alternative learning provided.

2.2 The PSHCEE Lead

The PSHCEE Lead will ensure that RSHE is well planned and sequenced, both as part of overall long-term plans and schemes of work. With the support of the Headteacher and senior leaders, the PSHCEE Lead is responsible for ensuring that RSHE is taught consistently well across the school and is suitably resourced. This might include liaising with and supporting staff and visiting professionals delivering key elements of the RSHE lessons. The PSHCEE Lead will work closely with others to ensure subject matter complements that delivered elsewhere in National Curriculum subjects.

They will work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

2.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** will work closely with senior leaders, PSHCEE Lead to ensure that all aspects of the planned curriculum are suitable for individual pupils. They will plan with the PSHCEE Lead effective delivery, in a manner which is sensitive and mindful of pupil backgrounds and any adverse childhood experiences or possible abuse.

2.4 Teachers

Teaching staff responsible for delivering RSHE lessons must recognise the importance and value of RSE. They must seek support, advice, training and any additional professional development, wherever necessary to help them to deliver well-prepared, high quality learning experiences at all times.

2.5 Training Lead

Branches Education Group has a Training Lead who will work closely with the Headteacher to ensure that teaching staff:

- who plan and deliver RSHE have an appropriate level of expertise and knowledge.
- attend suitable training, learning and development opportunities delivered in-house or externally.

2.6 The Proprietor and School Governance

The Proprietor has provided a clear process for ensuring sound governance of the school. Monitoring and evaluation opportunities are built into the cycle of improvement and the half-termly school governance meetings. The Governance Chair will hold the Headteacher and leadership team to account through scrutiny of all reviews of content, delivery and pupil outcomes in RSE. The Chair will report back to the Proprietor, confirming that that all requirements continue to be met in line with this policy and DfE guidance.

3.0 DELIVERY OF CURRICULUM PLANS - IMPLEMENTATION

See section 1.7 for our curriculum aims. RSE is carefully planned and delivered mainly through PSHCEE. These lessons have weekly timetable lessons for all pupils.

3.1 The Place of RSHE in our Curriculum

RSE might be taught as part of a combination of topic areas, with some topics planned and delivered discretely. Staff will always take into full consideration the age and emotional maturity of pupils. Additional teaching might take place as part of assemblies, Science, Religious Studies and other areas of the curriculum. Our approach to teaching RSHE will always be sensitive and carefully planned to ensure pupils' needs are met appropriately. **Appendix 3** Curriculum Map – long-term plan of RSHE within the curriculum.

3.2 Curriculum Delivery

The way we deliver our RSHE curriculum will:

- be factual, objective, age and needs appropriate, non-judgemental and inclusive,
- support pupils to ask questions in a safe environment,
- be through a variety of approaches, including distancing techniques and/ or use of classroom question boxes. We will encourage pupils to provide their name but even anonymously, this provides pupils with a mechanism to ask any questions or raise issues, which they might find embarrassing,
- ensure that pupils' views and feelings are listened to,

- support pupils to take part in discussion, with ground rules being developed and shared with pupils as part of best practice. Establishing ground rules helps the management of appropriate discussion, with personal questions or comments being managed in a sensitive way,
- ensure that core knowledge is broken down into smaller units, which are manageable,
- provide opportunities to revisit and build on previous learning, supporting clear progression,
- be sequenced carefully, within a planned scheme of work, linked to other curriculum areas where relevant,
- include sufficient and well-identified opportunities and contexts for pupils to embed new knowledge so that they can apply it with confidence in real-life situations.
- address issues proactively and in a timely way, in line with pupils' age, needs and development.
- be in small classes which are grouped carefully by teaching staff, leaders and the DSL, where appropriate,
- consider the nature of the topic and group pupils according to gender, or provide whole class or one to one delivery,
- involve consideration of the cultural, religious or personal background of pupils, as well as their age, special educational needs (SEND) or additional needs,
- be by using carefully selected resources which are suitable for the needs of the pupils being taught. At no time will any inappropriate/ illegal images, videos or other materials be used in any circumstances,
- in line with all related school policies,
- not stigmatise any pupil based on their background, home circumstances or needs. Subject matter and delivery will be sensitive in reflecting that some children may have a different structure of support around them to others, e.g. children in care or young carers,
- take account of pupils who might be more susceptible to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Staff will identify appropriate action to mitigate this,
- support pupils to understand why victim blaming is always wrong. Staff will ensure balance when teaching pupils about making sensible decisions to stay safe, e.g. online, whilst being clear that it is never the fault of any child who is abused.
- be mindful that pupils might be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. All pupils should feel that the content is relevant to them and explored at a timely point, in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner,
- include content related to LGBT+, which is fully integrated into a range of topics; not stand alone or one-off learning,
- be proactive in challenging perceived derogatory views about the legally protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, through exploration of, and development of mutual respect for those different to themselves,
- foster healthy and respectful communication between pupils and others,
- 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,
- raise awareness of issues such as sexism, misogyny, homophobia, gender stereotypes, sexual violence and harassment (including online), with positive action taken to build a school culture within which these are not tolerated,
- raise awareness of the issues of sexting and youth produced sexual imagery, which are not taught in isolation and instead are taught as part of a developmental PSHCEE programme, with all recent government guidance carefully considered.

3.3 Use of External Professionals

We will seek ways to enhance curriculum delivery, by bringing in professionals with specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging pupils in some elements of RSE. We might access support from the NHS or local specialist services to provide advice, training or continuing professional development (CPD) for teaching staff. Other specialist provision can be sourced from school nurses and representatives from organisations like the NSPCC, who have a range of resources and workshops, including the “Speak Out/ Stay Safe” programme.

External speakers will not replace school staff, they will be used only to enhance the teaching we provide in some topic areas. School staff will always be present throughout any RSE sessions delivered by external professionals. Staff will make visitors clear about the approach to confidentiality and the school processes for sharing information or reporting concerns in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Similarly, we will consider whether information sharing is necessary and will follow our Data Protection Policy.

Suitable vetting will take place, before introducing visitors or external professionals to support delivery of any aspect of the curriculum. This will include checks to validate the person’s credentials in line with the usual policies and procedures.

We will discuss with the visitor the details of how they intend to deliver their sessions and ensure that content is appropriate to pupils’ age and needs. Teaching delivered by external experts will fit with the planned curriculum and provisions of this protocol. The school will request and scrutinise learning materials and plans any visitor will use.

Where external agencies already work with any pupils, they will be consulted by a senior leader, or the DSL to ensure RSE content is delivered in an appropriate way.

5.0 SAFEGUARDING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Keeping children safe is at the forefront of all we do. The RSHE 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 broader curriculum. Teaching staff are made aware of common adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including family breakdown, bereavement, and exposure to violence in the home. We understand that pupils who have experienced problems at home may need and rely on school more as a key source of support.

Any subject matter which could be related to safeguarding is carefully planned with oversight from the PSHCEE Lead and the DSL. The DSL is likely to have knowledge of trusted professionals, services and high-quality local resources that could be used to support RSE delivery. The DSL will also have sound knowledge and understanding of any local issues which may be appropriate to address in lessons.

The DSL liaises with the PSHCEE Lead about the circumstances of individual pupils as required, including when and how adverse childhood experiences may be affecting any individual pupil and so may be influencing how they experience these in topic material. Additional professional advice will be sought if needed as related to those pupils, including support and advice from internal and external clinicians.

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 an increased number of safeguarding reports. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and related procedures must always be followed. Without exception, concerns or disclosures made within or as a result of RSHE or PSHCE lessons must be shared

with the DSL. Staff ensure pupils are clear about how to raise their concerns, make a report and how any report will be managed. 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.

6.0 RESPONDING TO DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

The PSHCEE Lead will advise staff about different types of questions, including those which are appropriate and inappropriate in a class setting. Staff will be advised on how to ask and respond to questions, using agreed ground rules with pupils to support the process. Depending on the nature of the questions asked, staff will use their skill and discretion to determine whether a question should be answered immediately. They might decide to inform the pupil that they will come back to their question at a later time. The staff member will decide to discuss possible responses to questions with a parent or carer, the PSHCEE Lead, the DSL or a member of the leadership team. Questions will be followed up with responses as appropriate, either with the individual pupil, with a small groups or whole class.

7.0 ASSESSMENT AND DELIVERY IMPACT

We have high expectations of pupil progress and outcomes in RSHE, as we do for all areas of the curriculum. We monitor the quality of teaching and learning, as well as the work pupils produce in RSHE. Our curriculum delivery builds on prior knowledge and learning, acquired by pupils in RSHE, PSHCEE and other subjects. Pupils are provided with regular feedback on their progress.

Assessment is used to identify learning and progress. It supports staff to identify where more support, interventions or additional challenge might help a pupil to learn and make better progress. Whilst there is no formal examined assessment for RSHE, teachers will assess all outcomes to capture progress. Assessment can take many forms including question and answer, tests, quizzes, written assignments, self-review, peer evaluation, mind-maps, presentations/ role-play, pupil interviews and learning portfolios, as appropriate.

We know that much of the impact of learning in RSHE and PSHCEE will not always be demonstrated in school. Much of the learning will underpin decisions and actions individuals make when they are adults in the world beyond school. To this end, we try to track pupils' destinations well after they have left school. Our focus is on ensuring they are in education, employment or training, and leading successful lives as adults. Through follow up and discussions, we try to ascertain success and whether former pupils have been able to apply learning in the community or at home as appropriate.

8.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

8.1 Monitoring

The Headteacher will ensure that support and oversight are in place for the PSHCEE Lead to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in RSHE. The overall quality of RSHE provision is also subject to regular and effective self-evaluation as part of termly review of all subjects as part of the quality

assurance self-review cycle. Monitoring will take various forms, including feedback from lesson visits and speakers, learning walks, planning and work scrutiny, pupil and parent feedback and a review of the progress pupils make.

8.2 Review

The Headteacher, lead teachers, the DSL and those responsible for governance will review:

- how effectively the curriculum is planned and delivered,
- whether staff teaching RSHE are suitably skilled and knowledgeable,
- whether and how well the RSHE curriculum reflects national guidance, local priorities and pupils' needs,
- if all pupils are being taught the curriculum as intended,
- the quality of teaching and whether it exemplifies best practice,
- whether teaching is consistently good across all class groups
- the suitability and accessibility of RSHE teaching and learning materials.

Maple School will review this policy at least annually, to ensure it continues to reflect guidance and best practice.

8.3 National Review

The DfE formed an independent expert advisory panel in 2025 to advise on the review of the statutory curriculum for relationships, sex and health* education (*note, health will be taught as part of PSHCEE at our school). The DfE intend the outcome of the review to inform refinements to the current guidance, e.g. are the right topic areas covered? The intention of the DfE is to bring even greater clarity on how to teach sensitive subject matter and engage with parents and carers positively. Outcomes of that review will inform our own future policy and practice.

As the school becomes established, we will seek opportunities for pupils to be consulted. This might include completing a questionnaire and discussion with the School Council, as part of a pupil focus group (School Council) and inviting parents/carers to complete a questionnaire.

9.0 GUIDANCE AND REFERENCES

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), (DfE, 2025)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (DfE, 2019) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>
- Talk Relationships Whole-School Approach Framework, NSPCC, 22 April 2024
- The Independent School Standards Guidance for Independent Schools (DfE, 2019)
- Principles of Good RSE (Sex Education Forum, 2017)
- Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges (Ofsted, 2021)
- Sexual violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in schools and colleges (DfE, 2021)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE, 2017)
- Three Steps to RSHE Success (Sex Education Forum, 2021)
- Sexting in Schools and Colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people (UKCCIS, 2016)

- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE, 2014)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE, 2015)
- National Curriculum in England – Key Stages 1-4 (DfE, 2014)
- 16-19 Study Programmes Guidance (DfE/ ESFA, 2019)

10.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of Key Content - how we plan to deliver the RSHE curriculum, in line with DfE guidance.

Our curriculum is planned in a way that ensures the key content is taught at the appropriate time for individual pupils. The key content is outlined below and is provided within the DfE's 2019 statutory guidance 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education'. This does not include related content taught as part of the National Curriculum for Science or related content taught as part of Health Education (PSHCEE).

Appendix 2: Compulsory Aspects of RSHE

This table summarises the compulsory aspects of RSE, as set out by the DfE.

	KS1	KS2	KS3	KS4
Relationship education	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.
Health Education (delivered as part of PSHCEE)	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.
Science – Reproduction	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.	Must be taught. No parental right to withdraw.
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 16th birthday.

PSHCEE Mandatory Requirements Taught Across the Curriculum

Physical Education (PE)

The characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardio-vascular ill health.

The positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress.

The benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.

Science

The science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

Awareness of the dangers of drugs which are prescribed but still present serious health risks.

The facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination.

How the different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDs are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including condom use) and the importance of and facts about testing.

The prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contact them and key facts about treatment.

Key facts about puberty, the changing adolescent body and menstrual well-being.

The facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women and menopause.

Food Technology

How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.

Functional Living Skills

About personal hygiene, germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread, treatment and prevention of infection, and about antibiotics.

Dental Hygiene – standalone day

Dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including healthy eating and regular check-ups at the dentist.

How to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer.

Emotional Literacy

How to talk about emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.

How to recognise the early signs of mental health and well-being concerns.