



Relationships and Sex Education Policy (including Health Education)

Date Ratified by Governors –

Date last reviewed – May 2026

Date for next review – May 2029

To be reviewed every 3 years

Author: Andy Scott

School Context

Watling View School is a 2-19 maintained special school in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The school currently caters for pupils, with a wide range of complex and profound learning difficulties. These include severe autism, complex medical conditions, physical and mobility difficulties, as well as severe developmental delay.

Statutory Requirements

This policy document sets out the approach we take Relationships and Sex Education as a school, including how we apply the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education; Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2025). This guidance details separate sets of expectations for maintained primary schools and maintained secondary schools. As an all through school catering for both primary aged and secondary aged pupils, the relevant provisions apply for pupils of different ages in different parts of our school.

As a maintained school, under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 we must provide;

- Relationships Education to primary aged pupils
- Relationships and Sex Education to secondary aged pupils
- Health Education to all pupils

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state, as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996. We must also have regard to our legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

At Watling View School, we teach Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education as set out in this policy.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We recognise that in our context, we must be especially mindful of the special educational needs and disabilities of our pupils as we craft our Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education curriculum. Our pupils may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their needs, and it is therefore of paramount importance that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to feel confident and secure in their relationships and interactions, and be able to advocate for themselves and seek support if they feel uncomfortable. We also recognise that there is a need to tailor content and teaching for pupils to ensure that teaching is always sensitive, age-appropriate, and developmentally appropriate, this is particularly pertinent for some of our learners and the content of Sex Education in the Upper School.

At Watling View School there is no hard cut off between primary aged and secondary aged class groups, and classes in our lower middle school department sometimes include both older primary aged pupils and younger secondary pupils. With this reality to navigate, and being mindful of the need for sensitive and developmentally appropriate teaching, our approach to meeting the different requirements for primary and secondary aged pupils is summarised as follows;

- Relationships Education is taught to all primary aged pupils
- Relationships and Sex Education is taught to all pupils in our Upper School department (Key Stages 4-5 / Years 10-14)
- Older pupils in the Lower Middle School department (Key Stages 3 / Years 7-9) are normally taught Relationships Education only
- On a case-by-case basis where a need is identified, some older pupils in the Lower Middle School department (Key Stages 3 / Years 7-9) are taught elements of Relationships and Sex Education in the form of personalised provision rather than whole class teaching.
- Health Education is taught to all pupils

Definitions

At Watling View our Relationships Education programme (primary) is defined as teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other peers and adults. Children learn about relationships as well as the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, human sexuality and sexual health in an age-appropriate way. This goes beyond learning about relationships, to include puberty, how a baby is conceived and born, how the body grows from birth to old age, body ownership, and safeguarding.

At Watling View our Relationship and Sex Education programme (secondary) is defined as teaching about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. Young people are equipped with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being. Relationship education doesn't involve explaining details of different forms of sexual activity, but could cover how knowledge about how to keep themselves safe and how to communicate unwanted touching or relationships.

- RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.
- RSE involves a combination of sharing information, and exploring issues and values.
- RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

School Ethos and Values

Our broad and balanced Relationships Education programme (primary), and Relationship and Sex Education programme (secondary) and policy is designed to reflect the wider social, spiritual, moral, cultural and religious backgrounds of our school community alongside the physical and mental development of our pupils. We aim to teach our pupils the knowledge they require in order to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-advocacy.

Watling View School recognises the educational entitlement of all pupils to receive RSE which is current, meaningful and relevant. We believe that by carefully considering our programme and its delivery we can play an important part in each of our pupil's development into adulthood. We promote respect for diversity, and encourage a sense of compassion and understanding of others, and a deep respect for human worth and dignity. We recognise and respect every member of the school community's ethnicity, cultural and religious values and sexual orientation.

Curriculum Intent

The intent of our curriculum is that every pupil will access and learn from an appropriate and balanced Relationship and Sex Education curriculum, relevant to their current developmental ages and needs. Relationship and Sex Education within the school will be relevant and accessible to all young people, sensitive in the use of sex education resources, and ensure that cultural diversity is reflected.

Our RSE curriculum seeks to;

- Enable pupils to have confidence and value themselves
- Promote healthy relationships, within the family and beyond
- Promote inclusivity around gender, sexuality and family units
- Celebrate a range of families and relationships
- Promote positive mental health and well-being for all our pupils
- Consider parent/carer views and needs/wants, whilst consistently tackling potential barriers to open conversations
- Enable our pupils to feel comfortable asking questions and exploring their own thoughts and feelings to get a better understanding of themselves.
- Ensure that the moral framework within which sex education is taught is inclusive not exclusive.
- Support our pupils to leave Watling View with the best factual knowledge, through careful planning, differentiation and consolidation of previous learning whilst making them aware of the range of moral and cultural frameworks within society.
- Ensure our pupils are supported, not undermined, in their cultural identities.
- Enable our pupils to avoid and resist unwanted advances and bullying, including cyberbullying
- Encourage pupils to develop and clarify their values and attitudes towards sex, sexuality and relationships and to respect and empathise with those of others.
- Promote a sense of personal responsibility within our pupils
- Develop pupil's self-esteem and respect for self and others
- Enable our pupils to explore their attitudes and values, and those of others
- Develop promote the use of pupil's interpersonal skills
- Promote and develop pupil's moral perspective
- Equip pupils with knowledge and tools to navigate online spaces safely
- Teach pupils accurate and appropriate information about how the body works, sexuality, reproduction and aspects of sexual health

Curriculum Implementation

Within the statutory guidance, it is made clear that schools are free to determine how to deliver the required content within the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. At Watling View School, Relationships Education (primary) and Relationships and Sex Education (secondary) are not taught as discrete separate subjects. They are instead primarily taught within our Personal, Social, Health, Emotional, Economic and

Citizenship (PSHEEC) curriculum. The following paragraphs and tables describe how that works for different age groups in different departments of the school.

Lower Middle School, including EYFS

In EYFS Relationship Education is an integral part of the Personal, Social, Health, Emotional, Economic and Citizenship (PSHEEC) curriculum. It is taught within the framework of Foundation programmes, e.g., personal, social and emotional development. At this stage, pupils learn the differences between boys and girls, learn the names of their body parts and develop self-awareness. This is taught through everyday classroom activities, group work and individual interactions with pupils. Stories, role play and doll play are used to explore difference in people.

In Lower Middle School pupils continue their PSHEEC curriculum, and all pupils have timetabled PSHEEC lessons each week (or the equivalent area of the ImPACTS curriculum – Personal, Social and Emotional Wellbeing). This develops to include the biological aspects of sex education included in the Science curriculum. At this stage, pupils are taught an awareness that humans can produce babies and that those babies grow into children and then adults. Specific, structured lessons are planned for effective coverage of RSE facts and information, using approaches such as group work, practical activities, role-play, doll play and stories. The PSHEEC curriculum and Relationships Education programme continue to support pupils to develop their personal and social skills, and pupils are given the opportunity to explore values and attitudes.

On a case-by-case basis where a need is identified, and in consultation with families, some older pupils in the Lower Middle School department (Key Stages 3 / Years 7-9) are taught elements of Relationships and Sex Education in the form of personalised provision rather than whole class teaching.

Upper School

In Upper School the biological aspects of Relationship and Sex Education (from the National Science Curriculum) include the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence, including hormones and the control and promotion of fertility. Pupils are taught about peer pressure and risk-taking behaviour, such as drugs, smoking and alcohol. Pupils continue to have structured PSHEEC / PSEWB (ImPACTS) lessons each week. Biological aspects of sex are taught in PSHEEC lessons and through some ASDAN modules. In PSHEEC pupils have opportunities to explore values and attitudes. Aspects of relationships, love and family life are considered. Pupils develop social and communication skills, decision-making skills and interpersonal skills for managing relationships. A variety of teaching resources are used to support teaching, along with role-play, circle time, discussion and opportunities for external facilitators to share information and experiences. Pupils are taught in both class groups and mixed groups. Pupils may be placed in single gender groups if deemed appropriate.

Curriculum Coverage and Long-Term Curriculum Objectives

For a full breakdown of the different topics taught as part of our Relationships Education and Sex and Relationships Education programmes, the following documents are included as an appendix to this policy;

1. Appendix 1 – RSE and Health Education Curriculum Coverage

This document maps out where required knowledge areas specified by the DfE are taught at Watling View School – primarily within PSHEEC curriculum topics, but also across some aspects of the Science and Computing curriculum.

2. Appendix 2 – PSHEEC Long Term Curriculum Objectives

This provides further details on how PSHEEC topics are broken down into specific learning objectives taught within each department

These documents clearly demonstrate how Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education are taught within the wider PSHEEC curriculum rather than as their own separate subjects. However, it is

important to note that in the summer of every year the PSHEEC half-termly topic is Relationships Education or Relationships and Sex Education.

Health Education

Watling View doesn't have a separate health education policy and incorporates it within this policy. Health education is incorporated both within PSHEECE lessons alongside other areas of the curriculum including PE, Science and day to day teaching in line with personalised targets.

In Lower / Middle School in Spring 2 the Topic title of Healthy Choices includes half termly topics of; A well-balanced lifestyle, How Can I keep my environment healthy, five a day and how can I keep myself healthy. Areas which are included in these topics include general wellbeing, wellbeing online, physical health and fitness, healthy eating, health protection and prevention and personal safety.

For pupils in the Upper school Health and wellbeing as well as having cross curriculum links it is also taught in PSHEEC primarily during Spring 2 with topics including; Arranging a healthy well-being event, A well-balanced lifestyle- what services can help me, how can I keep myself healthy - planning for the future, A well balanced lifestyle – my choices and their consequences and Healthy eating and the effects of unhealthy eating. Content within these topics include mental wellbeing, wellbeing online, physical health and fitness, healthy eating, drugs and alcohol, health protection and prevention, personal safety, developing bodies and basic first aid.

Curriculum Impact

The impact of our Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education programmes is monitored and evidence through the use of school-wide assessment and recording resources such as Personal Learning Goals, Curriculum Assessment Frameworks and Evidence for Learning. Pupils' progress through the wider PSHEEC curriculum including RSE is assessed on a termly basis, and all pupils always have personalised 'satellite' targets in either PSHEEC or PSEWB – as well as SEMH 'journey' target linked to their EHCP outcomes. See our Assessment policy for more information about target-setting and assessment. Senior leaders and the PSHEEC curriculum lead at the school regularly conduct a range of exercises to monitor the impact of RSE curriculum, such as work scrutinies, deep dives, and EFL reviews.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School Governing Body, Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Subject Leader for PSHEEC are responsible for the maintenance and implementation of this policy. These are some of the roles that they fulfil;

Governors;

- Fulfil wider responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 for ensuring that the school strives to do the best for all the pupils, irrespective of disability, educational needs, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity religion or sexual identity.
- The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the Head Teacher to account for its implementation

Head Teacher;

- The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from components of RSE (see below)

- Maintains overview of PSHEEC curriculum and ensures statutory RSE requirements are fulfilled
- Leads on curriculum development and planning for RSE within PSHEEC
- Produces and updates long term and medium-term planning documents
- Supports teachers and other colleagues to implement the RSE curriculum within PSHEEC lessons
- Delivers parent and carer workshops on RSE
- Monitors pupil progress in this subject area
- Delivers training to colleagues who teach RSE in classrooms around the school
- Manages and develops specialist resources to support the teaching of RSE

Working with young people and their families

The school is committed to working with parents and carers to ensure each young person receives a consistent approach; one that is sensitive to their needs as well as being appropriate to their level of understanding. It is important that staff and parents / carers feel confident with the task in hand so that the young person feels secure.

Parents are notified when particular aspects of Relationship and Sex Education are to be taught. The teaching of Relationship and Sex Education is not a task for the school in isolation, and we seek to work with parents and carers to ensure that the teaching of Relationship and Sex Education reflects parental expectations and complements teaching and values held at home. We seek to hold a parents and carers workshop on Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education in order to keep families informed about our approach to this part of the curriculum, and to provide a space for feedback and input to be contributed.

It is the school's practice to notify families when any updates are made to this policy, and we commit to engage constructively with any questions or concerns raised at such times. This would usually happen on a case-by-case basis, but an open meeting on the subject might be scheduled if there was judged to be sufficient demand or interest.

Curriculum Materials

Parents and carers can request to view all RSHE and health education materials which are used to teach their child. At the start of the topic, we will send information to parents and carers about the overarching content of the topic alongside types of resources which could be used.

Right to be excused from sex education

Parents and carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all aspects of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE – up to until three terms before the child will turn 16. This right applies to the Sex Education aspect of the programme only, and not the wider programme of Relationships Education. There is no right to request that children are withdrawn from relationships education at primary age, or from the Relationships Education aspect of Relationships and Sex Education at secondary age. Should a pupil who is withdrawn from sex education ask questions regarding topics which they have been withdrawn from staff will make contact with parents and make them aware before answering any questions. Appendix 1 provides highlights the areas of sex education for which parents can request to withdraw their child from.

Where parents or carers wish to make a request that their secondary aged child is withdrawn from the Sex Education element of Relationships and Sex Education, this is the process that should be followed;

1. A parent or carer who wishes to withdraw their child should submit a written request addressed to the head teacher explaining that they would like to discuss their child's participation in sex education lessons at school.

2. Upon receiving any such request, parents or carers will be invited to attend a meeting or hold a phone call, where the school will respectfully hear and understand the family's views or concerns.
3. The school will offer more information, explanation and reassurance around our approach towards teaching sex education, including why it is felt to be beneficial for pupils.
4. Following this discussion, if parents or carers still wish to proceed with withdrawing their child from the teaching of sex education, the request will usually be granted (unless there are exceptional circumstances as judged by the head teacher) and arrangements for alternative provision will be made.