Pathways School

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Policy Monitoring

Date policy last reviewed: June 2026

Signed by:

Neil Jones	Headteacher	Date:	June 2026
Saima Ali	Chair of governors	Date:	June 2026

Date of next review: June 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedure.

1. Introduction

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) forms part of the wider Personal Social Health and Economic Education (PSHE) curriculum at Pathways School.

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, 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.

We believe that it is everyone's right to understand their bodies, sexuality, and relationships, regardless of whether they have special educational needs. Disability does not rule out sexual feelings, sexual needs or in many cases sexual capabilities. Relationship and Sex Education can play an important role in preparing young people for a safe, productive, fulfilling life. It can empower them to take control and make informed decisions about their sexuality and relationships freely and responsibly. A comprehensive RSE curriculum aims to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being and dignity, develop healthy and respectful relationships, and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) at our school are to:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare students for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

Pathways School is based on the principles of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). RSE is taught based on each individual student's specific context and learning needs.

2. Statutory Requirements

The RSE Policy complies with the Department of Education's Guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education issued in 2019. This statutory guidance was issued under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

In addition to this, as a secondary school, we must provide RSE to all students under section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010

3. Links to other school policies and practices

- PSHE Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- SEN Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

4. Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students, and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance

2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations

3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy

4. Student consultation – we investigated what exactly students want from their RSE

5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

5. Curriculum

The Pathways School Relationships and Sex Education curriculum is based on UNESCO's *International technical guidance on sexuality education*[1]. The guidance has been developed to assist education, health and other relevant authorities in the development and implementation of school-based and out-of-school comprehensive sexuality education programmes and materials. It is a framework based on international best practices and is intended to support curriculum developers to create and adapt curricula appropriate to their context, to design and implement good quality relationship and sex-education in their settings. It provides guidance on how to develop developmentally appropriate RSE curricula, teaching and learning materials and programmes that are culturally responsive.

The guidance contains a comprehensive set of key concepts, topics and learning objectives to guide development of curricula for learners aged 5 to 18+. It promotes a learner-centred approach to education, which is perfectly aligned with the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA).

5.1 Key Concepts

The guidance outlines eight key concepts which are equally important;

1. Relationships
2. Values, Rights, Culture and Sexuality

[1] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260770

3. Understanding Gender
4. Violence and Staying Safe
5. Skills for Health and Well-being
6. The Human Body and Development
7. Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour
8. Sexual and Reproductive Health

The following table provides an Overview of key concepts, topics and learning objectives:

Relationships	**Values, Rights, Culture and Sexuality**	**Understanding Gender**	**Violence and staying safe**
• Families • Families, love and romantic relationships • Tolerance, inclusion and respect • Long-term commitment and parenting	• Values • and sexuality • Human rights and sexuality • Culture, society and sexuality	• The social construction of gender and gender norms • Gender equality, stereotypes and bias • Gender-based violence	• Violence • Consent, privacy and body integrity • Safe use of ICT
Skills for Health and Well-being	**The Human Body and Development**	**Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour**	**Sexual and Reproductive Health**
• Norms and peer influence on sexual behaviour • Decision-making • Communication, refusal and negotiation skills • Media literacy and sexuality • Finding help and support	• Sexual and reproductive anatomy and physiology • Reproduction • Puberty • Body image	• Sex, sexuality and sexual life cycle • Sexual behaviour and sexual response	• Pregnancy and Pregnancy prevention • HIV and Aids stigma, treatment and support • Understading, recognising and reducing the risk of STIs

5.2 Entitlement and equal opportunity

We promote the needs and interests of all students in line with our Equality and Diversity policy. Teaching considers the age, ability, readiness, and cultural backgrounds of children to ensure that all can fully access the RSE provision. We will use RSE education to address diversity issues and to ensure equality for all by including relevant content covering equality and diversity within our curriculum.

We consider the level of differentiation needed, and content and delivery are always adapted to suit the needs of the students. Teachers will work with individual students where required, and if appropriate.

5.3 Inclusive curriculum

We will ensure that:

- All students are encouraged to develop and display attitudes of mutual knowledge, understanding and acceptance;
- Staff understand and tailor their interaction and teaching in accordance with the students' religious, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage;
- Teaching and learning methods take account of the diversity needs of our students and encourage positive attitudes to diversity and race equality;
- The resources, images and contexts used are inclusive and diverse, mirroring the students' own lives and offering insight into the lives of others;
- Individual learning plans are based on diverse backgrounds, experiences, and cultural perspectives. In accordance with the Equalities Act 2010, issues related to gender stereotyping and sexual orientation discrimination will be addressed where appropriate.

6. Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

Because PSHE including RSE education works within students' real-life experiences, it is essential to establish a safe learning environment. We aim create a safe and supportive learning environment by having clear ground rules and confidentiality within lessons that is understood and applied by all teachers and students that have the cognitive ability to understand the importance of rules and confidentiality. We ensure that where students indicate that they may be vulnerable and at risk, they will get appropriate support by providing them with advice whilst always following the safeguarding/child protection policy. If a student makes a disclosure of sexual abuse or demonstrates behaviour that is concerning during a RSE lesson, the school staff will follow the guidelines laid down in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

At Pathways School we believe in collaborating closely with parents/carers and families to ensure the best outcomes for our students and we believe that a joint approach to learning about growing up, keeping safe, relationships and other areas of PSHE including RSE are highly beneficial.

6.1 Use of resources

We **will** consider whether any resources we plan to use:

- Are aligned with the teaching requirements set out in the Department of Education's Guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education issued in 2019
- Would support students in applying their knowledge in different contexts and settings
- Are age-appropriate, given the age, developmental stage and background of our students
- Are evidence-based and contain robust facts and statistics
- Fits into each student's individualised curriculum plan
- Are from credible sources
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches

- Are sensitive to students' experiences and won't provoke distress

6.2 Use of external organisations and materials

We will make sure that an agency and any materials used are appropriate and in line with our legal duties around political impartiality.

The school remains responsible for what is said to students. This includes making sure that any speakers, tools and resources used don't undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We **will**:

- Make appropriate checks and engage with external agencies to make sure that their approach to teaching about RSE is balanced, and it and the resources they intend to use:
    - Are age-appropriate
    - Are in line with students' developmental stage
    - Comply with:
    - This policy
    - The Teachers' Standards
    - The Equality Act 2010
    - The Human Rights Act 1998
    - The Education Act 1996
- Only work with external agencies where we have full confidence in the agency, its approach and the resources it uses
- Make sure that any speakers and resources meet the intended outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum
- Review any case study materials and look for feedback from other people the agency has worked with
- Be clear on:
    - What they're going to say
    - Their position on the issues to be discussed
- Ask to see in advance any materials that the agency may use
- Know the named individuals who will be there, and follow our usual safeguarding procedures for these people
- Conduct a basic online search and address anything that may be of concern to us, or to parents and carers
- Check the agency's protocol for taking pictures or using any personal data they might get from a session
- Remind teachers that they can say "no" or, in extreme cases, stop a session
- Make sure that the teacher is in the room during any sessions with external speakers
- We **won't**, under any circumstances:
- Work with external agencies that take or promote extreme political positions

- Use materials produced by such agencies, even if the material itself is not extreme

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board approves the RSE policy, and holds the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from part or all of the sex education delivered as part of RSE.

7.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from part or all of the sex education delivered as part of RSE,
- Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher.

7.4 Students

Students are expected to engage fully in RSE and, when discussing issues related to RSE, treat others with respect and sensitivity.

8. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from part or all of the sex education delivered as part of RSE, up to and until 3 terms before their child turns 16.

After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 1 of this policy and addressed to the Headteacher.

A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record. The Headteacher will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action.

9. Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Headteacher. The policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher and the Governors.

Appendix 1: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from Relationships and Sex Education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
S			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	