

WESTONBIRT SCHOOL

Senior School Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Relationships and Sex Education in the Senior School, including statutory knowledge by the end of secondary education

Applies to	Senior School (Key Stages 3–5)
Policy owner	Head of PSHE and RSE
Approved by	Head / Proprietor
Date adopted / last reviewed	September 2026 draft
Date of most recent parental consultation	June 2026
Next review due	September 2027, or sooner if statutory guidance changes
Statutory / regulatory basis	Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014; Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance effective September 2026

Policy Review and Revision Record

Version	Date	Review / change	Approval status
2026 draft	September 2026	Separated PSHE and RSE policies; retained curriculum and policy structure	Draft for approval
2026 draft	September 2026	RSE statutory knowledge included in Appendix 1 of RSE policy	Draft for approval

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1. Status and aims

The proprietor makes and keeps this separate written policy under paragraph 2A of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The school has regard to the Department for Education statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance effective 1 September 2026. RSE aims to equip pupils to form respectful, safe and nurturing relationships; understand consent, the law and sexual health; recognise harm; and seek help confidently.

2. What pupils learn

Relationships education covers families and committed relationships; friendship and respect; boundaries, privacy and consent; bullying, sexual harassment and violence; coercion and abuse; online relationships, pornography, image sharing and harmful content; equality and protected characteristics; and how to seek help. Sensitive safeguarding content remains part of relationships education where it does not explain the detail of different forms of sexual activity.

Sex education within RSE covers intimate and sexual relationships, choices about sexual activity, contraception, pregnancy and pregnancy options, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, safer sex, sexual and reproductive health, and access to reliable advice and services. Relevant biological reproduction and puberty content is also taught through science and health and wellbeing provision. The School identifies planned sex education content clearly for parents so that they understand the scope of withdrawal.

Teaching is accurate, inclusive and age appropriate. It addresses the facts and law about marriage, consent, exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, domestic abuse, sexual offences and equality. It includes diverse family structures and healthy same-sex relationships, without making assumptions about a pupil or their family. Staff distinguish established facts and law from contested views and do not promote stereotypes.

3. When and how RSE is taught

In Key Stage 3, trained staff teach planned RSE within discrete timetabled PSHE lessons, reinforced through tutor time and assemblies. In Key Stage 4, the programme uses planned assemblies, tutor time and dedicated sessions delivered by trained staff and suitable specialists. In Key Stage 5, tutor time, lectures and dedicated sessions revisit consent, healthy intimate relationships, sexual health and services, coercive control, online risk and preparation for adulthood. Science teachers teach the relevant science curriculum. The PSHE policy describes the delivery model across Key Stages 3 to 5. Appendix 1 below sets out the knowledge expected by the end of secondary education. The School identifies forthcoming sex education content clearly to parents so that they can exercise their right to request withdrawal.

Topics are sequenced before likely exposure to risks and revisited with increasing depth. Delivery may respond to safeguarding trends and pupil needs, with parents informed of material changes and forthcoming sex education content. Ground rules, anonymous questions and careful discussion make lessons safe. Staff do not require personal disclosures and give factual answers appropriate to age and safeguarding needs.

4. Who is responsible

The proprietor ensures that the policy and provision meet the Independent School Standards, consults parents before making or revising this policy, publishes it on the school website and provides a free copy on request. The Head and senior leaders oversee implementation. The Head of PSHE and RSE plans and maps the curriculum, prepares resources and supports staff. Trained teachers and tutors deliver planned content within their competence; the school nurse, science teachers and approved specialists contribute where appropriate. The designated safeguarding lead advises on sensitive content and disclosures. The school retains responsibility when an external provider teaches a session, checking their credentials, materials, safeguarding arrangements and teaching in advance.

5. Safeguarding, inclusion and resources

RSE is accessible to pupils with SEND through reasonable adjustments, suitable language, adapted resources and attention to developmental needs. Teaching respects the Equality Act 2010, different beliefs and family circumstances. Staff follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education, report concerns promptly to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy, and record them on CPOMS. They do not promise absolute confidentiality. Concerns about child-on-child harm follow the school's safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

The school quality assures all materials for factual accuracy, suitability and accessibility, including material supplied by external providers. Parents can view all curriculum materials on request, subject to practical arrangements and copyright; contracts with providers must permit parental inspection. The school offers representative samples and advance information about sex education sessions. Political issues are handled impartially.

6. Parents and the right to request withdrawal

Parents cannot withdraw a pupil from relationships education, from science content, or from health and wellbeing teaching within PSHE. A parent may ask the Head to withdraw their child from some or all sex education delivered as part of RSE. The Head discusses the request with the parent and, where appropriate, the pupil, explains the specific lessons and the possible effects of withdrawal, records the discussion and decision, and ordinarily grants the request. In exceptional circumstances, such as a safeguarding concern or the pupil's particular vulnerability, the Head may refuse it. A withdrawn pupil receives appropriate purposeful education for the relevant sessions.

From three terms before turning 16, a pupil may choose to receive sex education despite an earlier parental request; the school will make pupils aware of this right and arrange teaching if they opt in. Parents may contact the Head in writing to request a discussion; a particular form is not required.

7. Consultation, monitoring and review

The school will give parents this draft standalone RSE policy, including Appendix 1, invite and consider feedback before approval, and seek pupil and staff views. The June 2026 consultation on the combined PSHE and RSE policy will be taken into account; parents will also have the opportunity to comment on this separate policy before it is finalised. The Head of PSHE and RSE monitors coverage and impact through curriculum mapping, pupil feedback, staff review and safeguarding trends. The proprietor approves the final policy and reviews it at least annually and sooner when guidance or provision changes.

8. Documents and approval

Read with the Senior School PSHE Policy; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Child-on-Child Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy; Behaviour and Discipline Policy; SEND Policy; and Visiting Speakers Policy. Policy owner: Head of PSHE and RSE. Status: draft for parental consultation and proprietor approval. Proposed review: September 2027.

Appendix 1 Knowledge by the end of secondary education

Appendix 1 summarises the DfE secondary RSE knowledge expected by the end of secondary education. It is not a lesson timetable; the PSHE policy describes delivery. The full statutory guidance remains authoritative.

Families and committed relationships

- Different forms of stable, committed relationship and their contribution to wellbeing and bringing up children; the choices of marriage and civil partnership, their legal status and protections, and the absence of “common-law marriage” rights through cohabitation alone.
- The law on forced marriage and marriage under 18; how families change through birth, bereavement, separation and new relationships; parenting responsibilities and the importance of early childhood development.
- How to recognise an unsafe relationship, assess trustworthiness and seek help for oneself or others.

Respectful relationships

- The qualities of healthy relationships online and offline, including trust, respect, kindness, honesty, consent, privacy, boundaries, loyalty, communication, reconciliation and ending relationships well.
- Self-esteem, independence, interests and friendships; respectful conduct towards strangers and in public; equality, individual dignity and tolerance of different beliefs.
- Bullying, including online bullying, its effects, bystander responsibilities and routes to help; the influence of stereotypes, misogyny, prejudice and unequal power on relationships.
- Consent alongside care, kindness and attention to another person’s needs; the effects of pornography and some online communities or influencers on sexual expectations and ethics.

Online safety and awareness

- Online rights and responsibilities, privacy and location settings, public and private spaces, fake accounts and AI-generated or idealised content; the lasting consequences of sharing personal information or images.
- The law and harm concerning sexual images of under-18s, including AI-generated images, and sharing adult intimate images without consent; how to report image sharing and obtain help without fear of asking.
- Deepfakes, online misogyny and violent content, pornography, digital escalation of conflict, technology-facilitated bullying, harassment, stalking and control.
- Data collection and targeted advertising, scams and sextortion; risks of AI chatbots, including false intimacy and harmful advice, and critical evaluation of new technology.

Being safe

- How to recognise, communicate and respect boundaries and consent in relationships, including online and early romantic relationships; ways to resist pressure without pressuring others.
- Judging trustworthiness, recognising unsafe or exploitative situations, seeking help in public and private settings, and understanding that abuse is never the victim’s fault.
- Sexual harassment, sexual violence, rape and assault, harmful sexual behaviour, grooming, exploitation, domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking and obsessive unwanted conduct; relevant concepts, law and reporting routes.
- Forced marriage, female genital mutilation, virginity testing and hymenoplasty, their harms and legal status; the danger and criminal law concerning strangulation and suffocation.
- Where to report abuse or worrying behaviour, including one’s own, and where to obtain medical attention and other support.

Intimate and sexual relationships including sexual health

- The age of consent, the choice whether or when to have sex, and the possibility of intimacy without sex; sexual consent, capacity to give, withhold or withdraw it, and the role of care, law, beliefs and values.
- How sexual choices can affect emotional, physical, mental and reproductive health, and that some sexual behaviours can be harmful.

- The range, effectiveness and availability of contraception, including condoms; medically and legally accurate, impartial information on pregnancy choices, including parenting, adoption and abortion.
- Transmission, prevention, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections including HIV; condoms, HIV prevention medicines PrEP and PEP, stigma and access to services.
- The effects of alcohol and drugs on sexual decisions; where to find reliable, confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and support after sexual harm.

Source: DfE statutory RSE guidance effective September 2026, pp. 13–20.

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Appendix 2 Parent request for withdrawal from sex education within RSE

Use this form to ask the Head to withdraw your child from some or all sex education delivered as part of RSE. The School will discuss the request with you before recording its decision and arrangements. This form does not apply to relationships education, science content or health and wellbeing teaching.

To be completed by parent or carer

Pupil name	
Year group and tutor group	
Parent or carer name	
Date	
Sex education from which withdrawal is requested	
Reason for the request	
Other information for the School to consider	
Parent or carer signature	

To be completed by the School

Date and participants in discussion	
Agreed actions and arrangements	
Decision and any follow up	
Head or authorised representative signature and date	

Appendix 3 — Relationships, Sex and Health/Wellbeing Content and the Right to Withdraw

This appendix provides a clear summary for parents and carers. It is a guide to categories of content rather than an exhaustive scheme of work.

A. Relationships Education — no right to withdraw

- Families, caring relationships and different family structures.
- Respectful relationships, friendships and online relationships.
- Privacy, personal boundaries and help-seeking.
- Consent, sexual boundaries and the law on consent.
- Abuse, domestic abuse, coercive control, sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour, and how to report concerns.
- FGM, forced marriage, virginity testing and hymenoplasty — awareness and the law.
- Critical understanding of pornography and its potential influence on expectations of relationships and sex.
- Online relationships and safety, including image-sharing, AI-generated images and deepfakes, sextortion and grooming.
- Sexual orientation, gender reassignment, biological sex and relevant equality law.

B. Health and Wellbeing education provided through PSHE

- Mental wellbeing, emotions, resilience and help-seeking.
- Internet safety and the impact of online activity on wellbeing.
- Physical health, fitness, healthy eating, sleep, dental health and hygiene.
- Drugs, alcohol, smoking, vaping, gambling and related harms.
- Puberty, menstrual health and the changing adolescent body.
- Age-appropriate awareness of self-harm and eating disorders, with signposting to support.
- Basic first aid and emergency response.
- Reproductive health, fertility, menopause and lifestyle factors.

C. Science curriculum — no right to withdraw

- Science curriculum content including biological aspects of human reproduction, puberty and human development.

D. Sex Education delivered as part of RSE — right to request withdrawal

- Explicit teaching about intimate and sexual relationships, including different types of sexual activity where age-appropriate.
- Human reproduction, contraception and sexual health where taught as Sex Education within RSE rather than within Relationships Education or science.
- Choices, responsibilities, consent and decision-making within intimate sexual relationships.

Parents requesting withdrawal from the content in section D should follow section 15. From three terms before a pupil turns 16, the pupil may choose to opt back into Sex Education.