RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION AND HEALTH EDUCATION RSHE POLICY

Orleans Primary School

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ORLEANS PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION, RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) AND HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

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1. Aims

The aims of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education at Orleans Primary School are to:

- provide a safe and supportive framework in which sensitive discussions can take place;
- help pupils develop positive, respectful and caring relationships;
- prepare pupils for the physical and emotional changes associated with growing up and puberty;
- develop pupils' self-respect, self-esteem, confidence, empathy, kindness and integrity;
- help pupils understand and respect their own bodies and those of others;
- teach pupils appropriate and accurate vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies;
- help pupils understand personal boundaries, privacy and bodily autonomy;
- enable pupils to recognise safe and unsafe situations and relationships;
- help pupils recognise and respond to peer pressure;
- teach pupils how to seek help and support when they need it;
- support pupils' physical and mental health and wellbeing;
- develop resilience and healthy ways of coping with difficult emotions and experiences;
- promote healthy lifestyles, including physical activity, nutrition, sleep, hygiene and time outdoors;
- help pupils understand the relationship between physical health and mental wellbeing;

- support pupils to develop safe and responsible behaviours online;
- help pupils recognise harmful or inappropriate online content and behaviour;
- enable pupils to understand the importance of equality, dignity and respect;
- challenge bullying, prejudice, discrimination, stereotypes, sexism and misogyny;
- recognise and respect different families, backgrounds, cultures, beliefs and experiences;
- prepare pupils for the next stage of their education and for adult life.

Our RSHE curriculum is intended to give children the knowledge, language and practical skills they need to make safe, healthy and respectful choices. It is not intended to encourage children to experiment with relationships or sexual behaviour.

At Orleans, RSHE forms an important part of our wider Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) curriculum and contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development.

2. Statutory Requirements and Legal Framework

Orleans Primary School will teach Relationships Education and Health Education in accordance with the statutory requirements applying to primary schools.

The school will have regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance:

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education: Statutory Guidance – effective from 1 September 2026.

The school will also have regard to:

- Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019;
- Education Act 1996;
- Education Act 2002;
- Equality Act 2010;
- National Curriculum for England, including statutory Science requirements;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;

The school recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty. The school will have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- advance equality of opportunity;
- foster good relations between different people.

What is statutory?

At primary school Relationships Education is statutory.

Health Education is statutory.

Relevant Science curriculum content is statutory, including relevant teaching about human growth, puberty and reproduction. Additional Sex Education is not compulsory at primary school. Where Orleans teaches Sex Education in addition to Statutory Science, this will be clearly identified in the curriculum and parents/carers will be informed of the content.

Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from:

- Relationships Education;
- Health Education;
- Statutory Science.

Parents/carers do have the right to request withdrawal from additional Sex Education taught outside the statutory Science curriculum.

3. Policy Development

The school recognises that parents/carers are important partners in the development and delivery of RSHE. The 2026 statutory guidance requires schools to consult parents/carers when developing and reviewing their RSHE policy. It is also good practice to seek the views of staff and pupils.

This policy has been developed through:

1. **Review** – relevant national and local guidance, legislation and safeguarding information were reviewed.
2. **Staff consultation** – staff were given the opportunity to consider the policy and make recommendations.
3. **Parent/carer consultation** – parents/carers were given an opportunity to consider the proposed curriculum and policy and to ask questions prior to publication of the policy.
4. **Pupil consultation** – pupil views were sought where appropriate to understand their experiences, needs and priorities.
5. **Curriculum review** – the existing Orleans curriculum and Kapow resources were reviewed against the 2026 DfE requirements.
6. **Ratification** – following consultation and amendments, the policy was submitted to the FGB for approval.

The school will continue to listen to the views of parents/carers, pupils and staff when reviewing the curriculum. Parents/carers will not be able to veto statutory curriculum content, but their views will be considered carefully.

4. Definitions and Our Approach

4.1 Relationships Education

Relationships Education teaches the knowledge and skills that form the building blocks of positive relationships.

It includes:

- families and people who care for us;
- caring friendships;
- respectful relationships;
- online relationships and safety;
- being safe;
- personal boundaries;
- recognising inappropriate behaviour;
- seeking help.

4.2 Health Education

Health Education supports pupils to understand and care for their physical and mental health.

It includes:

- mental wellbeing;
- emotional regulation and resilience;
- physical activity;
- healthy eating;
- sleep;
- hygiene;
- puberty and changing bodies;
- menstrual health;
- drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping;
- health protection;
- personal safety;
- first aid;
- online wellbeing.

4.3 Sex Education

Sex Education is distinct from Relationships Education and Health Education. At primary school, Sex Education beyond the statutory Science curriculum is optional. Orleans Primary School currently does provide additional Sex Education for pupils in Year 6. Where additional Sex Education is provided, the school will clearly identify the content and ensure that parents/carers are informed in advance at our meeting in the spring also via letter.

4.4 Science

Science provides statutory biological knowledge about humans, growth, puberty and reproduction.

RSHE complements this learning by helping pupils understand how this knowledge relates to their health, relationships, personal safety and wellbeing.

5. Curriculum

Our RSHE curriculum begins in Reception and develops progressively through to Year 6.

The curriculum is carefully sequenced to reflect:

- pupils' age;
- developmental stage;
- prior knowledge;
- individual needs;
- safeguarding considerations;
- the needs of the school community;
- cultural and religious considerations.

The detailed curriculum map is included in Appendix 1. The school currently uses Kapow Primary as a significant source of RSHE/PSHE planning and resources. Resources for families can be found here.

A family workshop will take place at the end of the spring 2 term to set out the curriculum for each year group. If parents/carers wish to see more resources, they can request to do so before it is taught in the summer term.

Kapow currently provides a whole-school approach from Reception to Year 6, including:

EYFS

- Self-regulation
- Building relationships
- Managing self

Key Stages 1 and 2

- Families and relationships
- Health and wellbeing
- Safety and the changing body
- Citizenship
- Economic wellbeing

The school will ensure that its use of Kapow is supplemented or adapted where necessary to meet the 2026 statutory requirements and the specific needs of Orleans pupils.

5.1 Reception

In Reception, RSHE learning is embedded primarily through Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED).

Children learn about:

- building relationships;
- friendships;
- sharing and turn-taking;
- listening;
- managing emotions;
- self-regulation;
- independence;
- personal boundaries;
- trusted adults;
- keeping safe.

Please see Appendix 1 for more information.

5.2 Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, pupils develop their understanding of:

- families and people who care for them;
- friendship;
- kindness;
- respect;
- emotions;
- managing disagreements;
- personal boundaries;
- privacy;
- body ownership;
- personal hygiene;
- keeping safe;
- online safety;
- recognising trusted adults;
- asking for help.

This learning is supported by Science and other areas of the curriculum.

5.3 Lower Key Stage 2

In Lower Key Stage 2, pupils build on previous learning and develop their understanding of:

- positive relationships;
- conflict and resolution;
- peer pressure;
- emotions;
- resilience;
- online safety;
- personal safety;
- changing bodies;
- puberty;
- hygiene;
- health and wellbeing.

At Orleans, the current curriculum introduces the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty in Year 4.

5.4 Upper Key Stage 2

In Years 5 and 6, pupils develop a deeper understanding of:

- relationships;
- respect;
- personal boundaries;
- consent and respectful behaviour;
- peer pressure;
- puberty;
- menstruation and menstrual health;
- body changes;
- emotional wellbeing;
- resilience;
- online relationships;
- online safety;
- harmful online content;
- scams and fraud;
- gaming and online financial risks;
- image sharing and privacy;
- seeking help;
- Safeguarding.

6. Delivery of RSHE

RSHE is taught as part of the school's planned curriculum, principally through PSHE, and is reinforced through Science, Computing, Online Safety, PE, safeguarding education, assemblies and wider school life. Teaching is planned progressively from Reception to Year 6 and is appropriate to pupils' age, maturity and individual needs.

6.1 Relationships Education

Relationships Education is statutory in primary schools. Pupils are taught about families and people who care for them, friendships, respectful relationships, appropriate behaviour, boundaries, privacy, personal safety and how to recognise when something may be unsafe or harmful.

The school recognises and respects the diversity of family life and ensures that teaching promotes kindness, respect and equality.

6.2 Health Education

Statutory Health Education is taught progressively across the primary years. This includes physical health and wellbeing, mental and emotional wellbeing, healthy lifestyles, sleep, hygiene, dental health, medicines and drugs, online wellbeing and personal safety.

Pupils are taught to recognise and manage emotions, develop resilience, seek help when needed and understand how their choices can support their health and wellbeing.

6.3 Puberty and Developing Bodies

Pupils receive age-appropriate teaching about physical and emotional changes as they grow and develop. This includes puberty, personal hygiene, menstruation and other aspects of developing bodies.

Where content is also required through the statutory Science curriculum, it is taught as part of Science. The school's curriculum map identifies where these areas are taught.

6.4 Additional Sex Education

Sex Education is not compulsory in primary schools beyond the content required through the statutory Science curriculum. Where the school provides additional Sex Education, this will be age-appropriate, carefully sequenced and communicated clearly to parents. Where RSHE addresses laws or legal rights and responsibilities, these will be taught factually and in an age-appropriate manner.

Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from additional Sex Education. Parents cannot withdraw their child from Relationships Education, Health Education or statutory Science, including the elements of puberty and human reproduction that form part of the Science curriculum.

6.5 Online Safety and Emerging Risks

Online safety forms an integral part of RSHE. Pupils are taught about safe and respectful online relationships, privacy, personal information, harmful content, online behaviour and how to seek help. Where appropriate to pupils' age and needs, teaching will also address emerging online risks, including scams, gaming-related risks and manipulated or AI-generated content.

6.6 Inclusion and Accessibility

RSHE is taught in a way that is accessible to all pupils. Teaching is adapted where necessary to meet individual needs, including the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff will liaise with the SENCO where adaptations are required to ensure RSHE is accessible to all pupils.

The school promotes equality and respect and challenges discriminatory behaviour, harmful stereotypes, sexism and other forms of prejudice. Teaching reflects the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

6.7 Questions, Sensitive Issues and Safeguarding

21. Managing questions

Clear parameters of what is appropriate and inappropriate will be established within the ground rules and personal questions will not be answered. Staff will operate a three level approach to answering questions.

- **Level 1:** If a child asks a question that relates to the syllabus for RSE for that year, it will be answered there and then in front of other children who may be present.

- **Level 2:** If a child asks a question that relates to the syllabus for RSE for the school but not for their year, the question will be answered with age appropriate content. If the question is not age appropriate, staff have a stock response, see below. The class teacher will then speak with the PSHE lead, safeguarding team and/or the parents of the child.

"Thank you for your question; it's great that you're curious and thinking about this topic. Right now, we're focusing on subjects that are best for your age group. This question is something we might talk about when you're a bit older, as it's important to learn things at the right time. If you have any more questions, you can always talk to me after class, or you can speak with a trusted adult at home who can give you more information that's right for you."

- **Level 3:** If the child asks the question that is not covered by the syllabus for RSE in the school they will either be encouraged to ask their parent the question or, if the staff member is willing to answer, they may offer to get permission from the parent to answer the question on an individual basis away from the hearing of any other child.

Questions will be answered using simple, accurate and straightforward language. The answers given will always be honest but may not be, on occasion, everything there is to know. The age of the child will always be taken into consideration as will their level of maturity. It is generally good practice when asked a question to try and find out a little about why this question has arisen.

Any question that leads a staff member to suspect an inappropriate knowledge, curiosity or experience will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguard Lead.

6.8 Resources and External Providers

Resources used to support RSHE are selected carefully to ensure that they are accurate, age-appropriate, accessible and consistent with the school's curriculum and values.

Where external organisations contribute to RSHE, the school remains responsible for the content and delivery of the education provided and will ensure that appropriate safeguarding and resource checks are completed.

Further information about the content and sequencing of RSHE is provided in the school's RSHE Curriculum Map in Appendix 1.

7. Use of External Organisations and Curriculum Materials

Orleans Primary School may use external organisations or visitors where they enhance the curriculum.

The school remains responsible for:

- the content taught;
- the quality of teaching;
- safeguarding;
- the suitability of resources;
- ensuring alignment with this policy.

Before working with an external organisation, the school will:

- check the organisation's suitability;
- check relevant credentials;
- review lesson plans and resources;
- check the content is age appropriate;
- ensure accessibility for pupils with SEND;
- ensure content is balanced;
- ensure it complies with this policy;
- ensure safeguarding procedures are understood;
- clarify confidentiality arrangements;
- clarify how disclosures will be dealt with;

- ensure the classroom teacher remains present;

Parents/carers will be able to access the curriculum materials used in RSHE in accordance with the statutory guidance. The school will not enter into arrangements with external providers that prevent parents/carers from accessing relevant teaching materials.

The school will not use external organisations that:

- promote extreme political positions;
- use inappropriate or biased resources;
- refuse to provide curriculum materials to the school;
- prevent the school from meeting its obligations to parents/carers.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Governing Body

The governing body will:

- approve the policy;
- hold the Head of School to account for its implementation;
- ensure that statutory requirements are met;
- ensure curriculum content and resources are appropriate;
- ensure parents receive clear information;
- monitor the quality and accessibility of provision.

8.2 Head of School

The Head of School will:

- ensure RSHE is taught consistently;
- ensure staff have appropriate support and training;
- ensure curriculum materials can be accessed by parents/carers;
- oversee parent consultation;
- manage requests for withdrawal;
- ensure safeguarding procedures are followed.

8.3 PSHE / RSHE Subject Leader

The Subject Leader will:

- lead the implementation of this policy;
- maintain the curriculum map;
- review curriculum coverage;
- monitor teaching;

- support staff;
- review resources;
- ensure progression;
- coordinate staff training;
- liaise with parents/carers;
- monitor developments in statutory guidance;
- advise the Senior Leadership Team and governors.

8.4 Teachers and Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- delivering RSHE sensitively and appropriately;
- modelling respectful behaviour;
- using approved resources;
- responding appropriately to questions;
- adapting teaching for pupils' needs;
- monitoring pupil understanding;
- reporting safeguarding concerns;
- supporting pupils whose parents have requested withdrawal from additional Sex Education.

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSHE. Any staff member with concerns about teaching RSHE should discuss these with the Head of School.

8.5 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- provide advice on safeguarding issues arising from RSHE;
- support staff responding to disclosures;
- ensure appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed;
- advise on emerging risks;
- liaise with relevant external agencies.

8.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- participate appropriately;
- listen respectfully;
- respect others;
- use appropriate language;
- maintain agreed ground rules;
- avoid sharing personal information about others;
- seek help when they are worried.

9. Parents' Right to Withdraw

Parents/carers do **not** have the right to withdraw their child from:

- Relationships Education;
- Health Education;
- Statutory Science.

Parents/carers **do have the right to request withdrawal** from additional Sex Education that is not part of statutory Science.

Requests should be made in writing to the Head of School using the form in Appendix 4.

The Head of School will discuss the request with the parent/carer and explain:

- what the school teaches;
- whether the requested content is statutory;
- the purpose of the teaching;
- the benefits of receiving the education;
- the arrangements for withdrawal.

Where withdrawal is agreed, appropriate alternative work will be provided. A record of withdrawal requests will be maintained in accordance with the school's record-keeping arrangements. The withdrawal will be for that academic year only.

10. Staff Training

Staff will receive appropriate training and support to deliver RSHE.

Training will include, as appropriate:

- the 2026 statutory guidance;
- curriculum content;
- age and developmental appropriateness;
- safeguarding;
- managing disclosures;
- responding to difficult questions;
- online harms;
- equality and stereotypes;
- SEND accessibility;
- use of resources;
- parental communication.

RSHE will form part of the school's induction and continuing professional development programme where appropriate.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The delivery of RSHE will be monitored by the PSHE/RSHE Subject Leader in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team.

Monitoring may include:

- planning scrutiny;
- book/work scrutiny;
- learning walks;
- lesson observations;
- pupil voice;
- staff feedback;
- parent feedback;
- curriculum audits;
- resource reviews;
- assessment information.

Monitoring will consider whether:

- the curriculum is appropriately sequenced;
- statutory content is covered;
- pupils are making progress;
- teaching is accessible;
- resources are appropriate;
- staff are confident;
- safeguarding arrangements are effective;
- pupils understand how to seek help.

12. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years and sooner where there are significant changes to statutory guidance, legislation, safeguarding requirements or the school's curriculum.

The review will consider:

- changes to legislation;
- changes to statutory guidance;
- safeguarding developments;
- curriculum developments;
- pupil needs;
- parent feedback;
- pupil voice;
- staff feedback;

- resource changes;
- emerging issues.

13. Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Attendance Policy;

APPENDIX 1 – ORLEANS PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM MAP

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
EYFS	Self-regulation: My feelings	Building relationships: Special relationships	Managing self: Taking on challenges	Self-regulation: Listening and following instructions	Building relationships: My family and friends	Managing self: My wellbeing
Year 1	My healthy self: How can we look after our emotions?	Connecting with others: How can I help myself and others feel happy and safe?	The online world: How do we spend time online?	Citizenship: How can I help others and the environment?	Health protection: How can I protect myself and others in daily life?	Staying safe: How can I stay safe?
Year 2	My healthy self: How can we look after our bodies?	Connecting with others: How can I build safe, kind and caring relationships with others?	The online world: How can we stay safe online?	Citizenship: How do people belong to a community and earn money?	Growing up: How can we look after and respect our bodies as we grow?	Staying safe: How can I make safe choices in different places?
Year 3	My healthy self: How can I take care of my mind and body?	Connecting with others: What helps us feel safe and included?	The online world: How should we communicate online?	Citizenship: What rights and responsibilities do we have?	Health protection: How can we prevent illness and injury and respond if they happen?	Citizenship: What careers do people choose and why?
Year 4	My healthy self: How can I make healthy choices?	Connecting with others: How can we respect each other?	The online world: How can we decide what to trust online?	Citizenship: How can I spend money responsibly?	Growing up: How will my body and emotions change as I grow up?	Staying safe: What signs help me recognise what is safe or unsafe?
Year 5	My healthy self: How can I support my mind and body as I grow?	Connecting with others: Why are healthy relationships important?	The online world: How am I influenced by what I see online?	Citizenship: How can we make a difference in our communities and beyond?	Growing up: How can I manage the changes to my body and emotions as I grow up?	Citizenship: How can we be in control of our money?
Year 6	My healthy self: How do my choices today shape my future health?	Connecting with others: What does it mean to stand up for myself and others?	The online world: How do I feel about the things I see online?	Citizenship: How can we protect everyone's rights?	Staying safe: How can I stay safe as I grow up?	Sex education: How do people become parents and carers?

*This curriculum map is reviewed annually and may be updated to reflect changes in statutory guidance, curriculum resources and the needs of pupils.

APPENDIX 2 – BY THE END OF PRIMARY SCHOOL, PUPILS SHOULD KNOW

The following provides a summary of the statutory curriculum expectations and should be read alongside the full DfE statutory guidance.

Families and people who care for me

Pupils should understand:

- the importance of families;
- the characteristics of safe and happy family life;
- that families may look different;
- that other families should be respected;
- the importance of stable and caring relationships;
- that families can experience difficulties;
- how to recognise when relationships may be unsafe;
- where to seek help.

Caring friendships

Pupils should understand:

- what makes a positive friendship;
- the importance of kindness and respect;
- how friendships change;
- how to manage disagreement;
- how to recognise unhealthy friendships;
- how to seek help;
- how peer pressure can affect behaviour.

Respectful relationships

Pupils should understand:

- the importance of respect;
- manners and courtesy;
- how behaviour affects others;
- how to resolve disagreements;
- what bullying is;
- how to challenge prejudice;
- how stereotypes can be harmful;
- the importance of equality.

Online relationships and safety

Pupils should understand:

- that online relationships require the same respect as offline relationships;
- how to behave safely online;
- how to protect personal information;
- how to recognise harmful content;
- how to report concerns;
- the importance of age restrictions;
- risks associated with gaming;
- scams and fraud;
- that online content may be misleading or manipulated.

Being safe

Pupils should understand:

- personal boundaries;
- privacy;
- bodily autonomy;
- what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour;
- how to recognise unsafe situations;
- who trusted adults are;
- how to seek help;
- that abuse is never their fault.

Mental wellbeing

Pupils should understand:

- different emotions;
- healthy ways of managing emotions;
- resilience;
- coping strategies;
- the importance of relationships and support;
- loneliness;
- when to seek help;
- the relationship between physical and mental health.

Physical health

Pupils should understand:

- the importance of physical activity;
- healthy eating;
- sleep;

- hygiene;
- dental health;
- sun safety;
- vaccination and health protection;
- the risks associated with smoking, vaping, alcohol and drugs;
- basic first aid;
- personal safety.

Changing adolescent bodies

Pupils should understand:

- growth and development;
- puberty;
- physical changes;
- emotional changes;
- menstruation;
- menstrual health;
- hygiene;
- where to seek help.

APPENDIX 3 – ADDITIONAL SEX EDUCATION AT ORLEANS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Does Orleans Primary School provide additional Sex Education?

YES

Year group(s)

YEAR 6

Content taught

Sex education (non-statutory)

- Using correct scientific vocabulary to confidently and respectfully name and describe the functions of the male and female external reproductive organs.
- Describing, in simple terms, how a baby is conceived and born (e.g. that sexual intercourse is the way humans reproduce).
- Asking questions about growing up, relationships, conception and birth in a respectful and appropriate way.

Sex education (non-statutory)

- To know that to reproduce a sperm and egg join together to make a baby, usually through sexual intercourse (sex).

- To know that the legal age for sexual intercourse is 16 years old, although many people wait until they are older.
- To know that pregnancy begins when a fertilised egg grows in the uterus.
- To know that a baby develops in the uterus for approximately nine months.
- To know that birth is the process by which a baby is delivered from the uterus, usually through the vagina or sometimes by caesarean section.
- To know that there are different ways people can become parents, including through IVF and adoption.
- To know that babies need constant care and attention and that becoming a parent involves a lot of responsibility, time and support.

We use Kapow for these lessons and they are delivered in the summer term each year.

Withdrawal arrangements

Parents/carers may request withdrawal from this additional Sex Education using Appendix 4. They cannot withdraw pupils from Relationships Education, Health Education or Statutory Science.

APPENDIX 4 – YEAR 6 PARENT/CARER REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM ADDITIONAL SEX EDUCATION

Orleans Primary School

Request for withdrawal from additional Sex Education

Pupil name: _____

Class: _____

Parent/carer name: _____

I understand that:

- Relationships Education is statutory;
- Health Education is statutory;
- relevant Science curriculum content is statutory;
- I cannot withdraw my child from these areas;
- I may request withdrawal from additional Sex Education that is not part of statutory Science.

I wish to request that my child is withdrawn from:

_____

_____

Reason for request (optional):

Parent/carer signature: _____

Date: _____

For school use

Date received: _____

Discussion with parent/carer held by: _____

Date: _____

Decision / action: _____

Head of School signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5 – Overview of Changes to RSHE Guidance for 2026

Information for parents, carers and governors

The school has reviewed its Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy in response to the revised Department for Education statutory guidance, which came into effect on 1 September 2026.

The revised guidance updates the previous 2019 framework and places greater emphasis on age-appropriate teaching, parental transparency, safeguarding, online safety, mental wellbeing and respectful relationships.

The main changes relevant to primary schools are summarised below.

Area	What the 2026 guidance strengthens or clarifies
Parental involvement and transparency	Schools must be more transparent with parents about what is taught, when it is taught and the resources used. Parents should be able to access curriculum materials on request.
Clear distinction between curriculum areas	The guidance makes clearer the distinction between Relationships Education, Health Education, Science and additional Sex Education. This is particularly important when explaining parental withdrawal rights.
Relationships Education	Greater emphasis is placed on healthy and respectful relationships, families, friendships, boundaries, privacy, consent, kindness and recognising behaviours that may be harmful or abusive.
Safeguarding and sexual harassment	Schools are expected to address inappropriate behaviour, sexual harassment, abuse, exploitation and harmful attitudes in an age-appropriate way, beginning in primary education with boundaries, respect and personal safety.
Online safety	Online relationships and risks receive greater emphasis, including harmful content, privacy and personal information, scams and fraud, gaming and online behaviours.
Emerging technology and AI	The guidance recognises new online risks, including AI-generated and manipulated sexual imagery (“deepfakes”). Teaching should be age-appropriate and respond to relevant risks affecting pupils.

Mental health and wellbeing	Health Education places greater emphasis on emotional wellbeing, resilience, coping strategies, loneliness, seeking help and knowing when and where to access support.
Physical health and puberty	The guidance strengthens expectations around physical health, puberty and developing bodies, including appropriate preparation for menstruation and menstrual health.
Healthy lifestyles and risk	Health Education continues to cover healthy eating, physical activity, sleep, hygiene, medicines and drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping, while giving greater attention to some emerging risks.
Family diversity and equality	Schools should teach respect for different family structures and ensure teaching reflects the Equality Act 2010 and protects pupils from discrimination and harassment.
Stereotypes and harmful attitudes	There is greater emphasis on challenging stereotypes, sexism, misogyny and other discriminatory or harmful attitudes and promoting respectful behaviour.
Sensitive and controversial issues	The guidance gives schools clearer expectations for handling sensitive questions and topics, using professional judgement to ensure teaching is appropriate to pupils' age, maturity and needs.
SEND and accessibility	Schools should consider the needs of pupils with SEND and make reasonable adaptations so that all pupils can access RSHE.
External providers and resources	Schools remain responsible for RSHE delivered by external organisations and should check the suitability, accuracy, accessibility and safeguarding arrangements of resources and providers.
Withdrawal from Sex Education	The guidance confirms that parents cannot withdraw children from Relationships Education, Health Education or statutory Science. In primary schools, parents may request withdrawal from additional Sex Education taught outside the statutory Science curriculum.
Curriculum planning and progression	Schools are expected to plan RSHE carefully and progressively, ensuring that content is age-appropriate and builds pupils' knowledge and understanding over time.

What this means for our school

The revised policy reflects these national changes and provides greater clarity about:

- what pupils are taught and when;
- how RSHE is delivered across the primary years;
- the difference between statutory curriculum content and any additional Sex Education;
- how parents can understand and engage with the curriculum;
- how sensitive questions and safeguarding concerns are handled;
- how online safety and emerging digital risks are addressed; and
- how teaching is adapted to meet pupils' individual needs.

The revised policy does not mean that primary pupils will be taught inappropriate or adult material. The Department for Education guidance continues to require teaching to be age-appropriate, with schools using professional judgement about the needs and maturity of their pupils. The school will continue to communicate with parents about RSHE and make relevant curriculum information and teaching materials available in accordance with the statutory guidance. The purpose of this appendix is to explain the national changes that have informed the policy review. It does not constitute a separate curriculum or alter the school's existing curriculum map.