



Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSE) Policy

September 2026

Contents

1	Introduction and aims.....	3
2	Statutory requirements.....	4
3	Policy development.....	4
4	Definition.....	5
5	Curriculum	5
6	Delivery of RSE	5
7	Roles and responsibilities	7
8	Students	8
9	Parents' right to withdraw.....	8
10	Training.....	9
11	Monitoring arrangements	9
12	Safeguarding.....	9
	Appendix 1: Curriculum Map.....	10
	Appendix 2: By the end of primary school, students should know:	11
	Appendix 4: DfE RSE Statutory Guidance Suggested Resources.....	14

1 Introduction and aims

Schools play a crucial role in preventative education.

Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for racism, sexism, misogyny/misandry, homo/bi/trans phobia and sexual violence/harassment.

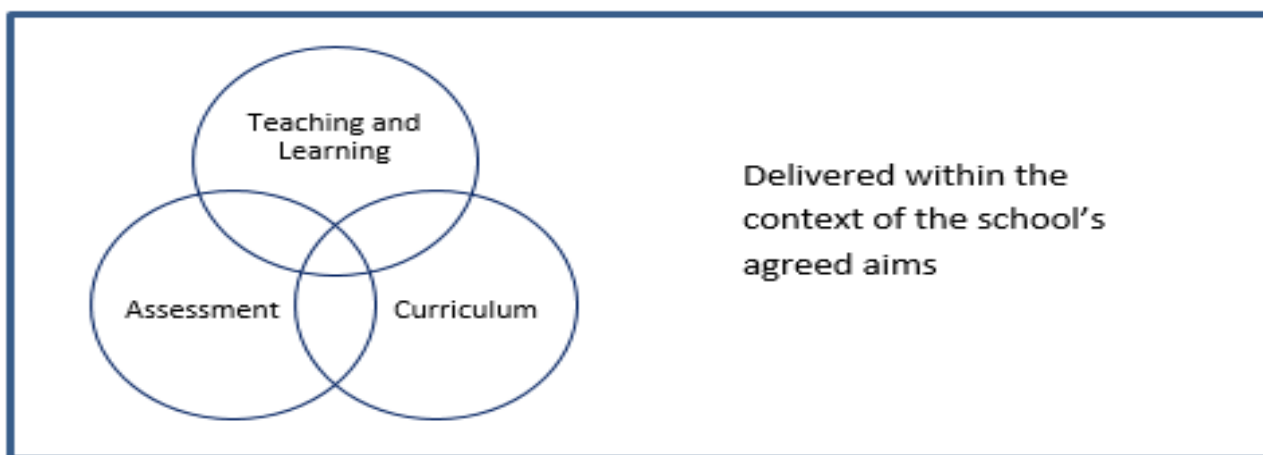
Scope

This policy applies to all students, including those in the Early Years.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that our Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education supports our school ethos and fulfils our school aims, which are defined as:

- To help pupils develop lively, enquiring minds, an ability to question and argue rationally and an ability to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills
- To help pupils acquire understanding, knowledge and key skills relevant to school, adult life and employment in a fast-changing world
- To help pupils to use language and numbers effectively
- To help pupils develop personal moral values, respect for religious values and tolerance of other races, religions and ways of life
- To help pupils understand the world in which they live and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations
- To help pupils to appreciate human achievements and aspirations



- 1.1 This policy forms part of the curriculum.
- 1.2 We see the curriculum as, 'The total learning experience for our students, which includes not only the taught lessons but also the routines, behaviours, events, activities and other opportunities that our students experience on a daily, weekly and yearly basis in order to ensure that all of them make the best progress possible and attain high standards'.
- 1.3 A well-structured and coherent curriculum is a fundamental element of the tripartite education that underpins all successful schools and includes Teaching, Learning and Assessment (see model below) and is underpinned by Wellbeing.

Aims

The aims of RSE at our school are to:

- 1.4 Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
- 1.5 Prepare students for puberty, give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- 1.6 Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- 1.7 Create a positive culture around sexuality and relationships.
- 1.8 Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- 1.9 Help students understand that healthy relationships are an important part of wellbeing.
- 1.10 Prevent students from becoming involved in child-on-child abuse, and /or experiencing harm in school/in the community

2 Statutory requirements

Relationships education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education, and relationships and sex education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) continues to be compulsory in independent schools.

The government RSHE guidance to be implemented on 1st September 2026 can be found [here](#). Until 31st August 2026, this policy will be underpinned and informed by the current 2025 guidance which can be found [here](#).

Our policy also follows the requirements of the government (DFE), Ofsted and Independent School Standards. Aspects of RSE are infused within the day-to-day operation of our school; incorporated through the curriculum, both in content included in subject schemes of work and through other planned learning opportunities in the school. They are captured in our written aims and expressed in the ethos and behaviours of everyone.

- 2.1 As a Pre-Preparatory School, we must ensure that every registered student who is provided with primary education at the school is provided with relationships education, in accordance with section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Independent School Standards

At Polam school, we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3 Policy development

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

- Review – The PSHE Lead reviewed all relevant information, including but not limited to, relevant national and local guidance including regard to the school's obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

- The policy was drafted in accordance with statutory guidance and aligned with the Independent School Regulations/BSO Standards. The school curriculum plans were amended accordingly.
- Staff consultation – school staff were given the opportunity to review the policy and make recommendations.
- Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents and any interested parties were invited to attend a meeting about the policy and offer commentary.

The school will proactively engage parents and make sure they are aware of what is being taught in RSHE and consult with them when developing and reviewing the RSHE Policy. The school will show parents a representative sample of the resources that they plan to use, enabling parents to continue conversations started in class, and should ensure that parents are able to view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE on request. Other steps may include inviting parents into school to discuss the curriculum content and the importance of RSHE for wellbeing and safety, inviting them to discuss any concerns, and supporting parents in managing conversations with their children about RSHE topics.

- Student consultation – students were consulted with about their RSE lessons in school council meetings
- Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was published.
- Policy review – this policy will be reviewed every three years.

4 Definition

- 4.1 RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about healthy relationships.
- 4.2 RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values.
- 4.3 RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity, sexual orientation, or a specific sexual identity.

5 Curriculum

- 5.1 Our curriculum is set out in Appendix 1, but we may need to adapt this as and when necessary.
- 5.2 We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, students and staff, taking into account the age, needs, and feelings of students.
- 5.3 For more information about our curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2 and our Curriculum Policy

6 Delivery of RSE

- 6.1 Our RSE is taught as part of our PSHEE curriculum. The PSHEE course is delivered to all students through discrete PSHEE lessons taught by our teachers. There is one lesson of taught PSHEE a week. Elements of the programme may be supported through the bringing in of additional expertise, such as outside speakers, trained health professionals, or the use of teachers with a particular interest or knowledge in a specific area. In addition to these discrete sessions, PSHEE is also embedded within the curriculum (e.g., social issues through the teaching of English Literature; Health through PE; Citizenship through History & RE). There are also centrally organised sessions which supplement the delivery in house.
- 6.2 Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, including:
- Families and people who care for me
 - Caring friendships
 - Respectful relationships
 - Online relationships
 - Being safe
- 6.3 For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2 and our Curriculum Policy.
- 6.4 These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures), along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

Equality

The school, in its delivery of RSHE will comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public sector equality duty (PSED) (s.149). Topics will be taught in a way which does not discriminate against pupils or amount to harassment. Pupils will be encouraged to understand the importance of equality and respect and learn about the law relating to the protected characteristics (by the end of their secondary education). The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sex.

Responding to new risks or issues within the national or local context

The school will carefully sequence teaching so that pupils are supported and equipped with the knowledge to navigate different experiences in a positive way before they occur, and to prevent harms. The school will maintain a relevant and responsive curriculum to ensure that any particular or new issues that are affecting the pupils in the school (or nationally) are addressed in a timely manner so that the children are kept as safe as possible on/offline. Where appropriate, the school will work with local partners and other bodies to understand specific local issues/risks. The school inform parents in advance of any deviation from our published RSE policy, including the reasons why they are covering this content, and will share any relevant materials with them on request in advance of the planned sessions. All teaching will be age appropriate and respectful of all children, including those who may have no familiarity with the topics under discussion.

Our RSE is taught as part of our PSHEE curriculum. The PSHEE course is delivered to all students through discrete PSHEE lessons taught by our teachers. There is one lesson of taught PSHEE a week. Elements of the programme may be supported through the bringing

in of additional expertise, such as outside speakers and/or trained health professionals (the credentials of any visitor or visiting organisation, and their materials will be checked prior to booking). The school will not use resources from any individual or organisation who hold partisan views on contested topics. External providers may not include contractual restrictions preventing schools from sharing materials with parents.

Health topics will include:

- General wellbeing
- Wellbeing online
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Health protection and prevention
- Personal safety
- Basic First Aid
- Developing bodies

- 6.5 For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2 and our Curriculum Policy.

The school will also adhere to any statutory guidance on teaching topics where there is significant debate, such as gender questioning/reassignment: we will be mindful that beyond the facts and the laws lie varying viewpoints. As such, the school will not endorse any particular view or teach it as fact that all people have a gender identity. The school will avoid language and activities which repeat or enforce gender stereotypes and will be mindful to avoid any suggestion that social transition is a simple solution to feelings of distress or discomfort.

7 Roles and responsibilities

Staff & Governance

7.1 PSHE Lead Teacher

The person with responsibility for the overview and yearly evaluation of this policy is the PSHE lead. However, all staff are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and acted on.

When evaluating the use and impact of this policy, our school leaders will evaluate the extent to which there is evidence of a curriculum which:

- Fulfils the aims of the school;
- Embeds aspiration, attributes and the expectation to achieve high standards and high rates of progress; and
- Provides engagement and excitement for learning.

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 components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 The Chair of Governors

The Chair of Governors will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Chair of Governors will ensure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes
- the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND (see below)
- Teaching is sensitive to the needs of all students with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn; and,
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

7.4 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; and
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the components 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.

8 Students

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

8.1 Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Our curriculum is inclusive and our RSE and Health Education is accessible for all students. For those pupils with special educational needs or specific learning difficulties, the school has a well-established Learning Support department, led by the SENCO. Further details of this provision can be found in our Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy.

High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility.

As set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching these subjects to those with SEND, Polam is mindful of preparing students for adulthood.

Polam is aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education and RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some pupils; for example, those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors will be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects.

9 Parents' right to withdraw

- 9.1 If parents require more information on RSE for primary aged children, this is a useful information source of information for them:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/812593/RSE_primary_schools_guide_for_parents.pdf

- 9.2 Preparatory schools, please insert:
Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education.

10 Training

- 10.1 Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development programme.
- 10.2 The Headteacher will also invite, following a due diligence and vetting process, visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

11 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

- 11.1 Monitoring
The delivery of RSE is monitored by the PSHE lead.
- 11.2 Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.
- 11.3 Evaluation
The delivery of RSE is evaluated by the PSHE lead.

12 Safeguarding

RSHE discussions can lead to increased safeguarding concerns being raised by pupils. All staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy if they have concerns about pupil wellbeing or safety.

Confidentiality arrangements must be clearly explained to pupils prior to sessions.

Appendix 1: Curriculum Map

Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum Map

	Key stage 1
	Year 1 and 2
	Minimum 10 sessions to include:
AUTUMN 1 Core theme 2: Relationships	Topic- Feelings and emotions: recognise feelings in self; special people; behaviour and how people's bodies and feelings can be hurt Topic- Healthy Relationships: secrets and surprises; working together; boundaries and relationships; resolving conflict; teasing and bullying
AUTUMN 2 Core theme 1: Health and Wellbeing	Topic- Healthy lifestyles: Keeping our bodies healthy; likes/dislikes and choices; recognising and managing different feelings; personal hygiene
	Key stage 1
	Year 1 and 2
	Minimum 10 session to include:
SPRING 1 Core Theme 1 Health & Wellbeing	Topic -Growing and changing: Change, loss and getting older; names of main body parts (including external genitalia); personal identity: likes; choices; strengths Topic -Keeping safe: What goes into our bodies; rules for keeping physically and emotionally safe; personal identity: family networks; people who are responsible for keeping us safe
SPRING 2 Core Theme 2: Relationships	Topic- Valuing difference: Attributes: kindness/fairness; sharing and respecting opinions; recognising and respecting similarities and differences
	Key stage 1
	Year 1 and 2
	Minimum 10 sessions to include:
SUMMER 1 Core theme 3: Living in the Wider World	Rights and responsibilities: contributing to life in the classroom; constructing and following rules; awareness of needs of people and other living things; belonging to communities and groups Taking care of the environment: improvements and harm to local environments; ways of looking after local environments Money matters: sources of money; uses for money; spending and saving; role of money in their lives; managing money and keeping it safe; choices about spending; influences on spending choices
SUMMER 2	Continue or re-cap

Appendix 2: By the end of primary school, students should know:

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Families and people who care about me	• That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability • The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives • That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care • That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up • That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong • How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed
Caring friendships	• How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends • The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties • That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded • That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right • How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships	• The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • The conventions of courtesy and manners • The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help • What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive • The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults
Online relationships	• That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not • That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous • The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them • How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met • How information and data is shared and used online
Being safe	• What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context) • About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe • That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact • How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know • How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult • How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard • How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so • Where to get advice e.g., family, school and/or other sources

Appendix 4: DfE RSE Statutory Guidance Suggested Resources

Link to Annex B (page 46) in DfE Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance – Suggested resources:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

Ownership and consultation	
Document author (role)	Darren O'Neil
Implementation date September 2026	
	Review date September 2027

Relationships Sex Education - September 2026 update

The underlying policy wording is retained. The following amendments record statutory/guidance changes that took effect for the 2026/27 academic year and supersede any inconsistent earlier references.

- **2026 statutory update - this section supersedes any inconsistent earlier wording in this policy.**

- From 1 September 2026 the school has regard to the revised DfE statutory guidance on **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education.**

- For primary-aged pupils, teaching will remain age- and developmentally appropriate and will build the skills needed for healthy, respectful relationships from the earliest stages, including boundaries, kindness, respect, permission-seeking, online relationships and recognising and reporting unsafe behaviour.

- The curriculum and wider school approach will challenge prejudice, sexism, misogyny, homophobia and harmful stereotypes in an age-appropriate way. Staff will challenge harmful ideas without stigmatising individual pupils.

- Online safety teaching will reflect contemporary risks, including misleading or harmful online content, artificial intelligence and manipulated or synthetic media, where relevant and age appropriate.

- There is no parental right to withdraw a child from statutory Relationships Education. Any non-statutory sex education taught by the school will continue to be handled in accordance with the current statutory guidance and this policy.

Review: September 2027

Prepared as a 2026 annual policy update. School-specific names, roles and procedures otherwise remain as stated in the policy unless separately amended by the school.