RSE Policy

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Date of Issue:	September 2026
Review Date:	September 2027

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1. **Introduction**

Primary Relationships, Sex Education & Health Education Policy Guidance

This policy has been updated in line with the Department for Education statutory guidance: "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education" (updated 2025, for implementation September 2026). The policy and curriculum have been reviewed and updates to ensure full compliance with the Department for Education statutory guidance to be implemented from 1 September 2026. This policy reflects:

- Updated RSHE statutory guidance (DfE, 2025 – effective September 2026)
- Draft Guidance – Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, (Department for Education February 2019)
- Supplementary Guidance Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) for the 21st Century 2013.
- Equalities Act 2010
- Not Yet Good Enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools, (Ofsted 2013)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice: 0-25 years, 2017
- Life Lessons: PSHE and SRE in schools: Fifth Report, (House of Commons Education Committee 2015)
- Keeping Children safe in Education – Statutory Safeguarding Guidance (2025)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision Green Paper (July 2018)

This policy should be considered alongside the following: -

- Online Safety Policy
- Anti-bullying or Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy (including child sexual exploitation)
- Equality Policy
- PSHE Policy

This policy reflects the increased emphasis on:

- Safeguarding and pupil safety
- Online safety and digital literacy
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Development of skills (e.g. communication, decision-making, managing risk)

2. **The Consultation Process Has Involved: -**

A consultation was offered to all parents/carers. We always aim to seek the thoughts, views, and suggestions of the wider school community.

Key members of staff have also completed training with the local authority.
The Board of Trustees have been consulted about this policy.

3. What is Relationships Education? (Including Relationships and Sex Education)

Relationships Education (Rel Ed) is the building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships, including on and offline. It gives children and young people the essential skills to build positive, enjoyable, and non-exploitative relationships.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is lifelong learning about physical, sexual, moral, and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of stable and loving relationships, respect, love, and care, for family life. It involves acquiring information, developing skills, and forming positive beliefs, values, and attitudes.
There should be a clear progression of what is taught from Rel Ed in primary school through to RSE in secondary school.

4. Principles and Values

In addition, Ribbon Academy believes that Rel Ed and RSE should: -

- be an integral part of the lifelong learning process, beginning in early childhood and to continue into adult life.
- be an entitlement for all pupils in our care.
- encourage every pupil to contribute to the school community that aims to support each individual as they grow and learn.
- be set within this wider school context and supports family commitment and love, respect and affection, knowledge, and openness. Family is a broad concept; not just one model, e.g., children living with stepfamilies; those living with same sex parents, children looked after, adopted children, extended family. It includes a variety of types of family structure, and acceptance of diversity.
- encourage pupils and staff to share and listen to each other's views and the right to hold/express views. We are aware of different values and opinions to sexual orientation and gender identity without promotion of any particular family structure. The important values are love, respect, kindness, generosity, and care for each other.
- generate an atmosphere where questions and discussion on personal matters can take place without any stigma or embarrassment.
- recognise that parents and carers are the prime educators in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents/carers and pupils, consulting them about the content of programmes.
- recognise that the wider community has much to offer, and we aim to work in partnership with other health and education professionals.

In line with updated statutory guidance, this school's RSHE curriculum is underpinned by the following principles:

- Teaching is age-appropriate, evidence-informed and carefully sequenced
- Learning is relevant to pupils' real lives, including online experiences
- RSHE takes a positive, strengths-based approach, promoting healthy relationships and wellbeing
- Teaching develops skills as well as knowledge, including:
    - Communication
    - Emotional regulation
    - Boundary-setting and help-seeking
- Parents/carers are actively engaged and informed
- RSHE contributes to the school's safeguarding responsibilities

Relationship Education (Including Relationships and Sex Education) in Ribbon Academy

At Ribbon Academy we teach RSE through a carefully structured PSHE curriculum rooted in key concepts that support children's development into healthy, responsible, and confident individuals. Our approach is built on the "roots" of Health and Wellbeing, Relationships, Living in the Wider World, Identity, and Choice and Consequence, which underpin all learning and help pupils understand how to care for themselves physically and mentally, build respectful and empathetic relationships, act responsibly as citizens, and develop a strong sense of self. These foundations feed into the "trunk" of Personal and Social Understanding, where pupils are supported to reflect, think critically, and make informed decisions about their lives, relationships and the world around them. Through this, children are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to navigate life safely, responsibly and with resilience.
The roots of our curriculum are built on the categories underpinned in statutory RSE guidance, including families and people who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships, being safe, health and wellbeing, changing body/puberty, and personal safety. A detailed curriculum progression map showing learning across EYFS, KS1 and KS2 is available on request and published on the school website.

Trunk statement:
'PSHE develops pupils' understanding of themselves and others so they can navigate life safely, responsibly and confidently.'

RSE has three main elements: -
Attitudes and Values

- learning the importance of values, individual conscience, and moral choices.
- Learning the value and valuing family life, stable and loving relationships, marriage, and civil partnerships.
- learning about the nurture of children.
- Learning the value of and demonstrating respect, love, and care.
- exploring, considering, and understanding moral dilemmas.

- developing skills including negotiation and decision making.

- The importance of permission seeking/consent and giving, in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

- challenging myths, misconceptions, and false assumptions about normal behaviour.

Personal and Social Skills

- learning to manage emotions within relationships confidently and sensitively, including off and online.

- developing positive self-esteem and confidence.

- developing and demonstrating self-respect and empathy for others.

- making informed choices with an absence of prejudice.

- developing an appreciation of the consequences of choices made.

- managing conflict.

- empower pupils with the skills to be able to recognise inappropriate/ uncomfortable situations and/or behaviours with their peers and adults.

Knowledge and Understanding

- Know the key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from ages 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes. (Health Education)

- Learn about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle. (Health Education)

- learning about reproduction, human sexuality, gender identity, personal health, emotions, and relationships.

- learning about where to go for help or advice in school and how to access a range of local and national support agencies.

5. Aims and Objectives

The aim of Rel Ed & RSE is to provide balanced factual information about physical and emotional changes, together with consideration of the broader emotional, ethical, religious, and moral dimensions of sexual health. Our Rel Ed & RSE programme aims to prepare pupils for an adult life in which they can:

- Understand how to **recognise risk and keep themselves safe** (online and offline)

- Develop the **confidence to seek help** and report concerns

- Understand the importance of **privacy, consent, and personal boundaries**

- Are equipped to navigate **online environments safely,** including:

    - Recognising scams and harmful content

    - Understanding how personal data is used

- Develop resilience, including coping with:
    - Change and loss (including **bereavement**)
    - Friendships and social pressures
- develop positive values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements, and behaviour.
- have the confidence and self-esteem to value themselves and others and respect for individual conscience and the skills to judge what kind of relationship they want.
- understand the consequences of their actions and behave responsibly within personal relationships.
- avoid being pressured into uncomfortable or dangerous situations.
- communicate effectively by developing the appropriate language for sex and relationship issues.
- Have an understanding of seeking permission and consent
- have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves in a variety of situations including from exploitation.
- be aware of sources of help and acquire the skills and confidence to access advice and support if necessary.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing board / trustees are responsible for approving this policy, ensuring statutory compliance, holding leaders to account for implementation, and receiving assurance about safeguarding, curriculum quality and parental engagement. – Hayley Williams is the named Trustee responsible for Relationship Education.

The headteacher / senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented consistently, that staffing and training arrangements are secure, that resources are appropriate, and that concerns arising from teaching are handled in line with safeguarding procedures – Mr Houghton is the named Senior Leader responsible for Relationship Education.

The PSHE / RSE lead is responsible for curriculum design, progression, staff guidance, resourcing, monitoring, pupil voice and quality assurance. At Ribbon Academy this role is led by Mrs S Bingham and supported by Mr Stuart Houghton.

Teaching staff are responsible for delivering the curriculum in line with the policy, establishing safe learning environments, responding appropriately to pupils' questions, and recording any safeguarding concerns in line with school procedures.

All staff are responsible for modelling respectful relationships, promoting inclusive language and attitudes, and upholding the school's safeguarding expectations.

Parents and carers are encouraged to engage with curriculum information, ask questions, view materials on request and work in partnership with the school.

7. Organisation and Content of Relationship Education (Including Relationships Education)

Ribbon Academy specifically delivers Relationships Education and Relationship and Sex Education through its PSHE Programme, RE and Science lessons at foundation stage, KS1 and KS2.

Much of the relationship's education (including relationship and sex education) at Ribbon Academy takes place within PSHE lessons. Teachers generally deliver the PSHE curriculum with support from professionals where appropriate. School staff are usually the best people to work with the pupils on many of the Rel Ed topics as they are aware of each pupil's individual circumstances. Lessons are set within the wider context of the PSHE curriculum and focus more on the emotional aspects of development and relationships, although the physical aspects of puberty and reproduction may also be taught as part of National Curriculum Science. The PSHE Programme and Science National Curriculum are taught in every year.

Any Rel Ed/RSE lesson may consider questions or issues that some pupils will find sensitive. Before embarking on these lessons, a group/classroom agreement, formally known as ground rules are established which prohibit inappropriate personal information being requested or disclosed by those taking part in the lesson.

When pupils ask questions, we aim to answer them honestly at an age-appropriate level and within the group/classroom agreement established at the start of the sessions. If it is felt that answering a specific question would involve information at a level inappropriate to the age and development of the rest of the pupils, the question will be dealt with individually at another time. Children's whose questions go unanswered may turn to inappropriate sources of information.
More expert or specialist teachers and other professionals may support staff that are uncomfortable with teaching certain aspects of the Rel Ed/RSE curriculum. Support and professional development will be provided for these staff, so that they can develop their confidence in delivering the whole of the Rel Ed/RSE programme.

Assessment is carried out where appropriate, for example, at the end of every module and involves teacher, pupil and peer assessment of knowledge and understanding, interpersonal skills, and attitudes.

7a. Safeguarding and Personal Safety

The curriculum explicitly teaches pupils to:

- Recognise unsafe situations and understand personal boundaries
- Identify trusted adults and seek help
- Understand safe vs unsafe secrets
- Stay safe in everyday contexts including:
    - Roads, railway and travel
    - Water safety
    - Public spaces

7b. Online Safety and Digital Wellbeing

Pupils are taught:

- How to stay safe online, including:
    - Privacy, passwords, and personal data
    - Location settings and sharing images

- Awareness of:
    - Online scams, fraud and financial risks
    - Gaming risks (e.g. in-game spending and manipulation)
- To critically evaluate online content and recognise harmful or misleading information

Pupils will:

- develop critical thinking skills to help them evaluate information encountered online, recognise misinformation and understand how online platforms may influence behaviour and decision-making.

7c. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

The curriculum includes:

- Emotional literacy (naming and managing feelings)
- Strategies to support mental wellbeing
- Understanding loneliness and friendship issues
- Learning about change, loss and bereavement
- Knowing where and how to access support

7d. Relationships and Families

Teaching reflects:

- A wide range of families, including:
    - Single-parent families
    - Same-sex parents
    - Adoptive and foster families
- Respect for diversity and inclusion
- Skills for:
    - Communication and conflict resolution
    - Developing and maintaining healthy friendships

7e. Health Education and the Body

Teaching includes:

- the correct scientific names for body parts, including genitalia, in an age-appropriate manner.
- Puberty and body changes (including emotional changes)
- Menstrual health education
- Understanding personal hygiene and self-care

8. Inclusion

This school ensures that RSHE is:

- Inclusive of all pupils regardless of ability, background, or need
- Sensitive to ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Reflective of protected characteristics under the Equality Act

Teaching about gender and identity:

- Is factual, age-appropriate and balanced
- Promotes respect, dignity and inclusion

Pupils with Special Needs

We will ensure that all pupils receive relationships education and relationships and sex education, and we will offer provision appropriate to the needs of all our pupils, taking specialist advice where necessary.

Gender, Identity and Sexual Orientation

The Rel Ed lead should ensure that the content is fully integrated into their programme of study. Teaching reflects the Equality Act 2010 and includes age-appropriate learning about diversity, respect and inclusion. Pupils will learn about different families and the importance of treating everyone with dignity and respect. We aim to deal sensitively and honestly with regard of sexual orientation and gender identity, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Pupils, whatever their developing gender identity and sexuality need to feel that relationship education is relevant to them.

9. Working with parents/carers and the wider community

Here at Ribbon Academy, we believe the role of parents in the development of their children's understanding about relationships is vital. Parents/carers are the first educators of their children. Therefore, we will ensure that we work closely with parents/carers to ensure they are aware what is taught and when. Parents/carers have the right to view all RSHE materials. This policy and information on what will be taught and when will be freely available on our schools' website for parent/carers to access. Parents will be supported in discussing RSHE topics at home when necessary.

Schools should consult parents before the final year of primary school about the detailed content of what will be taught. This process should include offering parents support in talking to their children about sex education and how the link this with what is being taught in school.

A maintained primary school should consult with parents on aspects of sex education which go beyond the national curriculum for science.

10. Pupils right to be excused from Sex and Relationship Education

11.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from statutory Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents may request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the non-statutory sex education delivered as part of RSHE, excluding those elements taught within the National Curriculum for Science. Requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher and will be considered in line with statutory guidance Parents will be informed of their right to withdraw from non-statutory sex education.

Requests to withdraw will be granted in line with the statutory guidance. We would make alternative arrangements in such cases. Parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns and / or decisions with the Head Teacher at the earliest opportunity to ensure that pupils are supported. The head teacher/RSE lead will document the process and outcome. Parents/carers are welcome to review any RSE resources the school uses.

12. Safeguarding reports of abuse and confidentiality

Safeguarding is central to RSHE delivery. Staff will:

- Respond to disclosures in line with the school's safeguarding policy
- Understand that RSHE may raise sensitive issues
- Ensure pupils understand:
    - That confidentiality cannot always be maintained

- How to seek support safely

It should be made clear to pupils that all adults in school cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. This should be made clear when forming the class Ground Rules.

A child under 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity. Any offence under The Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving a child under 13 is very serious and should be taken to indicate a risk of significant harm to the child. Cases involving under 13's should always be discussed with the nominated child protection lead.

Under the Sexual Offences Act, penetrative sex with a child under the age of 13 is classed as rape. Therefore, in all cases where the sexually active young person is under 13, a referral should be made to First Contact, formerly Social Care Direct identifying the young person, and the sexual partner if known. Following this, a Strategy Meeting or discussion will be held. The meeting will involve a Team Manager, Social Worker, Police, Health Worker, Education and Welfare and other relevant agencies, to discuss appropriate next steps.

Where the allegation concerns penetrative sex, or other intimate sexual activity occurs, there would always be reasonable cause to suspect that a child, whether girl or boy, is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. All cases involving under 13's should be fully documented and reported.
Health professionals in school are bound by their codes of conduct but have a duty to share information with relevant others, if they believe that a child is suffering abuse.
These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership procedures (link) with special reference to Sections 3 'Referral and Investigation' and Section 6.13 'Sexually Active Children under 18' – 'Young People under the age of 13'

13. Monitoring and Evaluation of Relationship and Sex Education

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher/ Leadership Team to oversee and organise the monitoring and evaluation of PSHE, in the context of the overall school plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The PSHE programme will be treated as a subject and will be involved in a yearly monitoring and evaluation exercise led by the Leadership Team.

Monitoring of Relationship and Sex Education will ensure:
- The curriculum reflects the updated statutory guidance
- Teaching is:
  - Age-appropriate
  - Inclusive
  - Safeguarding-focused
- Regular review of:
  - Pupil voice
  - Staff confidence and training needs
  - Curriculum effectiveness

The Governing body is responsible for overseeing, reviewing, and organising the revision of the sex and relationship education policy and curriculum.
Ofsted is required to evaluate and report personal development, behaviour, and welfare as well as spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development (SMSC) of pupils. This may include evaluating and commenting on the school's relationship and sex education policy, curriculum, staff development, and quality of provision.

Appendices

Appendix A: End of primary statutory focus areas

The following summary is provided so that staff, leaders and governors can see the main areas of end-of-primary expectation at a glance. This appendix should be read alongside the school's detailed curriculum map.

Strand	Core focus by the end of primary
Families and people who care for me	Love, security and stability; different family structures; when and how to seek help if family relationships feel unsafe or unhappy.
Caring friendships	Healthy friendship qualities; conflict and repair; inclusion; seeking help with problems.
Respectful relationships	Courtesy and manners; self-respect; seeking and giving permission; recognising and challenging stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination; understanding that bullying, cyberbullying, misogyny, violence, coercion, intimidation and abuse are never acceptable; knowing how and where to seek help.
Online relationships	Respect and safety online; privacy, data and image-sharing; harmful content/contact; reporting concerns.
Being safe	Boundaries, privacy, body ownership, unsafe contact, trusted adults and help-seeking.
Health and wellbeing	Mental wellbeing, physical health, routines, hygiene, healthy habits and support-seeking.
Changing body / puberty	Body changes, puberty, menstruation and correct vocabulary taught appropriately.
Personal safety	Practical strategies to recognise and reduce risk in age-appropriate everyday contexts.

Note: This appendix does not replace detailed medium-term planning. Leaders should ensure that the school's curriculum map shows where content is taught, how vocabulary and skills progress, and how adaptation is made for pupils with SEND.

Appendix B: Ofsted-ready implementation and evidence checklist

This checklist can be used by leaders, subject leads and governors when reviewing readiness for inspection, internal review or policy publication.

• The policy is current, published and aligned to the 1 September 2026 statutory guidance.

• There is a progressive curriculum map showing when each statutory strand is taught.

• Leaders can explain the school's intent and how sequencing reflects pupils' needs.

• Staff have had training on age-appropriate delivery, safeguarding and handling questions.

• Parents/carers know how to access curriculum information and materials.

• Any additional sex education beyond science is clearly identified and subject to the right to withdraw.

• Materials are age-appropriate, accurate, inclusive and free from stereotypes or stigma.

• Monitoring information includes pupil voice, planning scrutiny and evidence of staff confidence.

• The school can show how RSHE contributes to personal development, safeguarding and online safety.

• DSL and subject leader communication is strong where curriculum content raises emerging themes or concerns.