

Each day, discovery.



ELTHAM COLLEGE

**Relationships and Sex Education
Policy**

Last reviewed: September 2025



Version Control Information

| Reason for Amendment | Name | Date | Main Changes |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Annual Review | Cheryl Cartwright Lead Nurse | September 2017 | Updated programme to reflect current guidance and good practice. |
| Annual Review | Nicola Bilsby Head of Wellbeing | June 2020 | Updated programme to reflect new statutory requirements for the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education. |
| Annual Review | Nicola Bilsby Head of Wellbeing | August 2021 | Policy updated to reflect updated protocol for communicating with parents, and to identify areas of RSE programme that are covered in other curriculum areas |
| Annual Review | Ann Massey | August 2022 | No changes |
| Annual Review | Ann Massey | August 2023 | No changes |
| Annual Review | AMM | August 2024 | No changes |
| Annual Review | SFM | September 2025 | Added note re: 2026 statutory guidance fore-planning to Section 3. Changed 'pupil' to 'student' to confirm to policy house style. References to appendix removed. |

Other Related Documents

The Relationships and Sex Education policy supports/complements the following school policies and guidelines:

- Assessment and Feedback Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- Online Safety Booklet
- Safeguarding Policy
- Visiting Speaker Procedure



Documents that inform the school's RSE policy include:

- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance (2019)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010),
- Supplementary Guidance SRE for the 21st century (2014)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Principles of good RSE, Sex Education Forum (2017)

Note: The Department of Education published guidance in July 2025 with updated expectations for RSHE provision which will become mandatory from 1 September 2026. This is acknowledged fully in Section 1.



1 Rationale and Ethos

This policy covers our school approach to Relationships and Sex Education. It was produced by the Head of Wellbeing through consultation with the parent and student body, professional colleagues, and school governors.

We define 'Relationships and Sex Education' (RSE) as learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. We believe a comprehensive programme of RSE is fundamental for our students to have clear knowledge and understanding about the body, reproduction, sex, and sexual health. It also gives students the skills for building positive, enjoyable, respectful and non-exploitative relationships, and the skills necessary to stay safe when using social media both on and offline.

RSE will be taught sensitively and inclusively, with respect shown to the backgrounds and beliefs of students and parents as conveyed in the school aims, while always providing students with the knowledge they need of the law in this area. The first school aim is to teach in a Christian environment where students can learn about the Christian faith and spiritual values. This conveys the importance of faith in our community alongside our commitment to meet our legal requirements. Additionally, within Religious Education lessons, students will have further opportunities to discuss attitudes towards sex and relationships from Christian and other faith perspectives.

We view the partnership of home and school as vital in providing the context for Relationships and Sex Education at Eltham College since the school community is made up of a diverse range of family structures and belief systems. The school plans for this by ensuring that a broad range of perspectives on relationships and sex are explored through its curriculum; with 'respect' and 'choice' modelled as key values within lessons.

We ensure RSE is inclusive and meets the needs of all our students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by incorporating a range of approaches to learning, and providing opportunities for students to seek advice and guidance outside of lesson time. The key themes within the RSE curriculum will be re-visited with students on a regular basis and will reflect the changing needs of the students as they progress through the school.

Confidentiality and consent within the bounds of RSE are areas that Eltham College is mindful of since we understand that there may be additional privacy and safeguarding concerns that need to be considered. The school would never advocate a particular path of action in dealing with issues associated with relationships, sex or a particular sexual orientation. Pastorally, the school believes it is appropriate to provide students with information about external services that offer additional advice, support and guidance.

We ensure RSE fosters gender equality and LGBT+ equality by encouraging students to view a range of different viewpoints and highlighting issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled.

The intended outcomes of our RSE programme are:

- to **provide** information about RSE issues.
- to **explore** what our students know and understand about RSE related issues.
- to **identify** and **address** any learning needs.



- to **create** a safe environment where questions and discussions relating to sexual matters can take place without embarrassment.
- to **dispel** myths and common misunderstandings associated with RSE.
- to explore a range of attitudes and beliefs relating to RSE issues and help students to reach their own informed views and choices for a healthier lifestyle.
- to **engender** respect for individuality and to encourage students to empathise and understand one another.
- to **recognise** the value of loving, caring and intimate relationships.
- to **improve** students' self-esteem.
- to **appreciate** the value of family life, the implications of parenthood, and the needs of infants.
- to **develop** skills to effectively manage formative relationships and sexual situations.
- to **contribute** to a reduction in unwanted teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and abortion rates.
- to **know** where to get help and have the confidence to seek it.
- to **understand** the laws relating to sexual behaviour.

These issues will be approached in an age-appropriate way and often linked with the Science curriculum. For Junior School students the statutory guidance relates to the teaching of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), and lessons will be centred around:

- Puberty and changing bodies, including both physical and emotional changes.
- Life cycles
- Healthy relationships, boundaries and consent.
- Different families.
- Remaining safe, including online.
- Emotional maturity and empathy.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

The RSE programme will be led by the Head of Wellbeing, in collaboration with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Lead School Nurse. In the Junior School, RSE is one aspect of the wider Wellbeing programme and will be led by the Junior School Nurse and Form Tutors, in collaboration with the Junior School Head of Wellbeing and the Junior School Deputy Head (Pastoral)

It will be taught by people who are trained and confident in talking about issues such as:

- healthy/unhealthy relationships
- equality and respect
- abuse
- sexuality and gender identity
- sex and consent

It will be supported by pastoral staff within the school (Heads of Section, Heads of Year, and Form Tutors) and supplemented using relevant external speakers. Teaching staff will receive RSE training on during CPD sessions (including whole-school INSED days) throughout the academic year in order to support their ability to deliver high quality and accurate lessons. It is important that staff can create a



relationship of trust within RSE lessons so that students feel safe, supported and able to ask questions in an atmosphere of mutual respect (see also 5 Safe and Effective Practice).

3 Legislation (Statutory Regulations and Guidance)

Following statutory guidance from the Department for Education issued under Section 80A of the Education Act 2002 and section 403 of the Education Act 1996, we are required to teach Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) as part of the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This makes Relationships Education compulsory for all students receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all students receiving secondary education. Under the terms of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 we are required to teach personal, social, health and economic education which reflects the school's aim and ethos; and encourages respect for other people, paying regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act (2010).

Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against students because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage and be mindful of the SEND Code of Practice when planning for these subjects. In teaching Relationships Education and RSE, we are required to ensure that the needs of all students are appropriately met, and that all students understand the importance of equality and respect, in compliance with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.

In light of the revised Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance published by the Department of Education in July 2025, the school acknowledges the updated expectations which will become mandatory from 1 September 2026. Key changes include:

- **enhanced content on online safety (including harms related to pornography, deepfakes, scams and online influencers);**
- **personal safety in public environments (roads, railways, waterbodies, public spaces);**
- **violence against woman and girls;**
- **mental health (including grief, loss, loneliness);**
- **diverse family structures;**
- **greater emphasis on respectful relationships.**

Our policy, curriculum and teaching practice is being reviewed and revised during the 2025-2026 academic year to ensure full alignment with these requirements. We will consult with parents/carers, staff and governors, and provide training and resources for staff so that the school can deliver the updated content confidently, sensitively and inclusively. Exceptions (e.g. parent/carer withdrawal from sex education in the Senior School) will continue to be managed in line with statutory guidance.

4 Curriculum Design

RSE will be delivered in a way that affords dignity and shows respect to all those who make up our diverse community. It will not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics in the Equality



Act and will be sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of those in the wider school community. Reflecting our Christian foundation, it will explain the importance of trust, loyalty, fidelity and the Christian understanding of marriage as the context for sexual relationships, as well as the understanding of abstinence and celibacy as positive life choices. It will also seek to explain fairly the tenets and varying interpretations of different religious communities on matters of sex and relationships and teach these viewpoints with respect. It will value the importance of faithfulness as the underpinning and backdrop for relationships.

Our RSE programme is an integral part of our whole school PSHE education provision and will encompass the 12 points that are recommended by the Sex Education Forum for good quality RSE. This is based on research evidence and is supported by a wide range of organisations. We are therefore committed to Relationships and Sex Education, which:

1. is an identifiable part of a personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all the Year groups within the school;
2. is taught by staff regularly trained in RSE and PSHE (with expert visitors invited in to enhance and supplement the programme where appropriate);
3. works in partnership with parents and carers, informing them about what their children will be learning and about how they can contribute at home;
4. delivers lessons where students feel safe and encourages participation by using a variety of teaching approaches with opportunities to develop critical thinking and relationship skills;
5. is based on reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights, and distinguishes between fact and opinion;
6. promotes safe, equal, caring and enjoyable relationships and discusses real-life issues appropriate to the age and stage of students, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and safe relationships online;
7. gives a positive view of human sexuality, with honest and medically accurate information, so that students can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health in ways that are appropriate to their age and maturity;
8. gives students opportunities to reflect on values and influences (such as from peers, media, faith and culture) that may shape their attitudes to relationships and sex, and nurtures respect for different views;
9. includes learning about how to get help and treatment from sources such as the school nurse and other health and advice services, including reliable information online;
10. fosters gender equality and LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans) equality and challenges all forms of discrimination in RSE lessons and in every-day school life;
11. meets the needs of all students with their diverse experiences, including those with special educational needs and disabilities;
12. seeks students' views about RSE so that teaching can be made relevant to their real lives and assessed and adapted as their needs change.

The purpose of RSE is to help children and young people to be safe, healthy and happy as they grow up and in their future lives. RSE must always be appropriate to students' age and stage of development and is an essential part of safeguarding. The law requires that, from September 2020, Relationships and Sex education (RSE) is taught in all secondary schools in England, and that Relationships Education is taught in all primary schools in England. In addition, elements of sex education will be taught in National Curriculum Science lessons.

Our RSE programme will be taught according to the following over-arching principles:

- Ensures students' views are actively sought to influence lesson planning and teaching.



- Encourages students to reflect on their own learning and progress by giving feedback on how their understanding has been developed as a result of engaging in RSE lessons.
- Starts early and is relevant to students at each stage in their development and maturity.
- Reflects the fact that this form of learning is relative to the context and experience of each individual student, and that different elements of the programme will become more relevant to students as their context changes.
- Includes the acquisition of knowledge, the development of life skills and respectful attitudes and values.
- Covers a wide range of topics with a strong emphasis on relationships, consent, rights, responsibilities to others, negotiation and communication skills, and accessing services.
- Helps students understand social media, on and offline safety, consent, violence and exploitation.
- Is both medically and factually correct and treats sex as a normal and an important part of life.
- Is inclusive of diversity - gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, faith or belief, or other life experience.
- Explore the issues around gender identity and the law in relation to gender recognition and the rights of transgender individuals.
- Uses active learning methods and is rigorously planned, assessed and evaluated.
- Helps students understand a range of views and beliefs about relationships and sex in society - incorporating some of the mixed messages about gender, sex and sexuality from different sources including the media.
- Gives the opportunity for students to consider a range of ways to manage behaviour around sexual activity, including an understanding of pressure to engage in sexual activity before being ready to do so, and the option of abstinence.
- Teaches students about the law and their rights to confidentiality (even if under the age of 16) and is linked to school-based community health services and organisations.
- Promotes equality in relationships, recognises and challenges gender inequality and reflects girls' and boys' different experiences and needs.
- Teaches the key facts about the menstrual cycle including what is an average period, range of menstrual products and the implications for emotional and physical health.
- Addresses the physical and emotional damage caused by female genital mutilation (FGM) and teaches where to find support and that it is a criminal offence to perform or assist in the performance of FGM or fail to protect a person for whom you are responsible from FGM.
- Supports students to recognise when relationships (including family relationships) are unhealthy or abusive (including the unacceptability of neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence, including honour-based violence and forced marriage).
- Explores the impact of relationship abuse (psychological, physical, sexual or emotional) within a range of different types of relationships, and from a variety of gender and sexuality perspectives.
- Helps students to understand the law in relation to:
 - marriage
 - consent, including the age of consent
 - violence in relationships (including against women and girls, against men and boys, or within same-sex relationships)



- online behaviours including image and information sharing (including 'sexting', youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc.)
- pornography
- abortion
- sexuality
- gender identity
- substance misuse
- violence and exploitation by gangs
- extremism/radicalisation
- criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- female genital mutilation (FGM)

An overview of the learning in each year group can be found on the school website.

Some of the content of the RSE programme may also be taught within other curriculum areas, for example within the Science curriculum in Biology lessons, and within the programme of study for Religious Studies.

5 Safe and Effective Practice

We will maintain a safe learning environment by ensuring that teachers and students are following ground rules for each RSE lesson, covering the following principles recommended by the PSHE Association:

- **OPENNESS**

We will be open and honest, but not discuss directly our own or others' personal lives. We will discuss general situations as examples but will not use names or descriptions which could identify anyone. We will not put anyone 'on the spot'.

- **KEEP THE CONVERSATION IN THE ROOM**

We will keep the conversation within the room and we know that our teacher will not repeat what is said in the classroom unless they are concerned someone is at risk, in which case they will follow the school's safeguarding policy.

- **NON-JUDGMENTAL APPROACH**

It is okay for us to disagree with another person's point of view but we will not judge anyone, make fun of anyone, or put anyone down. We will 'challenge the opinion not the person'.

- **RIGHT TO PASS**

Taking part is important. However, we have the right to pass on answering a question or participating in an activity.

- **MAKE NO ASSUMPTIONS**

We will not make assumptions about people's values, attitudes, behaviours, life experiences or feelings.

- **LISTEN TO OTHERS**

We will listen to the other person's point of view and expect to be listened to.



- **USE OF LANGUAGE**

We will use the correct terms for the things we will be discussing rather than the slang terms, as they can be offensive. If we are not sure what the correct term is we will ask our teacher.

- **ASK QUESTIONS**

We know that no question is a stupid question. We will not ask questions that deliberately seek to embarrass anyone else. There is a question box for anonymous questions.

- **SEEKING HELP AND ADVICE**

If we need further help or advice, we know how and where to seek it confidentially, both in school and in the community. We will encourage friends to seek help if we think they need it.

These are most effective when they are written in students' own words, displayed in the classroom, monitored by students themselves, and followed consistently by the teacher as well as the students.

Distancing techniques such as question boxes are used to allow students to anonymously ask questions about sensitive issues, and to provide the teacher the opportunity to prepare answers to difficult topics. All staff teaching RSE will be supported by the Head of Wellbeing and the Lead Nurse.

6 Safeguarding

At the heart of effective RSE education is a focus on keeping children safe, and as such we play an important role in preventative education. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) sets out that all schools and colleges should ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Good practice allows students an open forum to discuss potentially sensitive issues. We recognise that such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Students will therefore be made aware of how to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This should include processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer.

Teachers are aware that effective RSE, which brings an understanding of what is and what is not appropriate in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue, and of what they are required to do in this instance by following the school Safeguarding Policy.

The protocol for inviting visitors into lessons is explained in the school Visiting Speaker Procedure documentation. All visitors/external agencies which support the delivery of RSE will be required to sign in upon arrival at the school, should wear a visitor's badge at all times, and be accompanied by a member of school staff.

7 Engaging Stakeholders

RSE within Eltham College is a partnership between home and school. Parents will be informed about the policy through consultation and feedback. The policy will be available to parents through the school website.

We are committed to working with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that they are fully aware of what is being taught within the RSE programme by providing access via the school website to schemes of work (from September 2025, these



will be whole-year curriculum by Section) along with outline lesson information and discussion points;

- providing additional resources and support through the school website, for example Wellbeing podcasts, or by signposting useful information via e-mail;
- offering parent information sessions and talks from visiting speakers to complement sessions that have been delivered to students;
- notifying parents when Relationships and Sex Education will be taught by e-mail communication, and signposting to the website curriculum materials.

Any parental enquiries regarding the RSE curriculum, should be addressed directly to the Head of Wellbeing, who will be able to provide further information about the content of the programme.

We recognise that parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from RSE content that is not part of statutory National Curriculum Science, however we will do this in negotiation with them to ensure that the student will not be significantly disadvantaged. If a parent/carer requests that their child be removed from relationships and sex education, we will meet with them to discuss the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded, as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes, rather than what was directly said by the teacher. We aim to maintain a constructive dialogue with them that is respectful of their viewpoint.

Governors will be informed of the RSE policy and curriculum through consultation and discussion of the relevant legislation and supporting documentation.

Student voice will be used to review and tailor our RSE programme to match the different needs of students, and will be sought using a variety of forums, such as MS Forms, or student discussion groups.

8 Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

We have the same high expectations of the quality of students' work in RSE as for other curriculum areas. A strong curriculum will build on the knowledge students have previously acquired, including in other subjects, with regular feedback provided on student progress. Lessons will be planned to ensure that students of differing abilities, including the most able, are suitably challenged. Whilst there is no formal examined assessment for RSE, outcomes from lessons will be assessed through the use of self-evaluations to capture progress, and to identify where students need extra support or intervention. Students will have opportunities to review and reflect on their learning during lesson as part of plenary session discussions and feedback forms. Student voice will be influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities to ensure that our curriculum is relevant and appropriate to the needs of the students.

Teachers will critically reflect on their work in delivering RSE through regular CPD sessions, including whole-school INSED days. Feedback from student self-evaluation will be used to identify where changes to provision is required, or where the content being covered needs to be re-visited or adapted to meet the needs of students.



9 RSE Policy Review Date

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Wellbeing.

This will ensure that the Policy continues to reflect any changes in legislation and responds to developments in best practice and the changing context of the school as we move towards full co-education.