

Each day, discovery.



ELTHAM COLLEGE

**Relationships and Sex Education
Policy**

Last reviewed: August 2026



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 conform to policy house style. References to appendix removed.
Annual Review	NJB/SFM	June-August 2026	Policy updated to reflect Statutory Guidance for teaching of RSE from September 2026. Section 1: underscored inclusive approach. Section 2: clarified new staff structure Section 5: added Five Rs to Curriculum Design Section 6: strengthened language around safeguarding, particularly online harms.



			Section 7: Added process around students withdrawn from RSE and statutory guidance.
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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 (2025)
- 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)



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.

In the Eltham Family of Schools, we value an inclusive and sensitive approach to the delivery of RSE. Our curriculum is research based and aligns with our school values to create a safe and supportive environment for our students. Respect is 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, RSHE 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, and Assistant Head (Pastoral).

For students in Years 7, 8 and 9 the RSE programme is delivered by Form Tutors. Lessons for students in Years 10, 12, 12, and 13 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



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) updated statutory guidance (published July 2025, for implementation from 1 September 2026), 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 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, sharing images, sextortion, AI risks such as deepfakes, scams, online influencers, harmful online cultures and ideologies);
- personal safety in public environments (roads, railways, waterbodies, public spaces);
- violence against woman and girls (laws around consent and abuse, understanding of sexual offences and coercion, specific clarification that strangulation is illegal);
- mental health (including grief, loss, loneliness, suicide prevention);
- diverse family structures (parenting responsibilities, raising children and family roles);
- greater emphasis on respectful relationships (power in relationships, ending relationships, boundaries and consent);
- health issues and reproductive health (menstrual health in more depth, conditions such as endometriosis and PMOS, fertility and menopause, serious health conditions and Gillick competence).

Our policy, curriculum and teaching practice has been 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 (the Wellbeing programme) and encompasses the twelve 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. Forms part of a planned, timetabled PSHE curriculum across all year groups.
2. Is delivered by trained staff, with expert visitors used where appropriate.
3. Works in partnership with parents and carers, keeping them informed and involved.
4. Provides a safe learning environment using varied methods to encourage participation and critical thinking.
5. Uses reliable, accurate information, including the law, and distinguishes fact from opinion.
6. Promotes safe, equal and respectful relationships, addressing age-appropriate real-life issues.
7. Provides positive, accurate and age-appropriate teaching about human sexuality and health.
8. Encourages reflection on values and influences, fostering respect for different views.
9. Teaches how to access help, support and reliable health information.
10. Promotes equality, including gender and LGBT+ equality, and challenges discrimination.
11. Meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and diverse experiences.
12. Seeks and responds to pupil voice to ensure relevance and continuous improvement.

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, alongside specific fertility issues such as PMOS and endometriosis.
- 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
 - harmful sexual behaviours, and sexual offences
 - 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, sextortion, and drug and knife purchases online)
- 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 and is shared with parents/carers at the start of the Academic year.

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.

Our wider Wellbeing Programme is encompassed by the Eltham College 5 Rs of Wellbeing, which incorporate the statutory elements of RSE, alongside best practice components to support wider personal and social development:

RESPECT Promote respectful, inclusive communities by challenging discrimination and harmful attitudes, critically assessing online content and extremism, and engaging positively in diverse and digital societies.

RELATIONSHIPS Understand healthy and unhealthy relationships, the impact of media and online influences, issues such as bullying, harassment, consent and power, and key aspects of sexual health, including contraception, parenting, fertility, and unplanned pregnancy options.

RESPONSIBILITY Understand physical development, healthy lifestyles, and reproductive health; assess and manage risks online and offline, including substance use and digital harms; and develop informed decision-making, resilience, and safe help-seeking.

RESILIENCE Set goals and build social and emotional skills, using self-regulation to support positive mental health, manage workload and pressure, and prepare effectively for exams.

READINESS Explore career and education pathways, build financial literacy and wellbeing, assess spending risks, and recognise and respond to online financial risks and exploitation.

The Wellbeing Curriculum covers all of Relationships, Sex and Health (RSE), as well as essential learning on Economic Wellbeing and Careers Education. Teaching materials are based upon PSHE Association resources and resources carrying the PSHE Association Quality Mark, such as those produced by the Home Office, the British Board of Film Classification, or the NHS.



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 followed consistently by the teacher as well as the students and are included in the lesson content for every RSE lesson.

Where particular lesson content may be difficult for students based upon their personal circumstances or pastoral concerns, a challenging content warning is included in the lesson presentation, reminding students to speak to their Form Tutor or teacher should they need additional support.

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

Statutory RSHE guidance places safeguarding at the centre of curriculum delivery, positioning RSHE as a key mechanism for preventing harm. It strengthens expectations around teaching pupils to recognise risk, identify unsafe situations (both online and offline), and seek support. The guidance introduces expanded content on online safety, exploitation, misogyny, violence, mental health, and personal safety, and emphasises the importance of creating safe learning environments in which pupils can disclose concerns and develop the knowledge and skills to protect themselves and others.

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. The school will fulfil its responsibility to ensure children withdrawn from sex education receive purposeful education during the withdrawal period by providing parents/carers with a clear and detailed outline of the content that has been covered to support them in reviewing the content at home. When a child is three terms away from turning 16, they have the right to opt back into sex education if they wish. In this case, the school will make arrangements to provide this education during one of those terms, in accordance with statutory guidance.

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 and pastoral listening projects.

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

As part of effective RSE provision, the RSE policy should be reviewed at least every 18-24 months to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff and parents and is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance.

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 our school context.