



PSHE and RSE (Relationship and Sex Education) Policy

Policy Review Date: September 2026

Version	Date	Created By
1.0	April 2023	G. Mann
2.0	January 2026	P. Chambers

Contents

School Ethos

Aims

Policy development

Statutory requirements

Definition

Delivery of RSE

Roles and responsibilities

Parents' right to withdraw

Training

Monitoring arrangements

Appendix 1: National Curriculum Aims

Appendix 2: Parent form: withdrawal from sex education within RSE

“Belong, Commit, Achieve”

Willow Park School is an independent specialist SEMH school committed to providing high-quality, trauma informed Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. This policy sets out how the school meets its statutory duties while ensuring that provision is sensitive to the emotional, social and developmental needs of our pupils.

Our Mission

At Willow Park we aim to create a safe and compassionate community where pupils belong, commit and achieve. We recognise the story and strengths of each individual, working first to understand and respond to the trauma and barriers they carry. From there we build trusting relationships, use trauma informed and neuro-affirming practice and teach with ambitious expectations, providing fun life experiences that every young person can re-engage with learning, grow in confidence and move towards a hopeful, purposeful future.

Core Values

Through our Core Values, RSE at Willow Park School supports pupils to:

- **Belong** - *We create a community where every pupil feels seen, safe and included. Relationships are the starting point for learning*
- **Commit** - *By developing trust, self-regulation, where we expect and model effort, attendance and perseverance.*
- **Achieve** - *By building the knowledge, skills and confidence needed for adulthood*

The policy reflects the school's belief that positive relationships, emotional safety and clear boundaries must be established before learning can take place.

Aims

The three key aims of Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) are:

1. Health and Wellbeing
2. Relationships
3. Living in the Wider World: Economic Wellbeing and Responsible Citizenship

Core Theme: Health and Wellbeing

- Understanding what constitutes a healthy lifestyle.
- Maintaining physical, mental, and emotional health and wellbeing.
- Managing risks and staying safe.
- Navigating change, such as puberty, loss and transition.
- Making informed choices and knowing where to seek help.
- Responding in emergencies and recognising influences on health.
- Navigating change such as puberty, loss and transition.
- To identify different influences of Health and wellbeing.

Core Theme: Relationships

- Developing and maintaining various relationships in diverse social and cultural contexts.
- Recognising and managing emotions within relationships.
- Responding to risky or negative relationships, including bullying and abuse, and knowing how to seek help.
- Respecting equality and diversity in relationships.

Core Theme: Living in the Wider World: Economic Wellbeing and Responsible Citizenship

- Respecting oneself and others and understanding the importance of responsible actions and behaviour.
- Understanding rights and responsibilities as members of families, groups, and as citizens.
- Learning about different groups and communities.
- Respecting equality and diversity and being a productive member of a diverse community.
- Understanding the importance of protecting the environment.
- Learning about money management and the role of money in people's lives.
- Gaining a basic understanding of enterprise.

The aims of relationships and sex education (RSE) are:

- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place
- Prepare pupils for puberty, and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and

empathy

- Create a positive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies

Policy development

Willow Park School maintains an up-to-date written policy for Relationships Education and, where sex education is taught, for Relationships and Sex Education. In line with the statutory guidance, the school proactively engages and consults with parents and carers when developing and reviewing this policy. The school also listens and responds to the views of pupils and staff so that RSHE meets pupils' needs, is taught at the right time, and supports prevention of harm before it occurs. The policy is published on the school website and a copy is provided free of charge on request.

The consultation and policy development process includes:

- **Review and compliance check:** Senior leaders and designated staff review current statutory guidance and relevant local intelligence, safeguarding trends and emerging risks, ensuring the policy and curriculum remain up to date and responsive.
- **Staff consultation and readiness:** Teaching and pastoral staff contribute to curriculum design, sequencing and delivery approaches. Training needs are identified to ensure skilled, confident delivery and consistent safeguarding practice.
- **Parent and carer engagement and transparency:** Parents and carers are consulted on policy content and curriculum intent. The school is transparent about RSHE materials and makes resources available for parents and carers to view on request. Where changes to planned content are required in response to emerging issues, parents and carers are informed in advance and relevant materials are shared on request.
- **Pupil voice and safeguarding sensitivity:** Pupils' views are gathered in age and stage appropriate ways, with careful attention to vulnerability, SEND and SEMH needs. This informs how content is made accessible, safely discussed, and supported through a trauma informed approach.
- **Ratification and review cycle:** The School Governor approves the policy. The policy is reviewed at least annually and additionally when statutory guidance changes or when safeguarding intelligence indicates a need to update content or approach.

This policy is written with regard to the **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance** and is compliant with the **Independent School Standards Regulations** (including requirements relating to PSHE and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development), alongside the school's safeguarding duties and equality obligations.

Statutory Requirements

Personal, social, health and economic education is a core part of Willow Park School's provision and is central to supporting pupils' wellbeing, safety and development. For many of our pupils, PSHE provides an essential foundation for understanding risk, building healthy relationships and developing the skills needed to make safe, informed decisions now and in the future.

Our PSHE programme is carefully sequenced and aligned to current statutory guidance, complementing the wider curriculum and addressing key areas including relationships education, relationships and sex education, health education, online safety, substance use, financial awareness and healthy lifestyles. Content reflects emerging risks and safeguarding priorities while remaining appropriate to pupils' age, stage of development and emotional readiness.

All compulsory content is taught sensitively and inclusively, recognising the diverse backgrounds, experiences and vulnerabilities of our pupils. Teaching is grounded in a trauma informed approach that prioritises emotional safety, respectful discussion and clear boundaries. Pupils are supported to understand the law in ways that are factual, protective and proportionate, without causing unnecessary distress.

Relationships education and relationships and sex education support pupils' emotional, social and cultural development through learning about relationships, boundaries, consent, sexual health, identity, diversity and healthy lifestyles. Teaching combines accurate information with opportunities for reflection and values-based learning. RSE is rooted in safeguarding and wellbeing and does not promote sexual activity.

As an independent school, Willow Park School provides relationships education to all pupils in line with section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Where sex education is taught beyond the statutory science curriculum, it is delivered in accordance with current statutory guidance and with due regard to guidance issued under section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

PSHE and RSE at Willow Park School are delivered consistently and thoughtfully in accordance with this policy, ensuring pupils are supported with care, clarity and compassion to belong, to commit and to achieve.

All PSHE and RSE teaching is delivered through a trauma informed approach that prioritises emotional safety, inclusion and respect. Teaching is age and stage appropriate, sensitive to pupils' experiences and beliefs, and designed to meet the needs of all learners, including those with SEND. Pupils are taught about the law in clear, factual ways so they understand rights, responsibilities and how to keep themselves and others safe.

The school works closely with parents and carers, respecting family backgrounds, values and beliefs. Parents are informed of their right to request withdrawal from non-statutory elements of sex education where applicable. LGBT+ content is integrated thoughtfully and at appropriate points in the curriculum, and staff consistently model positive, respectful relationships.

Willow Park School complies with the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate against pupils with protected characteristics. Reasonable adjustments are made, positive action is taken to reduce disadvantage, and the Accessibility Plan is reviewed regularly in line with the SEND Code of Practice.

An overview of the PSHE curriculum is provided in Appendix 1. The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains responsive to pupils' needs, safeguarding priorities and emerging risks. Ongoing consultation takes place with pupils, parents and staff. Where pupils raise questions beyond the scope of this policy, staff respond carefully and appropriately to ensure pupils are supported with accurate information and do not seek unsafe sources. Staff receive regular training to support confident, consistent and sensitive delivery of PSHE and RSE.

Definition

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is about the emotional, social, and physical development of pupils. It involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity, and personal identity.

RSE combines sharing factual information with exploring issues and values, and is delivered in an age-appropriate, inclusive, and sensitive manner.

It is not about the promotion of sexual activity, but about equipping pupils with the knowledge and skills to make safe, informed decisions.

Delivery of RSE

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is delivered as part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum. The biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, while additional elements are incorporated into Religious Education (RE). Pupils also receive stand-alone sex education sessions led by experienced staff and qualified health professionals.

Primary Phase:

Relationship education in primary school 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

The DfE Guidance 2025 (p.11) recommends that primary schools should consult parents about the content of anything that will be taught within sex education. This process should include offering parents support in talking to their children about sex education and how to link this with what is being taught in school as well as advice about parents' right to request withdrawal from sex education.

Secondary Phase:

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in secondary schools is designed to equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds. The curriculum covers:

- Families and different types of committed stable relationships
- Respectful relationships, including friendships
- Online and media influences, including online safety and digital relationships
- Being safe, including understanding consent, boundaries, and safeguarding
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health, contraception, and the law

These areas of learning are taught within the context of family life, with a trauma-informed and compassionate approach. We promote belonging by ensuring no pupil is stigmatised for their home circumstances whether from single-parent, LGBT, adoptive, foster, or extended families. With sensitivity and commitment, we recognise and support pupils with different care structures, such as those who are looked after or young carers. Guided by our values of belong, commit, and achieve, we aim to create a safe, inclusive environment where every pupil is empowered to thrive

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

All pupils at Willow Park School have additional learning needs and an Education Health Care (EHC) Plan. In line with the latest Department for Education guidance, we ensure that all pupils can access learning in the classroom by differentiating resources and teaching approaches as appropriate. This enables every child to fully participate in the PSHE and RSE curriculum. In most class teachers are responsible for identifying and providing additional support where needed and may work in partnership with the SENCo, clinical team and parents/carers to tailor provision for individual pupils. Our approach is inclusive, trauma-informed, and compassionate, ensuring that every pupil feels a sense of belonging and is empowered to achieve.

Equality

We are committed to meeting the needs of all pupils and promoting equality, respect, and a strong sense of belonging, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the most recent DfE statutory guidance. Sexual orientation and gender reassignment are recognised as protected characteristics, and our curriculum is designed to be inclusive, accessible, and welcoming to all. By embedding LGBT+ content throughout the curriculum in an age-appropriate and timely manner, we ensure that every pupil feels valued and included.

We value every individual and respect the rights of pupils, families, and staff to hold their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, promoting a community where everyone belongs.

Should any aspect of the curriculum raise concerns for parents or carers, we invite open discussion with the school to ensure understanding, support, and a sense of shared belonging.

Roles and responsibilities

The School Governing board

The Governing Board is responsible for approving the PSHE and RSE policy and holding the Headteacher to account for its effective implementation across the school. The Board ensures that statutory requirements are met and that the policy is reviewed regularly in line with government guidance

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that PSHE, including RSE, is delivered consistently and to a high standard throughout the school. The Headteacher manages requests from parents to withdraw pupils from non-statutory or non-science components of RSE, in accordance with statutory guidance, and ensures that alternative provision is made where appropriate.

Staff

All staff are expected to:

- Deliver PSHE, including RSE, in a sensitive, inclusive, and age-appropriate manner
- Model positive attitudes towards PSHE and RSE
- Monitor and support pupils' progress and wellbeing
- Respond to the individual needs of pupils, including those with additional needs
- Respond appropriately to requests for withdrawal from non-statutory or non-science components of RSE
- Engage in relevant training and professional development to ensure high-quality delivery

Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching PSHE or RSE. Any concerns about teaching RSE should be discussed with the Headteacher, who will provide appropriate support.

Parents' right to withdraw

In accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) Statutory Guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), 2025, parents and carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of the sex education delivered as part of statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), except for those elements that are part of the national science curriculum (DfE RSHE Guidance 2025, Section: Right to Withdraw, p. 27).

Primary:

- Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from relationships education or health education (DfE RSHE Guidance 2025, Section: Primary Education, p. 27).
- Parents may request to withdraw their child from the non-statutory, non-science components of sex education within RSE. Requests should be made in writing, using the form provided in Appendix 3 of this policy, and addressed to the Headteacher (DfE RSHE Guidance 2025, Section: Withdrawal Process, p. 28).

- The Headteacher will discuss the request with parents/carers and ensure that alternative, appropriate provision is made for the pupil during these lessons (DfE RSHE Guidance 2025, Section: Alternative Provision, p. 28).

Secondary:

- Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the non-statutory, non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the pupil wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this (DfE RSHE Guidance 2025, Section: Secondary Education, p. 29).
- Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing, using the form in Appendix 3, and addressed to the Headteacher (DfE RSHE Guidance 2025, Section: Withdrawal Process, p. 29).
- A copy of the withdrawal request will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The Headteacher will discuss the request with parents/carers and take appropriate action (DfE RSHE Guidance 2025, Section: Record Keeping, p. 29).
- Alternative learning will be provided for pupils who are withdrawn from sex education during their allocated teaching time (DfE RSHE Guidance 2025, Section: Alternative Provision, p. 29).

Additional Guidance:

- The science curriculum in all schools includes content on human development, including human reproduction. There is no right to withdraw a child from the science curriculum (DfE RSHE Guidance 2025, Section: Science Curriculum, p. 27).
- Parents are encouraged to discuss the content and timing of sex education with the school to ensure they are fully informed about what their child will be taught (DfE RSHE Guidance 2025, Section: Parental Engagement, p. 28).

Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of PSHE and RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development calendar. The Headteacher will also invite visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The delivery of PSHE, including RSE, is overseen by the senior leadership team through comprehensive curriculum planning and robust quality assurance processes, ensuring compliance with statutory guidance. Progress in PSHE and RSE is monitored by class teachers using our internal assessment system, SOLAR, with regular moderation to maintain high standards and equity for all pupils.

Our approach is trauma-informed and compassionate, recognising the diverse experiences and needs of our pupils. We prioritise emotional safety, wellbeing, and a sense of belonging, ensuring every child feels valued and supported. Guided by our core values; belong, commit, achieve we are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where pupils are encouraged to engage fully, persevere in their learning, and reach their potential.

The senior leadership team reviews this policy annually to ensure ongoing compliance and responsiveness to pupil needs. For further information about the SRE and PSHE curriculum, please contact Katie Harvey at Katie.harvey5@willowparkschool.co.uk.

Appendix 1: Alignment with National Curriculum Aims

At Willow Park School, our curriculum is designed to draw on and align with the latest National Curriculum expectations, including Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Health Education, in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance (2025). This ensures that all pupils have access to recognised knowledge, skills, and qualifications, while allowing flexibility in how learning is sequenced, taught, and assessed to meet individual needs and contexts.

Primary Phase: By the end of primary school, pupils will know—

Families and People Who Care About Me

- The importance of families for providing love, security, and stability.
- The characteristics of healthy family life, including commitment, protection, care, and spending time together.
- That families can look different, and all should be respected; understanding that love and care are central to all families.
- The significance of stable, caring relationships for children's security and wellbeing.
- The meaning and importance of marriage as a formal, lifelong commitment.
- How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from trusted adults or services.

Caring Friendships

- The role of friendships in happiness and security, and how to form and maintain them.
- Key characteristics of healthy friendships: mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, and support.
- That healthy friendships are welcoming and inclusive, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.
- How to navigate ups and downs in friendships, resolve conflict, and seek help when needed.
- How to recognise trustworthy friends and manage situations where friendships may be unhealthy or uncomfortable.

Respectful Relationships

- The importance of respecting others, even when they are different or make different choices.
- Practical steps to support respectful relationships in various contexts.
- The conventions of courtesy and manners.
- The link between self-respect and happiness.
- Expectations of respect in school and wider society, including towards those in authority.
- Understanding bullying (including cyberbullying), its impact, and how to get help.
- What stereotypes are, and how they can be unfair or harmful.
- The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers, and adults.

Online Relationships

- That people may behave differently online, including pretending to be someone they are not.
- The same principles of respect apply online as in person, including when anonymous.
- Rules and principles for keeping safe online, recognising risks, harmful content, and how to report concerns.
- How to critically consider online friendships and information, including risks from people they have never met.
- How information and data is shared and used online.

Being Safe

- Appropriate boundaries in friendships and other relationships, including in digital contexts.
- The concept of privacy for both children and adults, and when it is not right to keep secrets.
- That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe contact.
- How to respond safely to unknown adults in all contexts, including online.
- How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or uncomfortable.
- How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to persist until they are heard.
- How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- Where to get advice, including from family, school, or other sources.

Secondary Phase: By the end of secondary school, pupils will know—

Families

- The different types of committed stable relationships and their contribution to happiness and child-rearing.
- The legal status of marriage and other long-term relationships, including rights and protections.
- Why marriage must be freely entered into and its importance for many couples.
- The roles and responsibilities of parents, and the characteristics of successful parenting.
- How to determine whether relationships are trustworthy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others.

Respectful Relationships, Including Friendships

- The characteristics of positive, healthy friendships in all contexts, including online: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent, and conflict management.
- Practical steps to improve or support respectful relationships.
- How stereotypes, especially those based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, can cause harm.
- Expectations of respect and tolerance in school and society, including towards those in authority.
- Understanding different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact, and how to get help.
- Recognising criminal behaviours in relationships, including violence and coercive control.
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence, and why these are always unacceptable.
- Legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality, and the uniqueness and equality of everyone.

Online and Media

- Rights, responsibilities, and opportunities online, with the same expectations of behaviour as offline.
- Online risks, including sharing material and the difficulty of removing compromising content.
- Not to provide or share material they would not want shared further.
- How to report and manage issues online, and the impact of harmful content.
- Understanding that sexually explicit material (e.g., pornography) can distort perceptions and negatively affect behaviour.
- The criminality of sharing/viewing indecent images of children, including those created by children.
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared, and used online.

Being Safe

- The concepts and laws relating to sexual consent, exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence, and FGM, and their impact on relationships.
- How to actively communicate and recognise consent, including how and when it can be withdrawn in all contexts.

Intimate and Sexual Relationships, Including Sexual Health

- The characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships: mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests, sex, and friendship.
- How choices in sex and relationships affect all aspects of health: physical, emotional, mental, sexual, and reproductive.
- Facts about reproductive health, fertility, and the impact of lifestyle.
- Strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including peer pressure and resisting or not pressurising others.
- The choice to delay sex or enjoy intimacy without sex.
- Facts about contraception, pregnancy (including miscarriage), and choices regarding pregnancy (with impartial, medically and legally accurate information).
- How STIs (including HIV/AIDS) are transmitted, how to reduce risk, and the importance of testing.
- Prevalence and impact of STIs, key facts about treatment.
- How alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour.
- How to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Appendix 2: Parent form: RSE Withdraw Request

Name of child:

Form Group:

Name of Parent/Carer:

Date:

Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education

Any other information you would like the school to consider

Parent/Carer Signature: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL

Agreed actions from discussion with parents/carers:

Include notes from discussions with parents and agreed actions taken:

Headteacher Signature: _____

