Coppice Primary Partnership

An Ethic of Excellence



Relationship & Sex Education & Health Policy

Approved: T5 2025/2026

Next Review: T5 2026/2027

Contents

1. Introduction and Statutory requirements 3

2. Definitions, Rationale and Ethos 3

3. Roles and Responsibilities 4

4. Curriculum Design and Delivery 4

5. Safe and Effective Delivery, including Safeguarding 5

6. *Openness and Engagement with Parents and Other Stakeholders* 6

7. Right to Withdraw from Sex Education 6

8. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation 6

9. Policy Review 7

1. Introduction and Statutory Requirements

This policy outlines our approach to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education at Coppice Primary Partnership. We believe that RSHE is an integral part of pupils' education, contributing to their personal development, well-being, and ability to thrive in a complex world. It aims to equip pupils with the knowledge, understanding, skills, and confidence to build healthy relationships, stay safe, and make informed decisions about their lives.

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff and parents, taking into account the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on RSE and Health Education, and the recommendations of the PSHE Association.

2. Definitions, Rationale, and Ethos

As a Primary Academy we must provide relationships education to all pupils as per section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. We do not have to follow the National Curriculum but we are expected to offer all pupils a curriculum that is similar to the National Curriculum including requirements to teach science which would include the elements of sex education contained in the science curriculum. In teaching RSHE, we are required by our funding agreements to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996. Within the Coppice Primary Partnership, we teach RSHE as set out in this policy.

The DfE's statutory requirements mean schools must teach Relationships Education and Health Education in primary schools. In addition to the statutory requirements, our school has chosen to teach sex education in upper KS2 (Years 5 and 6), in line with content about conception and birth, which forms part of the national curriculum for science.

We define 'relationships education' as learning about the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships, with particular reference to friendships, family relationships, and relationships with other children and adults.

We define 'sex education' as learning about the emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, sexuality, diversity and personal identity. RSHE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSHE is not about the promotion of sexual activity.

Teaching will include clear, factual learning about biological sex, including the differences between males and females, as part of the science curriculum. This content will be taught in an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate way, ensuring pupils understand biological facts without introducing contested or non-statutory concepts.

We believe RSHE is important for our pupils and school because it helps them to develop the knowledge, skills, and understanding they need to lead healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives. We ensure RSHE is inclusive and meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) through differentiation and by adaptive teaching methods where it is felt necessary. We ensure RSE fosters equality by promoting respect for diversity and by challenging stereotypes and prejudice.

The intended outcomes of our program are that pupils will:

- Know and understand the different types of relationships they may encounter in their lives, and the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Understand they have a right to be safe, respected, and valued in all of their relationships.
- Understand they have a responsibility to treat others with respect and to behave in a way that is safe and responsible.
- Develop the skills of communication, empathy and assertiveness.
- Develop the attributes of self-respect, confidence and resilience.
- Prepare pupils for puberty and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.

This policy was produced by school leaders through consultation with staff and parents.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board will approve the RSE policy, and the LGBs will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The Headteacher in each school is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across their school and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from components of RSE (see section 7).

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way, considering the religious and cultural views of the school community (remembering that under the Equality Act 2010, religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics).
- Modelling positive attitudes toward RSE.
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils.
- Ensuring that teaching related to sexual orientation and gender identity should be delivered clearly, sensitively, and respectfully, in line with statutory guidance, recognising that pupils' sexual orientation and gender identity may be emerging.
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE.

Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with their line manager or curriculum lead. Within Coppice Primary Partnership, responsibility for teaching RSE will fall with the Class Teacher and support will be offered where required.

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

Teaching will reflect the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 in an age-appropriate way. Pupils will learn that families and individuals may differ and that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect, including in relation to sex and sexual orientation. Gender reassignment is not taught explicitly in primary school; however, where relevant to the needs of a class, or in response to pupils' questions, it may be referred to within the context of equality, respect and inclusion.

4. Curriculum Design and Delivery

RSHE is not delivered in isolation, but firmly embedded in all curriculum areas including Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, Religious Education (RE), Physical Education (PE), Humanities and Science. At Coppice Primary Partnership, the main RSHE content is delivered as part of a wider topic to provide a context for learning. Several aspects of RSHE are taught throughout the year, whilst some specific

age-related aspects are delivered at a pre-planned point during the year in order that parents are informed and can be involved in supporting their child.

RSHE is normally delivered by class teachers in mixed gender groups other than when it is deemed more appropriate for topics to be covered in single sex groups.

Pupils are able to ask anonymous questions and a range of strategies are used to gather pupil voice.

Our curriculum and teaching of the subject will be inclusive of, and accessible to all pupils. Every child is entitled to receive RSHE regardless of their:

- ethnicity
- gender
- religion
- age
- culture
- sexuality
- language
- special educational need or disability (SEND)

As far as is appropriate, pupils with special educational needs should follow the same RSHE curriculum as all other students. Careful thought is given concerning the level of differentiation needed, and in some cases the content or delivery will have to be adapted. This must be in line with each individual child's needs and, where relevant, their EHCP. Teachers and/or Teaching Partners work with individual pupils where required, and if appropriate.

Relationship education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- families and people who care for me
- caring friendships
- respectful relationships
- online relationships
- being safe
- pupils also receive stand-alone sex education sessions

These areas of learning are taught taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBT parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers amongst other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some children may have a different structure of support around them (for example: looked after children or young carers).

Our RSHE curriculum prepares pupils to navigate the online world safely and critically. Teaching includes age-appropriate learning about online relationships, digital consent, privacy, misinformation, artificial intelligence, manipulated or deepfake content, harmful online influences, and how to seek help if they encounter unsafe or upsetting material. Learning will be adapted to reflect emerging technologies and online risks.

5. Safe and Effective Practice, including Safeguarding

We ensure a safe learning environment by establishing clear ground rules, using appropriate language, and creating a culture of respect and trust. Pupils' questions are answered by teachers in an age-appropriate and

sensitive manner. If a pupil's question goes beyond the sex education covered by the school or relates to sex education from which they have been withdrawn, the teacher will inform parents and DSLs where appropriate.

Distancing techniques, such as using case studies, are used because it allows pupils to explore sensitive issues in a safe and non-threatening way.

The RSHE policy supports our school's approach to safeguarding and links to/is informed by other policies and statutory and non-statutory guidance for schools, including the school's safeguarding policy.

Teachers are aware that effective RSHE can at times lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue. Teachers will consult with the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about a pupil.

The protocol for inviting visitors/external agencies into lessons is to ensure that they have been appropriately vetted. If a visitor/external agency receives a disclosure from a pupil, they will inform the designated safeguarding lead.

Teaching will support pupils to recognise unsafe situations, including online grooming, coercion, exploitation, bullying and inappropriate requests for personal information or images. Pupils will be taught how and where to seek help.

6. Openness and Engagement with Parents and Other Stakeholders

The policy is available to parents through the school website and on request from the school office. We are committed to openness with parents through regular communication and consultation. We work closely with parents to ensure they are aware of what is being taught and provide access to resources if requested. We notify parents when RSHE is taught by sending out letters or emails in advance. Staff, pupil and wider community voice is used to review and tailor our RSHE program to match the different needs of pupils through questionnaires and focus groups.

7. Right to Withdraw from Sex Education

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools and the content set out in this guidance therefore focuses on Relationships Education. Primary Sex Education at Coppice Primary Partnership will, with parental consent, focus on the scientific process of human conception and birth.

Parents **do not** have the right to withdraw their children from relationships and health education.

Parents **have** the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education as mentioned above. Requests for withdrawal must be put in writing. This must also include the name of the child, class and reason for withdrawal. Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

8. Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation

Assessment of RSHE contributes to evaluation through pupil self-assessment, teacher observation, and feedback from parents and pupils. The contribution of visitors and external agencies is monitored and evaluated by seeking feedback from pupils and staff. Pupil voice is influential in adapting and amending planned learning activities.

9. Policy Review

During the transition to the revised 2026 RSHE guidance, this policy will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with emerging statutory requirements. After this point, this policy will be reviewed by the Coppice Primary Trust every 2 years or in line with new statutory guidance. This will ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff and parents and remains in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance.