

Statutory RSE Policy

Scope:	Senior School (Including Boarding and Homestay)
Release date:	April 2025
Author:	Senior Deputy Head Senior School
Reviewer:	Senior Deputy Head Prep School
Approval body:	Board of Directors <i>(Ratified at Edcomm Meeting)</i>
Review date:	September 2025

Linked documents

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the

- PSHE Policy
- Prep School PSHE Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- SEND Policy
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (R50) and Health Education 2019

Acronym

RSE Relationships and Sex Education

Availability

This policy may be viewed on the School website, the staff shared area, and a printed copy is available upon request from the School Office/Pupil Services Team.

Definition of RSE

RSE is about the emotional, social and cultural development of pupils, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity. RSE involves a combination of sharing information and exploring issues and values. RSE is not about the promotion of sexual activity, sexual orientation, or a specific sexual identity.

Introduction and aims

This policy applies to all senior school pupils and forms part of the school curriculum.

At Wisbech Grammar School, we recognise that effective Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is essential for the personal development and wellbeing of our students. Our aim is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life.

Our RSE programme is delivered in accordance with the statutory requirements, as set out in the 'The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Relationships Education is compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education.

The aims of RSE at our school are to:

- Help pupils develop the knowledge and attributes they need to manage their lives, now and in the future, in terms of relationships,
- Help pupils prepare for life – and work – in modern Britain, developing knowledge, skills and attributes they need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society,
- Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place, and pupils feel comfortable asking questions,
- Give pupils an understanding of sexual development and the importance of sexual health and hygiene,
- Encourage pupils to understand the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships,
- Teach pupils how to form and maintain positive, respectful and healthy relationships
- Help pupils develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy
- Create a positive culture around sexuality and relationships,
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies,
- Help pupils understand that healthy relationships are an important part of wellbeing.

As pupils move through the school, RSE sessions help them to learn to respect the views of others, and to consider the needs and rights of other citizens. They clarify their opinions and attitudes in discussions with peers and informed adults, and consider the consequences of potential decisions.

There are many choices to be made as pupils progress through the school and the RSE programme aims to enable the pupils to make positive choices around sexual health and relationships.

We recognise the important role that parents/carers play in teaching their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We aim to work in partnership with parents, carers, and pupils, consulting them about the content of the RSE program. We also aim to work in partnership with other relevant health and education professionals as appropriate. An example of this is an external organisation that visits the school yearly to provide sexual health testing, and the C-card scheme (providing free condoms, advice, and information for young people aged 13-24 years).

Statutory requirements

Our policy follows the statutory guidance given by the government (DfE) and meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards. As an Independent School, we must ensure that every registered pupil who is provided with primary education, is provided with relationship education, and every pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school, is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused through a parent's decision to opt out, in accordance with section 34 of Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Independent School Standards, and guidance outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996.

Policy development

This policy is developed in consultation with the school community. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

- Review – the Head of PSHE review all relevant information, including but not limited to, relevant national and local guidance,
- The policy is drafted in accordance with up-to-date statutory guidance and aligned with the Independent School Regulations/BSO Standards. The school curriculum plans are then amended accordingly,
- Parents and any interested parties within our community are annually invited to provide feedback on RSE through consultation when they are informed about the right to withdraw. Parents are asked to contact the relevant Head of PSHE. This feedback can be used to influence policy content,
- Pupil consultation – pupils are consulted about their RSE lessons in pupil voice meetings, surveys, and within lessons,
- Ratification – once amendments are made, the policy is ratified and published to the school website <https://www.wisbechgrammar.com/about-us/policies-isi-reports/>
- Policy review – this policy will be reviewed every year.

Curriculum

Our RSE curriculum is age-appropriate, inclusive, and tailored to the maturity of our students in Years 7–13. It is delivered primarily through PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education), but is supported through tutor time, school assemblies, section briefings, cross-curricular links, and through the work of our pastoral team. We ensure that the curriculum:

- builds knowledge progressively across year groups.
- Reflects the law, including the Equality Act.
- Provides opportunities for discussion in a safe and supportive environment.

During pupils' academic career, broad topic areas covered in our RSE sessions include cover:

- Families
- Relationships online and the media
- Growing up: physical and mental changes
- Positive relationships and relationship values, knowing what healthy and respectful relationships look like, including within families, friendships and romantic relationships
- Forming, keeping and ending relationships
- Recognising pressure, persuasion and coercion and knowing how to respond to it
- Spotting unhealthy and abusive relationships, including the different types of abuse within relationships and the support available
- Bullying, grooming, exploitation, sexual harassment, and honour-based violence
- What is good communication?
- Dealing with conflict and standing up for yourself
- Understanding marriage, civil partnerships and long-term commitments
- Sexuality and gender identity
- Freedom and capacity to consent, understanding the effects of alcohol and drugs on consent, understanding the law and gauging readiness
- Contraception
- Sexual Health - preventing and treating STIs
- Fertility in men and women, and routes to parenthood
- Pregnancy outcomes, including miscarriages and abortion
- Family life: parenthood and caring
- The impact of pornography and unreal expectations
- The role of intimacy and pleasure
- Hormonal changes from puberty to menopause
- Choosing a good partner

We have developed a spiralling curriculum in consultation with resources from The PSHE Association, Medway, Unifrog, Cre8tive Education, and The Journey of Life. We have consulted with our community, considering the age, needs and feelings of pupils. For more information about our curriculum, please contact the Head of PSHE or the Senior Deputy Head.

Delivery of RSE

The RSE course is delivered to all pupils through discrete PSHE lessons, taught by a select number of teachers. It is an integral part of the wider PSHE curriculum.

Sessions are interactive, discussion-based, and supported by a range of resources which are tailored to the individual group. External speakers are invited to enrich the programme, under the supervision of school staff. All teaching is sensitive to the backgrounds and beliefs of all pupils.

RSE focuses on giving young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, including:

- Families,
- Respectful relationships, including friendships,
- Online and media,
- Being safe,
- Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.

These areas of learning are taught using inclusive language within the context of family life, taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances (families can include single parent families, LGBTQ+ 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).

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of PSHE in liaison with the Senior Deputy Head:

- Responsibility for the overview of this policy, however, all teaching staff are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and acted on,
- Provides engaging lesson material,
- Ensuring that RSE is delivered consistently across their relevant section of the school, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from non-statutory components of RSE,
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-statutory components of RSE.

The Senior Deputy Head

- Evaluating this policy,
- All pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes,
- The subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned,
- The quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation,
- Teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND,
- Clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn; and,

- The subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.

Teaching Staff (the PSHE team):

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way.
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE.
- Using inclusive language.
- Monitoring progress, which includes completing an attitude to learning grade
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils.
- Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE, but if they feel uncomfortable with a specific topic due to personal reasons, the Head of PSHE will find a suitable member of the pastoral team to cover those specific lessons. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the relevant Head of PSHE.
- Ensure pupils are made aware of helpful external agencies.
- Be unbiased in their delivery of the topics covered and do not indoctrinate pupils. For example, teachers should not aim to influence the political or religious views of the pupils.
- Challenge and record any inappropriate language of radical views that are disclosed in the sessions.

Pupils

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

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Our curriculum is inclusive and RSE is accessible for all pupils. For those pupils with special educational needs or specific learning difficulties, the school has a well-established Learning Support department led by a SENCO. Pupils can use their own device and OneNote in RSE lessons to help with accessibility. All tutors are aware of the provision on the SEN register and pupils are supported at an individual level.

Further details of this provision can be found in our Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will be the starting point to ensure accessibility. RSE can also be particularly important subjects for some pupils; for example, those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors will be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects.

Parental Engagement and Right to Withdraw

- We work in partnership with parents to ensure the curriculum reflects our shared values and the needs of our pupils.
- If parents require more information on RSE for secondary-aged children, this is a useful source of information for them:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/812594/RSE_secondary_schools_guide_for_parents.pdf

- Parents of senior pupils have the right to withdraw their children from the non-statutory components of sex education within RSE (but not from relationships education) up to and until 3 terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the school will arrange this.
- Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing to the school either by replying to our annual parent letter, or by emailing office@wisbechgrammar.com
- The relevant Head of PSHE along with the Senior Deputy Head will discuss the request with parents in the first instance.
- Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

An example of the information that parents will receive is as follows:

Next term pupils will be moving on to their RSE unit. RSE lessons include teaching about how to have fulfilling and healthy relationships, including friendships and intimate relationships, families, puberty, developing self-esteem, conflict resolution strategies, keeping safe and consent. Pupils will also have opportunities to ask questions that help prepare them for relationships of all kinds in the modern world, and we invite local organisations to support our delivery, such as the Terrence Higgins Trust.

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from all or some of the sex education delivered as part of the statutory RSE, following discussions with the school. However, the Relationships Education or Health Education content, and any content from the statutory Science curriculum is not covered by this opt-out. It is also important to note that from three terms before your child turns 16 (the legal age of sexual consent), if they themselves wish to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, they can opt back in.

Please be reassured that sessions have been designed in line with DoFE recommendations and with support from the PSHE Association, Unifrog, Medwal and Cre8tive Education, to ensure that the content is sensitive, comprehensively planned, inclusive and age-appropriate. If you wish to withdraw your child from all or some of the lessons on sexual health and sex education, would you please reply using the electronic form below. If pupils are removed, they will go to 'The Space' and be set other PSHE material to cover that their class teacher will provide feedback on.

Monitoring arrangements

- The delivery of RSE is monitored by the Senior Team through regular learning walks, and by the Head of PSHE through curriculum development and sharing of best practice.
- Pupils' development in RSE is monitored by the PSHE teachers as part of our internal assessment systems. All senior school pupils are regularly given an 'Attitude to Learning' grade.
- The delivery of RSE is evaluated through
 - Gathering pupil views on RSE topics, delivery methods, and their understanding,
 - The use of baseline and end-of-unit assessments for pupils to self-evaluate to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and confidence,
 - The use of pupil presentations and in-class assessment for learning through a variety of activities,

- Teacher reflections through regular meetings,
- Collecting RSE teachers' views on lesson resources and delivery, and sharing best practice,
- Self-evaluation by staff teaching RSE to reflect on what worked well and what could be improved,
- Working with an external organisation, 'Cambridgeshire PSHE'
- Annual review of curriculum content to ensure alignment with statutory requirements and emerging issues (e.g. online safety, consent, harmful sexual behaviour) through school, local and national data.
- Parent feedback
- Using the Society of Heads networking group to evaluate what we do, compared to other, similar, schools
- Keeping up-to-date with RSE blogs and forums