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Relationships and

Sex Education Policy

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy – 2026 Compliant

Introduction

This policy outlines how Etwall Primary School delivers Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Health Education (RSHE) in line with statutory guidance updated for September 2026. It reflects the school's commitment to supporting all pupils to develop knowledge, skills, and values to form healthy, respectful relationships and to keep themselves physically and emotionally safe.

What is RSE at Etwall Primary School?

• Relationships Education focuses on healthy friendships, families, and interactions. It teaches pupils about healthy friendships, families, and relationships, and supports them to develop respect, boundaries, and communication skills.

• RSE includes statutory science content on human reproduction.

• RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education) further includes statutory Health Education, covering wellbeing, mental health, online safety, physical health, and puberty.

Rationale and Ethos

The aim of Relationships and Sex Education at Etwall Primary is to equip children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and take responsibility for their health and wellbeing. We believe that children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. We recognise the central importance of healthy respectful relationships focusing on family and friendships (in all contexts, including online) in supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, academic achievement and future success. Our programme also aims to support pupils in their development of personal attributes such as kindness, integrity, generosity, honesty and respect and to support our wider work of building resilience and character that we know are fundamental to pupils being happy, successful and productive members of society.

Our integrated PSHE and RSE curriculum aims to:

• Develop communication and skills to be effective in friendships and relationships.

• Ensure children are able to name parts of the body correctly and describe how their body works; learn how to care for their body and value health, fitness and hygiene.

- Ensure children know how babies are conceived and born.

• Respect their own and other peoples' bodies and personal space.

• Recognise appropriate and inappropriate touching, be able to keep themselves safe and to know when and how to ask for help and support.

• Recognise that difference is OK and celebrate it and so recognise and challenge pressure to conform to gender stereotypes.

• Be confident with their body image and prepared for puberty.

The Department for Education (DfE) recommends that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that boys and girls are prepared for the changes that adolescence brings and drawing on the knowledge of the human life cycle - how a baby is conceived and born. We focus on attitudes, values and skills, as well as knowledge and understanding. This will include developing self-esteem, the skills to manage relationships and most importantly keep themselves safe in all their relationships.

Based on the revised Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE) statutory guidance published in July 2025, which comes into full force on 1 September 2026, the Department for Education (DfE) has introduced key guiding principles.

Here are the five core guiding principles:

1. Engagement with Pupils: Schools are expected to ensure the curriculum is informed by pupil voice and reflects their lived experiences to ensure content is relevant and engaging.

2. Engagement and Transparency with Parents: Schools must proactively consult with parents on the curriculum content and be transparent about materials used, ensuring parents can view resources and understand the importance of RSHE for child wellbeing.

3. Positivity: The curriculum should focus on building positive attitudes, skills, and healthy norms about relationships and health, rather than just focusing on risks. This includes supporting children to build self-worth and resilience.

4. Careful Sequencing: Teaching should be structured to build knowledge and skills progressively from an early age, ensuring pupils are equipped with essential knowledge to manage different experiences safely before they encounter them.

5. Relevant and Responsive: The curriculum must be age-appropriate and dynamic, tailored to the specific context of the school and the needs of its pupil cohort, allowing it to adapt to new risks (e.g., online safety).

Aims

Our RSHE curriculum aims to:

• Develop skills for healthy, respectful and positive relationships.

• Support emotional literacy and regulation.

• Promote online safety, providing accurate information to help pupils stay safe online and offline, understanding their rights and potential financial harms.

• Build confidence, resilience and wellbeing and the ability to seek help when needed.

• Equip pupils with age-appropriate understanding of body changes and puberty.

• Foster empathy, respect for diversity, and an understanding of equality.

• Support safeguarding by empowering pupils to recognise unsafe situations and know how to report concerns.

Legislative Framework

Etwall Primary School promotes values of respect, responsibility, empathy,

kindness, and inclusion. Our RSHE curriculum supports these values by helping pupils:

• Understand and respect differences and diversity.

• Build positive relationships based on mutual trust.

• Develop respect for themselves and others.

• Build confidence and social skills aligned with our whole-school ethos. This policy reflects Section 80A Education Act 2002, Keeping Children Safe in Education, Equality Act 2010 and the revised DfE RSHE guidance effective 1 September 2026. Under these regulations, Relationships Education and Health Education are statutory in all primary schools.

Primary schools may also choose to teach sex education beyond the science curriculum; where this occurs, parents have a right to request withdrawal.

Influences on Policy

The curriculum is shaped by:

• National evidence about the importance of RSHE, including research by the Sex Education Forum showing that high-quality RSE improves safeguarding, mental health, and relationship outcomes.

• Pupil voice, identifying topics pupils want more understanding of such as friendships, consent, and digital safety.

• Local safeguarding trends, including trends seen through local authority briefings, school pastoral systems, and pupil wellbeing surveys.

• The statutory RSHE changes including strengthened online safety, accurate body terminology, inclusivity, emotional wellbeing.

• Parental engagement, ensuring the curriculum reflects community needs and expectations.

Curriculum Content

Our curriculum is progressive, building year on year and age-appropriate sequencing across year groups following the 'PSHE Matters' document. The content is introduced when pupils are ready and revisited to strengthen knowledge and skills. Relationships Education covers families, friendships, respectful behaviour, consent, diversity, safety, and online conduct. Health Education covers mental wellbeing, physical health, hygiene, risks, first aid, and puberty. Non-statutory sex education (beyond science) is limited.

'PSHE Matters' scheme overview

Our RSE programme is integrated as part of our PSHE curriculum 'PSHE Matters', a spiral, progressive curriculum produced by Derbyshire County Council which is used across the school (EYFS-Year 6)

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework PSED Educational Programme:

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These

attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

In Key Stage 1 (age 5-7)

Children will learn about recognising naming and managing their emotions; what makes them special; what makes a good friend; how to be kind to others; what's special about them and their families; how families are different; life cycles; about changes and how they have changed since babyhood; how boys and girls bodies are different; the correct names for genitals; that some parts of their body are private; how to ask for help if they are worried or concerned.

In Lower Key Stage 2 (age 7-9)

Pupils learn about change in friendships, relationships and families; how to be a good friend online and offline; managing conflict in friendships; how and why their bodies are changing; staying safe online; about gender stereotypes and their impact; about feelings and how to cope with them; what a baby needs, about privacy, boundaries and secrets and who to talk to if they feel anxious or unhappy.

In Upper Key Stage 2 (age 9-11)

Pupils learn about the important relationships in their life; about how to show love to others; the different kinds of families and partnerships; about marriage and stable loving relationships and their importance for having babies and bringing up children; how to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships; the different types of bullying, why they are unacceptable and how to respond; the physical and emotional changes in puberty, including menstruation, and how to cope with them; how babies are conceived, how they develop and are born; the impact of social media on self-esteem, body image, health and safety and ways to manage this. Some elements of RSHE are statutory. Learning about 'the changing adolescent body' is part of statutory Health Education. Children will learn key facts about puberty including physical and emotional changes, menstruation and the key facts about the life cycle.

Furthermore, statutory National Curriculum science content includes:

In Key Stage 1

• identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense.

• That animals, including humans, have offspring that grow into adults.

In Key Stage 2

• Describe the differences in the life cycle of a mammal, an amphibian and insect and a bird.

• Describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals.

• Describe the changes as humans develop to old age.

Delivery/ Roles and responsibilities

There is a coordinator in school who is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the integrated RSE and PSHE scheme of work, storing resources and providing support for staff. All staff support the policy and have been integral in its development. The Governors are ultimately responsible for the policy.

How RSE is provided

Different teaching and learning methods are used to ensure pupils' full participation and development of skills and a safe learning environment is established in all PSHE lessons.

RSE is provided;

1. Within the taught, age appropriate, spiral RSE programme within the integrated PSHE curriculum, curated by the PSHE coordinator.

2. Within Science as stipulated by the National Curriculum and/or as negotiated between the Science and PSHE coordinators.

3. Through other curriculum areas for example Drama, English etc.

4. Through assemblies.

5. Via the provision of appropriate leaflets and other information sources such as visitors.

6. Through pastoral support and targeted intervention, where appropriate, with vulnerable individuals.

7. Delivery in response to incidents.

Safe learning environment

Safe learning environments are established through:

• Ground rules being set within each class.

• Using distancing techniques such as scenarios and fictional character being introduced.

• Providing question boxes and opportunities for anonymous questions.

• Responding to misconceptions sensitively and factually.

• Safeguarding protocols, ensuring any disclosures indicating a risk of harm are reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and teachers redirecting questions that are inappropriate for the age group.

• Inclusive practice ensures SEND access. Staff respond factually and safely to questions.

Dealing with questions

Sometimes an individual child will ask an explicit or difficult question in the classroom.

• In most cases, teachers will attempt to answer pupils' questions and concerns in a sensitive, age and development appropriate manner.

• Questions do not have to be answered directly and can be addressed later. Teachers will use their skill and discretion in these situations and, if necessary, refer to the PSHE coordinator for advice and support.

• Pupils are encouraged, where appropriate, to write down questions anonymously and post them in a box. The teacher will have time to prepare answers to all questions that are relevant.

• Teachers are careful not to be drawn into providing more information than appropriate to the age of the child.

• If a question is too personal the teacher should remind the pupil of the ground rules. No one (teacher or pupil) should be expected to answer a personal question.

• If a question is too explicit, feels too old for a pupil, is inappropriate for the whole class, or raises concerns about sexual abuse, the teacher should acknowledge it and promise to attend to it later on an individual basis. If a teacher is concerned that a pupil is at risk of sexual abuse then the child protection/safeguarding guidelines will be followed.

Assessment

Assessment is central to teaching and learning in all curriculum subjects and PSHE is no different. Our integrated PSHE curriculum provides opportunities and resources for assessment of RSE learning. Assessment of pupils' existing knowledge may also often be the starting point for RSE work. Needs assessments is built into lesson planning where required as each group may

have different knowledge, experience and understanding. The elements of RSE that form part of the Science curriculum are assessed within the requirements of that subject.

Continuity and Progression

Continuity and progression will be generated through the adoption of a whole school approach to the planning and delivery of clearly defined and progressive learning objectives covering knowledge, skills and understanding as mapped out in 'PSHE Matters'.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The scheme of work and curriculum used by the school will be evaluated and updated as required by the PSHE Lead.

The curriculum is monitored via:

• Lesson observations/ learning walks

• Pupil feedback/ pupil voice

• Staff reflection and CPD

• Governor oversight

• Curriculum leader review

Equality and Inclusion

At Etwall Primary, we deliver RSE with regards to the Equality Act 2010 and observance of the protected characteristics of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership and sexual orientation. We recognise that children have varying needs regarding RSE depending on their circumstances and background. To achieve this, the school's approach to RSE will consider:

Research conclusions that girls typically engage easier in RSE. Therefore, we will consider the needs of boys, as well as girls, and use approaches that will actively engage them. We shall also be proactive in combating sexism, misogyny, sexualised behaviour and sexist bullying.

• Some pupils may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) that result in particular RSE needs at different times. We will ensure

that RSE is accessible to all pupils through high-quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised.

• We recognise that our pupils may come from a variety of family situations and home backgrounds. We will take care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances and deliver the curriculum sensitively and inclusively.

Pastoral support for Pupils / dealing with incidents

All members of staff will be approachable to discuss questions related to relationship and sex issues with the children. Midday Supervisors and Teaching Assistants will receive further training to enable them to confidently deal with sex related issues which include homophobic / gender related bullying.

Menstrual wellbeing

The onset of menstruation can be confusing or even alarming for girls if they are not prepared and pupils will be taught key facts about the menstrual cycle in an age-appropriate manner. In addition to curriculum content, we will also make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls prepare for and manage menstruation including requests for menstrual products with provision made for menstruation including those impacted by period poverty. With our school providing both sanitary towels and period pants as required.

External Providers

Visitors supplement but do not replace teacher-led provision. Teachers always remain present. All materials are checked in advance and are reviewed and shared with parents before delivery.

Working with Outside Agencies / Visitors

Visitors such as a school community nurse or other suitably qualified professionals such as members of Bridge the gap team or representatives from the charity NSPCC may supplement the RSE curriculum as a planned event with the teacher present. We ensure that visitors are made aware of the RSE policy in order that they support the children in an appropriate manner.

Staff Development

Etwall Primary School is committed to high-quality delivery through:

• Regular CPD in RSHE

• Safeguarding and equality training

• Curriculum leader support

• Access to national training materials

Supporting RSE outside the classroom

At Etwall we recognise parents and carers as children's primary educators and work closely with them by:

• Holding information sessions where necessary

• Providing topic overviews half termly

• Sharing resources in advance

• Offering opportunities to discuss concerns

Parents may withdraw their child from non-statutory sex education only.

They cannot withdraw from:

• Relationships Education

• Health Education

• Science curriculum objectives

If a parent/guardian has concerns about any aspect of the programme they will be

directed to talk with their child's class teacher in the first instance. Withdrawal requests must be submitted in writing to Mrs Bentley. If a child is withdrawn from elements of the programme they will be provided meaningful education.

Policy development and review

This policy was developed through:

• Consultation with teaching staff

• Engagement with parents and carers

• Input from the governing board

Review of statutory guidance Curriculum leaders monitor delivery through observations, planning scrutiny, and consultation. Reviewed biennially.