

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Rationale

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) involves teaching children about reproduction, sexuality and sexual health. The aim of RSE is to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships. Physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked and it is important that pupils understand that good physical health contributes to good mental wellbeing and vice versa.

At Briarwood School Relationships and Sex Education plays an important role within the curriculum and school life supporting pupils to deal with difficult moral and social questions and in order to make informed choices in order to keep safe. As part of Relationships Education pupils learn about stable relationships and marriage. Pupils are helped to develop skills to enable them to understand difference, respect themselves and others with the intention of preventing and removing prejudice.

Relationships and Sex Education does not encourage early sexual experimentation. It teaches pupils to understand how their bodies are changing, understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others. It aims to support pupils in developing their confidence, maturity and self-esteem.

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. Relationships and Sex Education is part of Personal, Social, Health and Emotional (PSHE) education for our pupils and fits within our 'Myself' and 'My Independence' curriculum strands at Briarwood. Our pupils need the knowledge, skills and understanding to make positive and informed choices about their personal safety and relationships.

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents/carers.

The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – a member of staff or working group pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/stakeholder consultation – parents/carers and any interested parties are consulted annually to discuss RSE curriculum content for their child, examples of curriculum content and resources are provided by the class teacher
4. Pupil consultation – pupil voice is a core aspect, ensuring next steps and further opportunities for learning are developed following the pupil's responses and requests
5. Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

Aims

At our school, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) aims to provide a safe and structured framework in which sensitive discussions can take place. The programme is designed to:

- Prepare pupils for puberty, helping them understand sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- Promote self-respect, confidence, empathy, and positive personal qualities such as kindness and integrity.
- Create a positive and inclusive culture around issues of sexuality and relationships.
- Teach pupils the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- Ensure all content is adapted to pupils' age and developmental level to maintain suitability and understanding.

RSE offers pupils the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in two key areas:

1. Relationships Education

- Develop a positive self-image and greater awareness of personal safety.
- Build personal autonomy and the ability to express needs, feelings, and opinions.
- Develop and maintain a variety of healthy relationships within diverse social and cultural contexts.
- Recognise and manage emotions within relationships.
- Identify risky or negative relationships, including all forms of bullying and abuse, and respond appropriately by seeking help.

2. Sex Education

- Develop an individual understanding of their own bodies, including scientific terminology for private body parts, and changes during puberty.
- Maintain sensible attitudes toward bodily change and personal hygiene.
- Understand the concepts of public and private actions.
- Learn about reproduction, sexual intercourse, and contraception.
- Recognise that they can seek advice and support from trusted adults.

Entitlement and Content

Differentiation and Curriculum Access

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is adapted to ensure developmentally appropriate and accessible learning for all pupils. Opportunities and activities are identified within each scheme of work, and teachers, in collaboration with parents, senior management, and the RSE subject lead, determine which objectives are meaningful for each pupil.

RSE follows the PSHE 2017 curriculum guidance and references the PSHE Planning Framework 2018 for pupils with SEND. Briarwood School ensures pupils have access to an appropriate curriculum by modifying targets to suit individual needs.

Equality and Inclusion

RSE is delivered to all pupils regardless of gender, culture, or ability. Multisensory approaches are used to support engagement and understanding. Teachers are responsible for being aware of any medical, physical, or learning needs that may affect a pupil's ability to access RSE. Support, equipment, and resources are provided by the subject lead or relevant professionals as required.

Parental Engagement

Teachers work in partnership with parents to ensure they understand the objectives and teaching approaches used in RSE. Parents are informed of their right to withdraw their child from non-statutory sex education. Alternative arrangements are made for pupils who are withdrawn. Statutory Relationships and Health Education lessons are mandatory and cannot be withdrawn.

Statutory Requirements

As a maintained specialist school, we must provide relationships education to all pupils under section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#).

In teaching RSE, we must have regard to [guidance](#) issued by the secretary of state, as outlined in section 403 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

We also have regard to legal duties set out in:

- Sections 404 to 407 of the Education Act 1996.
- Part 6, chapter 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Parental Withdrawal

This section outlines parents' rights regarding their child's participation in Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSE/RSHE). While statutory relationships and health education lessons are mandatory for all pupils, parents may request that their child be withdrawn from certain non-statutory sex education lessons up to the age of 16. Please find a record sheet for parents and teachers to complete with parental withdrawal information outlined, to be saved in each pupils information folder on the teachers drive. For students aged 16 and over, including those in SEND settings, young people are considered capable of making their own decisions regarding sex education. All content is adapted to the pupils' age and developmental level to ensure suitability and understanding. The table below summarises the types of education, withdrawal rights, typical content, and relevant notes for staff and parents.

Type of Education	Parent Withdrawal Allowed?	Typical Content	Notes
Non-statutory sex education (3–16)	Yes	- Contraception- Sexual relationships- STIs (if outside science curriculum)- Intimate relationships taught as part of PSHE/RSE, not science	Schools must respect withdrawal requests; child may miss these lessons until age 16.
Non-statutory sex education (16–19 SEND)	No	- Contraception and sexual health in detail- STIs and safe sexual practices- Intimate relationships, sexual orientation, gender identity- Online sexual safety- Adult relationships and healthy sexual behaviour	Young people over 16 make their own decisions; content should be adapted to cognitive and developmental levels.
Statutory relationships education (3–19)	No	- Friendships and caring relationships- Respect and boundaries- Consent and personal safety- Different family structures	Mandatory for all pupils; ensures safeguarding and social development.
Statutory health education (3–19)	No	- Puberty and bodily changes- Menstruation and hygiene- Physical and mental health- Healthy lifestyle choices	Mandatory for all pupils, including SEND; cannot be withdrawn from these lessons.

Curriculum Content

Early Years, Key Stage 1 & Key Stage 2

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is tailored to pupils' age, developmental stage, and emotional maturity. In the early years and primary phases, the focus is on building friendship, self-esteem, emotional awareness, and understanding of basic body knowledge, delivered through the "Myself" and Science curriculum. Pupils learn to communicate their feelings, recognise and respond to the emotions of others, respect differences, and understand the importance of family and special relationships. They are supported to develop cooperative skills, resolve conflicts, and recognise and respond to bullying appropriately.

Safety and wellbeing are emphasised, including understanding personal boundaries, distinguishing between secrets and surprises, judging acceptable physical contact, and managing dares. In line with statutory science requirements, pupils also learn about puberty, menstruation, body changes, hygiene, and reproductive terminology.

Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4

At secondary level, RSE continues to be delivered in class, with sensitive questions addressed in smaller groups or on a one-to-one basis where appropriate. Sex education is provided in gender-specific groups, while pupils withdrawn from this content continue to follow statutory science lessons.

Pupils develop the knowledge and skills to maintain healthy relationships, communicate effectively, respect differences, and offer support to others. They are taught to recognise and manage a range of emotions, identify and respond to negative or risky relationships, and understand discrimination, bullying, and prejudice. Safety education includes recognising unhealthy relationships, understanding acceptable contact, distinguishing confidential information from secrets, and learning about marriage, civil partnerships, and forced marriage laws. Pupils also learn about sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and apply knowledge of body changes, personal hygiene, and public versus private boundaries.

Sex education at secondary level focuses on bodily functions and changes, reproduction, sexual health, contraception, and the emotional aspects of relationships. Pupils are encouraged to develop sensible attitudes toward bodily changes, personal hygiene, and sexual wellbeing, and are supported to seek advice from trusted adults.

Statutory and non-statutory curriculum content overview

Stage	Statutory RSE Content	Statutory Sex Education (Science)	SEND Adaptations / Notes
(Early Years / FS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognising and naming body parts - Understanding personal boundaries - Developing positive relationships - Understanding feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Correct names for genitals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use picture cards / Boardmaker symbols - Social stories about body autonomy - Simple games about emotions and friendships
(KS1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families and care - Caring friendships - Respectful behaviour - Safe online use (basic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differences between males and females - Basic life cycles of humans & animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual aids for family types - Songs / stories about sharing, kindness, respect - Age-appropriate videos or puppets to explain life cycles
(KS2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Healthy friendships - Respectful relationships - Managing conflict - Online safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human reproduction (age-appropriate) - Changes in puberty - Life cycles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social stories for puberty (e.g., using Boardmaker / photos) - Practical hygiene demonstrations - Scaffolded discussion about emotions & relationships
(KS3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All KS2 content continued - Consent & boundaries - Healthy relationships - Online safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed puberty changes - Fertility basics - Conception and pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step-by-step visual guides for puberty - Role-play for understanding consent - Use simplified language & repetition
(KS4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing relationships education - Personal safety - Consent & online safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contraception - STIs - Healthy sexual behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use social stories / visual scenarios for sexual health - Group / 1:1 discussions adapted to cognitive levels - Use accessible apps or videos
(Post-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintaining relationships - Consent - Recognising abusive relationships - Personal safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Optional: revision of previous content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practical life skills (e.g., managing relationships, online safety) - Use real-life scenarios and role-play - Ongoing scaffolded support for personal safety and autonomy

Use of Resources and External Agencies in RSE

When planning and delivering Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), we ensure that all resources and materials:

- Align with the statutory RSE guidance.
- Support pupils in applying their knowledge across different contexts and settings.
- Are age-appropriate, reflecting the pupils' developmental stage and maturity.
- Are evidence-based, using robust facts and statistics.
- Fit within the overall curriculum plan.
- Come from credible and reputable sources.
- Are compatible with effective teaching approaches.
- Are sensitive to pupils' experiences and designed to avoid causing distress.

When consulting with parents and carers, we provide clear examples of the resources planned for use. Our current resources include Jigsaw PSHE, Twinkl, the PSHE Association, and the NSPCC.

Engagement with External Agencies

Before working with any external agency, we ensure that:

- Materials and approaches are accurate, balanced, unbiased, and age-appropriate.
- Content is suitable for the pupils' developmental stage and in line with statutory guidance.
- All work complies with this policy, the Teachers' Standards, the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Education Act 1996.

We only collaborate with agencies where we have full confidence in their approach and resources. For all external speakers and materials, we:

- Confirm that content supports the intended learning outcomes.
- Review any case studies or materials and consider feedback from other schools that have worked with the agency.
- Clarify in advance: the content of sessions, the agency's position on issues, and the names of all individuals attending.
- Follow our usual safeguarding procedures for all visitors.
- Conduct basic online checks to identify any potential concerns.
- Check the agency's protocols for photography, recordings, or personal data use.
- Ensure a teacher is present at all sessions and retains the authority to stop or refuse any activity if necessary.
- Inform agencies that all content must be available to parents and carers, and we share all external materials with them.

Prohibited Practices

We will not, under any circumstances:

- Work with agencies that promote or support extreme political positions.
- Use materials from such agencies, even if the materials appear neutral.
- Work with agencies that do not allow their materials or content to be shared with parents and carers.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board will approve the RSE policy, and hold the headteacher and leadership team to account for its implementation.

Leadership Team

The leadership team is responsible for making sure that RSE is taught consistently across the school, for sharing all resources and materials with parents and carers, and for managing requests to withdraw pupils from [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE.

Staff

The Head of Education is responsible for the curriculum content mapping of RSE, the implementation of this is monitored by the Head of Teaching and Learning alongside Heads of School and the Myself subject coordinator.

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a way that is sensitive, high-quality and appropriate for each year group
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- Responding appropriately to pupils whose parents/carers wish them to be withdrawn from the [non-statutory/non-science] components of RSE
- Modelling positive behaviour and avoiding language that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and being conscious of everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and stereotypes
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or disclosures that pupils may make as a result of the subject content to the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- Staff do not have the right to opt out of teaching RSE. Staff who have concerns about teaching RSE are encouraged to discuss this with the leadership team.

Pupils

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

Training

Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of our ongoing CPD offer within teachers meetings, department meetings, INSET training and Twilight training offer.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessments are made using the Briarwood fine prompt levels to show each step of progress pupils make throughout the year, the pupils have annual targets in place which are analysed throughout the year to ensure appropriate intervention and challenge. The schemes of work and data will be monitored by the subject coordinator in order to improve teaching and learning. The subject coordinator for Relationships and Sex Education will continue to monitor coverage across the school and how it is delivered to ensure pupil progress. This will involve observations of taught sessions to reflect on all aspects of teaching and learning within this subject area. An action plan for further development will be regularly updated.

Policy Review Date: August 2026 in light of the following...

Key Changes in RSHE Guidance Effective from September 2026

- 1. Inclusive Teaching on Family Structures**
Primary schools are now "strongly encouraged" to teach about same-sex parents alongside other family arrangements when discussing families. At the secondary level, schools should ensure that content about same-sex relationships is integrated into the RSHE curriculum, rather than being delivered as a standalone unit.
- 2. Gender Identity Education**
The previous proposal to ban teaching about gender identity has been removed. The updated guidance states that pupils should be taught the facts and the law about biological sex and gender reassignment. However, schools are advised not to present any particular view, especially regarding gender identity, as fact.
- 3. Expanded Content on Online Safety and Harmful Influences**
The curriculum now includes education on identifying positive male role models and challenging online misogyny. This aims to address harmful influences such as "incel" culture and the impact of pornography on attitudes towards women.
- 4. Mental Health and Wellbeing**
Mental health education will begin in primary school, focusing on emotions and bullying. In secondary schools, topics such as suicide prevention, mental health resilience, and the influence of harmful online content will be addressed.
- 5. Parental Consultation and Rights**
Schools are required to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their RSHE policies. Parents retain the right to withdraw their children from sex education, but they must be informed of the content being taught and the reasons for its inclusion.
- 6. Training and Support for Educators**
From early 2026, schools will be able to apply for training grants to help staff tackle these sensitive topics with confidence. Additionally, resources like Oak National Academy's online safety lessons will be available to support educators in delivering the updated curriculum.

These changes reflect a comprehensive approach to RSHE, aiming to equip students with the knowledge and skills to navigate complex social and personal issues in a respectful and informed manner.

Parent information letter



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Date:

Dear Parents and Carers,

The Department for Education announced changes to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). These changes came into effect from September 2020 and all schools are required to comply with the updated requirements.

We have reviewed our RSE curriculum and policy to ensure that it is appropriate to meet the needs of our pupils based on their age, learning needs, physical and emotional maturity and religious and cultural backgrounds.

The compulsory elements that schools are required to teach are:

- Relationships Education – All Primary
- Relationships and Sex Education – All Secondary
- Health Education – All Primary and Secondary

In Term 5 we will be teaching Changing Me.

This scheme of work covers:

- Growing up
- Appropriate touch
- Public and private – body parts/behaviours/spaces
- Puberty
- Types of relationships
- Sex education

You will be contacted by the class teacher if they exploring any particularly sensitive topics. The majority of students will be focusing on; physical changes relating to growing up and appropriate touch, understanding public/private body parts and spaces and internet safety. **Students will access individual sex education and relationships as and when their physical, emotional and social development dictates is appropriate.**

If you have any questions or if you would like to talk to us in more detail please contact you child's head of school.

More Information can be found in our Relationship and Sex education policy published on our website:

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Moles

Head of Education

Parent/carer form requesting their child’s withdrawal from sex education within RSE (save onto the teachers drive within the pupil’s information file)

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS/CARERS			
Name of child		Class	
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/carers and agreed actions taken.