RSHE Life Skills Policy

Reviewed: July 2026

Adapted from Model PSHE and RSHE policy for use by East Sussex schools (2025/26)

School Vision:

"At PaWS we have an ambitious vision to work in partnerships with families, the church and the wider community to prepare all our children with the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours they will need in order to flourish, reach their potential and enjoy fullness of life."

(John 10:10)

This policy and will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if the RSHE curriculum is amended, for example in response to emerging themes, changing pupil needs or introduction of new legislation and guidance.

The school's Governing Board monitors the impact of RSHE on an annual basis. The governors give serious consideration to any comments, consultation and evidence of impact.

Consultation with pupils will be conducted on a regular basis to support with reviewing the curriculum to ensure it remains responsive to emerging needs and the policy updated accordingly.

What is RSHE Life Skills?

At Pevensey and Westham, RSHE Life Skills covers 'Relationships and Sex Education' (RSE) and 'Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE). Our curriculum supports pupils' wellbeing, relationships and safety and meets the statutory guidance.

Policy context and rationale

This policy covers Pevensey and Westham Church of England Primary School's approach to teaching Personal, Social, Health & Economic (PSHE) education which includes relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). This policy has been updated to reflect the new RSHE Guidance released in July 2025 (for implementation by September 2026). This policy has been subject to thorough consultation with the whole-school community including pupils, parents/carers, staff, school governors. The policy aligns to the RSE Church of England Principles and Charter (see appendix). Pupil consultation has ensured that the needs of all pupils can be met through the

delivery of an age and stage appropriate curriculum that addresses relevant issues, informed by analysis of public health data and pupil priorities.

Policy availability

Stakeholders can be informed about the policy through consultation events or by accessing a copy from the school website. Should a hard-copy of the document be required, the school will be happy to provide this upon request and will also work with any stakeholders that require the policy in an alternative format to meet their individual needs, ensuring equitable accessibility for all. The policy can be obtained in an alternative format by contacting: admin@pevenseyschool.org.uk.

Policy values, aims and objectives

Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities but also challenges and risks. In this environment, 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.

Our school's overarching aims and objectives are "to prepare all our children with the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours they will need in order *to flourish, reach their potential and enjoy fullness of life*." (John 10:10). RSHE Life Skills at PAWS is underpinned by a clear set of embedded values and principles that complement the school ethos and permeate through the teaching practice, resources and classroom management of delivery.

RSHE is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health in an age and stage appropriate manner. RSHE equips children and young people with accurate information, positive values and the skills to enjoy healthy, safe and positive relationships, to celebrate their sexuality and to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing both now and in the future. We recognise the importance of PSHE in preparing children and young people to live safe, fulfilled and healthy lives. The overarching objective of PSHE is to support children and young people through a journey of physical, emotional and moral development via the teaching of essential knowledge, skills and values within the framework of the law and relevant acts and guidance.

Effective RSHE can make a significant contribution to the development of personal skills needed by pupils to establish and maintain relationships. RSHE will ensure children and young people are encouraged to understand the importance of stable, loving relationships, respect, love and care. It also enables young people to make responsible and informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

PSHE will be approached through evidence-based, best practice principles to ensure the highest impact on improving pupil health, wellbeing, safeguarding and lifelong outcomes. The following principles are based on research evidence, supported by a wide range of leading organisations.

Principles of effective PSHE

Our PSHE programme:

- Is an identifiable part of our school curriculum, which has planned, timetabled lessons across all the Key Stages.
- Is taught by staff regularly trained in PSHE
- Uses carefully selected expert visitors invited in to enhance and supplement the programme, where appropriate.
- Works in partnership with parents and carers, informing them about what their children will be learning and how they can contribute at home.
- Delivers lessons where pupils feel safe and encourages participation by using a variety of teaching approaches with opportunities to develop critical thinking and relationship skills.
- Is based on reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights, and distinguishes between fact and opinion.

- Promotes safe, equal, caring and enjoyable relationships and discusses real-life issues appropriate to the age and stage of pupils, including friendships, families, consent, relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and safe relationships online.
- Gives medically accurate information so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health in ways that are appropriate to their age and maturity.
- Gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their values and influences (such as from peers, media, faith and culture) that may shape their attitudes to relationships and nurture respect for different views.
- Includes learning about how to get help and treatment from safe sources such as health and advice services including reliable information online.
- Fosters gender equality and LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans) equality and challenges all forms of discrimination in everyday school life.
- Meets the needs of all pupils with their diverse experiences including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Seeks pupils' views so that teaching can be made relevant to their real lives and assessed and adapted as their needs change.

Entitlement and equality of opportunity

All children are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum delivered in an age and stage appropriate manner. Teachers will include a range of teaching styles and groupings to allow all children to make progress. Every child will be given opportunity to develop their skills independently and in groups, enhancing their own confidence and self–esteem.

We actively celebrate the diversity of our pupils, their families and the wider whole-school community. RSHE Life Skills will always be taught in a non-judgemental, non-biased and fully inclusive manner through clear, impartial, scientific information as well as covering the law to ensure all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. We do not use RSHE as a means of promoting any form of sexual orientation over another.

Through consultation, continual assessment and regular reviews of the curriculum we ensure that we continually recognise and respect pupils' different abilities, levels of maturity, personal circumstances (including faith or culture and that of their family, friends and the wider whole-school community) in accordance with the school's inclusion policy.

Teaching and learning

The RSHE Life Skills programme at PAWS is taught by class teachers. All staff involved in the delivery of RSHE Life Skills have received specialist training to ensure that pupils receive clear and consistent approaches throughout their time at PAWS. Whole staff and individual training needs will be identified through the school's self-evaluation process and staff appraisal.

On occasion external visitors, experts and agencies may be invited to contribute to the delivery of PSHE to enhance delivery of these subjects, bringing in specialist knowledge and different ways of engaging with children and young people. When this happens, our school will follow our External Visitor Policy which includes:

- Check the visitor or visiting organisation's credentials.
- Ensure the teaching delivered by the visitor fits with our planned programme and our published policy.
- Discuss the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils.
- Ask to see in advance the materials visitors will use as well as a lesson plan so that collectively we can ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs (e.g. special educational needs) and make sure these are available for parents/carers to view.
- Agree how confidentiality will work in any lesson and that the visitor understands how safeguarding reports should be dealt with in line with our school's policy.

Monitor and evaluate the visitor input to inform future planning

RSHE Life Skills will be taught through a range of teaching methodologies, including story-telling, drama, discussions, individual private reflection, quizzes and fact finding, debating, independent research and artistic presentations etc. This wide range of teaching strategies promotes engagement by all pupils, irrespective of preferred learning styles.

Curriculum

The majority of the curriculum is a statutory requirement to teach to meet Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (July 2025), whilst ensuring schools fulfil their duties under the Equality Act, 2010. Our RSHE Life Skills curriculum also contributes towards the learner's citizenship education.

Life Skills will be taught through a 'spiral curriculum'. This approach means that pupils will gain knowledge, develop values and acquire skills gradually by re-visiting core themes to build on prior learning. RSHE Life Skills will support the school's commitment to safeguard pupils through an age-appropriate curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world.

Our intended RSHE Life Skills curriculum is detailed on our website but may vary in response to emerging issues and to reflect the rapidly changing world in which our pupils are living and learning. The curriculum is complemented by themed assemblies, topic days and cross curricular links.

www.pevenseyschool.org.uk/Learning/Curriculum

In July 2025 the Department for Education launched the new Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education for implementation by September 2026. Whilst much of the curriculum remains the same as the previous guidance, and was already covered within our existing curriculum, some elements have been given more focus or clarification to reflect the current world that we live in. Particular changes include what is taught in online safety lessons as well as additional content around personal & travel safety; grief, loss and bereavement and vaping.

Assessment

Pupils' learning will be assessed throughout their learning and teachers will adapt the prevision to support pupils in making sufficient progress against their own starting points and to build on prior teaching and learning. It also enables us to check that teaching strategies and resources remain relevant and effective. Assessment will be implicit, forming part of a normal teaching activity to ensure that pupils do not feel under pressure and may include self-assessment tasks that will confirm pupils' understanding of the topics. Information about these assessments and pupils progress will be shared with pupils and parents/carers as appropriate

The quality of teaching and learning will be monitored through a range of means such as learning walks, observations, work checks, subject reviews, informal drop-ins and pupil voice conducted by subject leads and/or members of the senior leadership team. The observations and findings of which will be used to identify and inform future staff training needs.

Responding to pupils' questions

There will often be sensitive and controversial issues within the subjects of RSHE Life Skills. These may be a matter of age and stage appropriateness or contrasting personal beliefs including those originating from faith perspectives and culture. We believe that children are best educated and protected from harm when they are provided with a safe and supportive space to discuss issues openly within the framework of a class working agreement. Pupils will be provided with an opportunity to ask questions in an open setting and will also be provided with an opportunity to raise questions through the use of our 'Connection Boxes'. Teachers will answer questions as fully as they feel is age and stage appropriate based on the level of knowledge demonstrated by pupils during the lesson and as set in the statutory guidance. Teachers may delay answering a pupil's

question if they need time to consult with a colleague or the school leadership team to construct an appropriate answer.

Teachers can refuse to answer a question that they feel is inappropriate and will never answer personal questions about their own body, personal circumstances or lifestyle choices. If a teacher does not answer a question, the pupil will have the reasons clearly explained and the teacher will work with the pupil to identify suitable sources of information where they can obtain an answer to their question. This may include encouraging the pupil to ask a parent/carer or trusted adult at home.

Confidentiality, signposting and handling disclosures

The school's responsibility to safeguard pupils through a curriculum that prepares them to live safely in the modern world will remain central to our curriculum content, teaching methodologies and supporting resources.

At the beginning of RSHE Life Skills teaching the class will discuss and create a Class Charter. Confidentiality will be included within this agreement so pupils are clear of the limits of confidentiality that can be guaranteed by a teacher.

Distancing techniques such as the use of characters within RSHE Life Skills avoids pupils feeling under pressure to participate or disclose information beyond that which is appropriate or feels comfortable. This strategy makes RSHE Life Skills more accessible to all pupils including those who may have experienced unhealthy relationships and/or abuse.

Teachers will signpost pupils to information relevant to the topic being taught to ensure safe sources of information, advice and guidance are provided. Teachers will also work closely with the school's pastoral system to advise on topic coverage so that the school can be responsive to pupil's pastoral needs and safeguarding arrangements can be actioned efficiently if required.

Teachers will conduct RSHE Life Skills lessons in a sensitive manner and in confidence. However, if a child makes a reference to being involved (or being likely to be involved) in sexual activity, then the teacher will take the reference seriously, and deal with it as a matter of child protection. Teachers will respond in a similar way if a child indicates that they may have been a victim of abuse. They will immediately inform the named person for child protection issues about their concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will then deal with the matter in line with our school's safeguarding policy.

Supporting vulnerable learners

We are aware that pupils with SEND, specific needs/experiences or those with additional support may be more vulnerable than their peers to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual abuse, exploitation and violence, bullying and other issues. RSHE Life Skills is particularly important for these pupils, particularly those with social, emotional and mental health needs or learning disabilities.

The school will ensure that, in line with our Teaching and Learning principles, resources and teaching materials are appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils, are accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND and are sensitive to pupils' needs.

Staff will liaise with the safeguarding team prior to delivery of sensitive content to ensure that learners who may have negative experiences or trauma relating to the content are appropriately supported.

Involving parents and carers

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children in RSHE Life Skills and that learning is most effective when it is collaboration between school and home. We therefore wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with parents and carers of children and young people at our school through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation.

Prior to teaching a unit of work in RSHE Life Skills, teachers will inform parents of the topics and key learning points via ClassDojo. Materials which are to be used to teach are available to parents with

a specific opportunity to come into school and view the Sex Education resources taught outside of the national curriculum for science The school also operates an open-door policy enabling parents to discuss RSHE Life Skills relevant times throughout the school year.

We have a dedicated RSHE Life Skills parent page on the school website to help parents understand the benefits of our RSHE Life Skills curriculum, understand what is included in our curriculum and to answer any common questions.

https://pevenseyschool.org.uk/RSHE-Life-Skills/

The vast majority of RSHE Life Skills is compulsory. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents and carers are only able to request that their child is excused from Sex Education, taught outside of the national curriculum for science. If a parent wishes their child to be excused, they should request a copy of the Right to Withdraw Policy, which outlines the steps. This will include a discussion with the school, making clear which aspects of the programme they do not wish their child to participate in. The Headteacher will outline to parents/carers the benefits of receiving this important education and any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child. This could include any social and emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in the classes rather than what was directly said through delivery of quality assured resources. If the withdrawal process is continued the parent/carer must complete a copy of the withdrawal form – the school will record its actions and hold a copy of the form on file.

This process is the same for pupils with SEND. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the Headteacher may want to take a pupil's specific needs arising from their SEND into account when making this decision. If a pupil is excused from sex education, the school will ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal.

Links to other school policies and curriculum

This policy complements the following policies:

- Positive Relationships and Behaviour
- Collective Acts of Worship
- Anti-bullying
- Online Safety
- Equality
- Inclusion
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Teaching and Learning

Appendix

A CHARTER FOR FAITH SENSITIVE AND INCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION, RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) AND HEALTH EDUCATION (RSHE)

In Pevensey and Westham Church of England Primary School we seek to provide Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE), which will enable all pupils to flourish.

We commit:

1. **To work in partnership with parents and carers**. This will involve dialogue with parents and carers through all stages of policy development as well as discussing the resources used to teach their children and how they can contribute at home. It must, however, be recognised that the law specifies that what is taught and how it is taught is ultimately a decision for the school.

2. **That RSHE will be delivered professionally and as an identifiable part of PSHE**. It will be led, resourced and reported to parents in the same way as any other subject. There will be a planned programme delivered in a carefully sequenced way. Staff will receive regular training in RSHE and PSHE. Any expert visitors or trainers invited into the school to enhance and supplement the programme will be expected to respect the school's published policy for RSHE.

3. **That RSHE will be delivered in a way that affords dignity and shows respect to all who make up our diverse community.** It will not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act and will be sensitive to the faith and beliefs of those in the wider school community. RSHE will seek to explain fairly the tenets and varying interpretations of religious communities on matters of sex and relationships and teach these viewpoints with respect. It will value the importance of faithfulness as the underpinning and backdrop for relationships. It will encourage pupils to develop the skills needed to disagree without being disagreeable, to appreciate the lived experience of other people and to live well together.

4. **That RSHE will seek to build resilience in our pupils to help them form healthy relationships, to keep themselves safe and resist the harmful influence of pornography in all its forms**. It will give pupils opportunities to reflect on values and influences including their peers, the media, the internet, faith and culture that may have shaped their attitudes to gender, relationships and sex. It will promote the development of the wisdom and skills our pupils need to make their own informed decisions.

5. **That RSHE will promote healthy resilient relationships set in the context of character and virtue development**. It will reflect the vision and associated values of the school, promote reverence for the gift of human sexuality and encourage relationships that are hopeful and aspirational. Based on the school's values it will seek to develop character within a moral framework based on virtues such as honesty, integrity, self-control, courage, humility, kindness, forgiveness, generosity and a sense of justice but does not seek to teach only one moral position.

6. **That RSHE will be based on honest and medically accurate information from**

reliable sources of information, including about the law and legal rights. It will distinguish between different types of knowledge and opinions so that pupils can learn about their bodies and sexual and reproductive health as appropriate to their age and maturity.

7. **To take a particular care to meet the individual needs of all pupils including those with special needs and disabilities.** It will ensure that lessons and any resources used will be accessible and sensitive to the learning needs of the individual child. We acknowledge the potential vulnerability of pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and recognise the possibilities and rights of SEND pupils to high quality Relationships and Sex Education.

8. **To seek pupils' views about RSHE so that the teaching can be made relevant to their lives.** It will discuss real life issues relating to the age and stage of pupils, including friendships, families, faith, consent, relationship abuse, exploitation and safe relationships online. This will be carefully targeted and age appropriate based on a teacher judgment about pupil readiness for this information in consultation with parents and carers.

© The Church of England Education Office November 2019