

COGNITA



Duncombe
School

An Independent Preparatory
School and Nursery

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSE) Policy

September 2025

Date Policy Reviewed	Policy Reviewed By	Reason/Outcome	Next Review Due
1 st September 2022	Lydia Cartwright	Review	Autumn 2024
1 st September 2024	Lydia Cartwright	Review	Autumn 2025
1 st September 2025	Lydia Cartwright	Review	Autumn 2026

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1 Introduction and aims

Schools play a crucial role in preventative education.

Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for racism, sexism, misogyny/misandry, homo/bi/trans phobia and sexual violence/harassment.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, including those in the Early Years.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that our Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) supports our school ethos and fulfils our school aims, which are defined as:



Mission Statement - Duncombe

'Duncombe School will educate the whole child, fostering the individual's highest academic, creative, social and recreational standards within a happy, caring and stimulating environment.'

➤ **Mission Statement – Treetops**

'Our primary purpose is to support children and parents through the early years of education. Treetops offers a carefully managed induction programme to school life and subsequently a broad and challenging education within a caring and secure family environment.'

School Aims and Philosophy

- To educate the whole person (academic, spiritual, moral), promoting respect for Christian values but recognising and respecting beliefs, needs and achievements of others in our multi-cultural society.
- To provide a structured and happy environment where each member of the community is valued and secure and where there is a commitment to encouraging individual development.
- To promote high standards in all areas of life.
- To encourage self discipline, self motivation and self respect through promoting competition against self and objective standards rather than each other.
- To provide each child with a broad and balanced curriculum that encourages children to realise their full capabilities.
- To foster a lively and varied learning environment adopting teaching styles relevant to each child's learning.
- To work in partnership with parents encouraging dialogue in the best interests of their child.

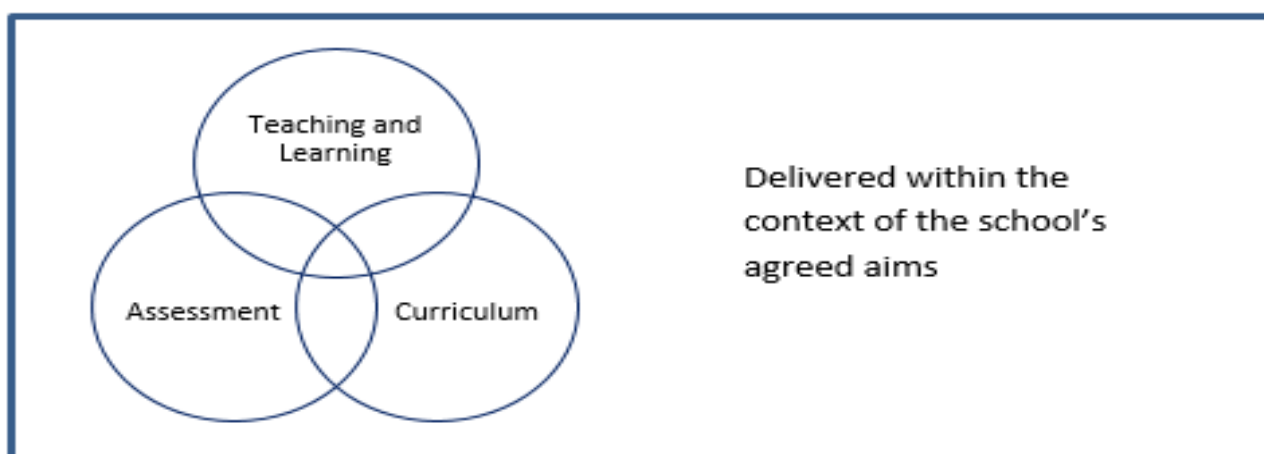
1.1 This policy applies to all students, including those in the Early Years.

1.2 This policy forms part of the curriculum.

- 1.3 We see the curriculum as, 'The total learning experience for our students, which includes not only the taught lessons but also the routines, behaviours, events, activities and other opportunities that our students experience on a daily, weekly and yearly basis in order to ensure that all of them make the best progress possible and attain high standards'.
- 1.4 A well-structured and coherent curriculum is a fundamental element of the tripartite education that underpins all successful schools and includes Teaching, Learning and Assessment (see model below) and is underpinned by Wellbeing.

The aims of RSE at our school are to:

- 1.5 Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
- 1.6 Prepare students for puberty and give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- 1.7 Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- 1.8 Create a positive culture around sexuality and relationships.
- 1.9 Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- 1.10 Help students understand that healthy relationships are an important part of wellbeing.
- 1.11 This policy forms part of the curriculum.
- 1.12 We see the curriculum as, 'The total learning experience for our students, which includes not only the taught lessons but also the routines, behaviours, events, activities and other opportunities that our students experience on a daily, weekly and yearly basis in order to ensure that all of them make the best progress possible and attain high standards'.
- 1.13 A well-structured and coherent curriculum is a fundamental element of the tripartite education that underpins all successful schools and includes Teaching, Learning and Assessment (see model below) and is underpinned by Wellbeing.



Aims

The aims of RSE at our school are to:

- 1.14 Provide a framework in which sensitive discussions can take place.
- 1.15 Prepare students for puberty, give them an understanding of sexual development and the importance of health and hygiene.
- 1.16 Help students develop feelings of self-respect, confidence and empathy.
- 1.17 Create a positive culture around sexuality and relationships.
- 1.18 Teach students the correct vocabulary to describe themselves and their bodies.
- 1.19 Help students understand that healthy relationships are an important part of wellbeing.
- 1.10 Prevent students from becoming involved in child-on-child abuse, and /or experiencing harm in school/in the community

2 Statutory requirements

Relationships education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education, and relationships and sex education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) continues to be compulsory in independent schools.

The government RSHE guidance to be implemented on 1st September 2026 can be found [here](#). Until 31st August 2026, this policy will be underpinned and informed by the current 2025 guidance which can be found [here](#).

Our policy also follows the requirements of the Independent School Standards. Aspects of RSE are infused within the day-to-day operation of our school; incorporated through the curriculum, both in content included in subject schemes of work and through other planned learning opportunities in the school. They are captured in our written aims and expressed in the ethos and behaviours of everyone.

- 2.1 As a Preparatory School, we must ensure that every registered student who is provided with primary education at the school is provided with relationships education, in accordance with section 34 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Independent School Standards

At Duncombe we teach RSE as set out in this policy.

3 Policy development

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

- Review – The PSHE Lead reviewed all relevant information, including but not limited to, relevant national and local guidance including regard to the school's obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

- The policy was drafted in accordance with statutory guidance and aligned with the Independent School Regulations/BSO Standards. The school curriculum plans were amended accordingly.
- Staff consultation – school staff were given the opportunity to review the policy and make recommendations.

The school will proactively engage parents and make sure they are aware of what is being taught in RSHE and consult with them when developing and reviewing the RSHE Policy. The school will show parents a representative sample of the resources that they plan to use, enabling parents to continue conversations started in class, and should ensure that parents are able to view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE on request. Other steps may include inviting parents into school to discuss the curriculum content and the importance of RSHE for wellbeing and safety, inviting them to discuss any concerns, and supporting parents in managing conversations with their children about RSHE topics.

- Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was published.
- Policy review – this policy will be reviewed every three years.

4 Definition

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

5 Curriculum

- 5.1 Our curriculum is set out in Appendix 1, but we may need to adapt this as and when necessary.
- 5.2 We have developed the curriculum in consultation with parents, students and staff, taking into account the age, needs, and feelings of students.
- 5.3 Primary sex education will focus on:
 - Preparing all students for the changes that adolescence brings; and
 - How a baby is conceived and born.

It will:

- i. consider the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with SEND/ and an EHC plan.
- ii. not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and
- iii. ensure that discriminatory, extremist opinions or behaviours are challenged as a matter of routine.

- 5.4 For more information about our curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2 and our Curriculum Policy

6 Delivery of RSE

Our RSE is taught as part of our PSHE curriculum. The PSHE course is delivered to all students through discrete PSHE lessons taught by our teachers to their classes and forms. There is one lesson of taught PSHE a week which follows, but is not explicit to, the Jigsaw programme. In addition to these discrete sessions, PSHE is also embedded within the curriculum (e.g. social issues through the teaching of English; Health through Science and PE; Citizenship through History and RE). There are also centrally organised sessions which supplement the delivery in house. Elements of the programme may be supported through the bringing in of additional expertise, such as outside speakers and/or trained health professionals (the credentials of any visitor or visiting organisation, and their materials will be checked prior to booking). The school will not use resources from any individual or organisation who hold partisan views on contested topics. External providers may not include contractual restrictions preventing schools from sharing materials with parents.

6.1

Equality

The school, in its delivery of RSHE will comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (s.149). Topics will be taught in a way which does not discriminate against pupils or amount to harassment. Pupils will be encouraged to understand the importance of equality and respect and learn about the law relating to the protected characteristics (by the end of their secondary education). The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sex.

Responding to new risks or issues within the national or local context

The school will carefully sequence teaching so that pupils are supported and equipped with the knowledge to navigate different experiences in a positive way before they occur, and to prevent harms. The school will maintain a relevant and responsive curriculum to ensure that any particular or new issues that are affecting the pupils in the school (or nationally) are addressed in a timely manner so that the children are kept as safe as possible on/offline. Where appropriate, the school will work with local partners and other bodies to understand specific local issues/risks. The school inform parents in advance of any deviation from our published RSE policy, including the reasons why they are covering this content, and will share any relevant materials with them on request in advance of the planned sessions. All teaching will be age appropriate and respectful of all children, including those who may have no familiarity with the topics under discussion.

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

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful kind relationships
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe

RSE will be delivered via two areas of the curriculum.

1. Through National Curriculum Science where they are required to learn:

Key Stage 1

- That animals including humans, move, feed, grow, use their senses and reproduce

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- To recognise and compare the main external parts of the bodies of humans
- That humans and animals can produce offspring and these grow into adults.
- To recognise the similarities between themselves and others and treat others with sensitivity.

Key Stage 2

- That the life processes common to humans and other animals include nutrition, growth and reproduction
- The main stages of the human life cycle

2. Through the Jigsaw puzzle in the Summer Term, entitled Changing Me.

- As with other PSHE units, Sex Education will develop in response to key questions
- Sex education at the school will be developmental and age appropriate
- Pupils will be taught about the nature of the human body and how it grows and changes
- Sex education will be taught within the context of relationships and family life.

Material used will be from a variety of sources as appropriate.

Resources and expertise from appropriate outside agencies may be utilised alongside teaching staff within the framework of this policy.

Discussion will be encouraged at all times.

Ground rules for discussion excluding personal questioning of staff or pupils will be established.

We shall attempt to deal with questions in a sensitive, open, frank and matter of fact way.

Questions concerning homosexuality, sexually transmitted diseases and contraception will be answered if raised.

Difficult or explicit questions do not have to be answered directly. Teachers will use their own discretion in these situations.

- 6.2 For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2 and our Curriculum Policy.

Health topics will include:

- General wellbeing
- Wellbeing online
- Physical health and fitness
- Healthy eating
- Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Vaping
- Health protection and prevention
- Personal safety
- Basic First Aid
- Developing bodies

- 6.3 For more information about our RSE curriculum, see Appendices 1 and 2 and our Curriculum Policy.

These areas of learning are taught 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).

The school will also adhere to any statutory guidance on teaching topics where there is significant debate, such as gender questioning/reassignment: we will be mindful that beyond the facts and the laws lie varying viewpoints. As such, the school will not endorse any particular view or teach it as fact that all people have a gender identity. The school will avoid language and activities which repeat or enforce gender stereotypes and will be mindful to avoid any suggestion that social transition is a simple solution to feelings of distress or discomfort.

7 Roles and responsibilities

Staff & Governance

7.1 PSHE Lead Teacher

The person with responsibility for the overview and yearly evaluation of this policy is Susie Saito. However, all staff are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and acted on.

When evaluating the use and impact of this policy, our school leaders will evaluate the extent to which there is evidence of a curriculum which:

- Fulfils the aims of the school;
- Embeds aspiration, attributes and the expectation to achieve high standards and high rates of progress; and
- Provides engagement and excitement for learning.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that RSE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-science components of RSE (see section 8).

7.3 The Chair of Governors

The Chair of Governors will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Chair of Governors will ensure that:

- 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 (see below)
- Teaching is sensitive to the needs of all students with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010
- 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.

7.4 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RSE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RSE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual students; and
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-science components of RSE.

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 Headteacher.

The Head of Science is responsible for delivering the Science aspect of RSE in our school.

8 Students

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

8.1 Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Our curriculum is inclusive and our RSE and Health Education is accessible for all students. For those pupils with special educational needs or specific learning difficulties, the school has a well-established Learning Support department, led by the SENCO. 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.

As set out in the SEND code of practice, when teaching these subjects to those with SEND, Duncombe School is mindful of preparing students for adulthood.

Duncombe School is aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education and 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.

9 Parents' right to withdraw

- 9.1 If parents require more information on RSE for primary aged children, this is a useful information source of information for them:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/812593/RSE_primary_schools_guide_for_parents.pdf

9.2

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

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-science components of sex education within RSE.

Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 3 of this policy and addressed to the Headteacher.

Alternative work will be given to students who are withdrawn from sex education.

10 Training

- 10.1 Staff are trained on the delivery of RSE as part of their induction and it is included in our continuing professional development programme. RSE training takes place in school regularly with relevant updates given by the Head of PSHE. Resources used to support include resources from The PSHE Association and Jigsaw.
- 10.2 The Headteacher will also invite, following a due diligence and vetting process, visitors from outside the school, such as school nurses or sexual health professionals, to provide support and training to staff teaching RSE.

11 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

- 11.1 Monitoring
The delivery of RSE is monitored by Susie Saito through discussion with staff, work scrutiny, learning walks and parent report observations.
- 11.2 Students' development in RSE is monitored by class teachers as part of our internal assessment systems.

11.3 Evaluation

The delivery of RSE is evaluated by: Susie Saito, Lydia Cartwright and Apollonia Micele-Jones.

12 Safeguarding

RSHE discussions can lead to increased safeguarding concerns being raised by pupils. All staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy if they have concerns about pupil wellbeing or safety.

Confidentiality arrangements must be clearly explained to pupils prior to sessions.

Appendix 1: Curriculum Map

Relationships and Sex Education Curriculum Map

Include as much detail as you can, including links to resources you'll use or sharing examples. Being transparent with parents/carers early on will make it easier for you to handle questions, concerns, or objections.

[illegible]

Appendix 2: By the end of primary school, students should know:

TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Families and people who care about me	• That families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability • The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives • That others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care • That stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up • That marriage represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong • How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed
Caring friendships	• How important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends • The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties • That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded • That most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right • How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed

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TOPIC	STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
Respectful relationships	• The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs • Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships • The conventions of courtesy and manners • The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness • That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority • About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help • What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive • The importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults
Online relationships	• That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not • That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous • The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them • How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met • How information and data is shared and used online
Being safe	• What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context) • About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe • That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact • How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know • How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult • How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard • How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so • Where to get advice e.g., family, school and/or other sources

Appendix 3: Parent form: Withdrawal from sex education within RSE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within relationships and sex education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	

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Ownership and consultation	
Document sponsor (role)	Director of Education- Europe
Document author (name)	Former group Director of Wellbeing/PSHE Leads
Consultation February 2020	Consultation with the following: Regional Safeguarding Lead (RSL)
Review – June 2022	Director of Education for Europe Regional Safeguarding Lead for Europe
Review - June 2025	Regional Safeguarding Lead for Europe and USA

Audience	
Audience	All school staff

Document application and publication	
England	Yes
Wales	Yes

Version control	
Implementation date	September 2025
Review date	September 2028

Related documentation	
Related documentation	Curriculum Policy Anti-Bullying Policy Behaviour Policy SEND Policy EAL Policy Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism Policy Drug and Alcohol Policy Early Years Policy, where relevant Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures Independent School Standards