RSE Policy	
Version	2026.1
Effective from	September 2026
Extent of Policy	Sedbergh School
Policy Owner	Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Review by	September 2027
Governor	Safeguarding Governor
Frequency of Audit	Annual
Circulation	Teaching staff Parents by request
Publication	Website The Hub

Policy Context and Rationale

To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. These subjects can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.
(DfE – Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education 2020)

Sedbergh School understands its obligation to teach RSE as part of the revised Department for Education statutory guidance. RSE, together with PSHE, is known in Sedbergh School as the Compass Programme.

Documents that inform the School's PSHE and RSE policies include:

- Education Act (1996)
- Learning and Skills Act (2000)

- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Supplementary Guidance RSE for the 21st century (2014)
- Keeping children safe in education (2024)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2021)
- Sedbergh School Safeguarding Policy

The scheme is planned to reflect the new government guidance. Please see the link for the revised DfE PSHE/RSE full report here: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK

Parents and carers will be informed annually about the policy through communication from the School. The policy is available to parents and carers through the Sedbergh School website. If you require this policy in any other format, please contact hm@sedberghschool.org.

Policy Aims and Objectives

The aim of Relationships and Sex Education in our School is to equip children and young people with the information, skills and values they need to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and to take responsibility for their physical, sexual and emotional health and wellbeing.

We recognise the central importance of relationships 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 personal development with regard to attributes such as Humility, Ambition, Resilience and Kindness.

We focus on attitudes and values, skills and 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.

As a School we recognise the impact of social media, the media and the digital world on our children and young people. We aim to deliver an RSE programme that recognises and addresses this to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves and their personal information safe.

As such, we are committed to:

- providing a supportive and responsive framework in which balanced and well-informed discussions can take place;
- preparing pupils for puberty by giving them an understanding of sexual development, and matters of health and personal hygiene;
- supporting pupils to develop a sense of competency, self-respect, confidence and empathy;
- nurturing a positive and open-minded culture around issues of sexuality and relationships;
- equipping pupils with the vocabulary to describe themselves, their feelings and their bodies;
- understanding the value of the PSHE and RSE programmes for pupils' personal development, academic progress and wider School experience;
- facilitating the personalised thinking and study skills for success, as well as a range of practices to promote self-regulation and positive mental wellbeing.

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

RSE is predominantly delivered by tutors in small groups in single year group and single gender groups (as dictated by the tutoring structure at Sedbergh). This enables clear ground rules to be established to ensure a safe learning environment. Occasionally, where appropriate, whole year groups, or the whole School may be involved in the delivery of particular topics, and, again, these are designed to ensure a safe learning environment, delivered by experts in their field.

In the course of RSE education lessons, pupils may indicate in some way that they are vulnerable or may be at risk of harm. Lessons and associated discussions may prompt pupils to seek advice or support on a particular personal issue. There are clear links here with the School's Safeguarding Policy, and all staff therefore have the clarity about what is required in such circumstances. The procedure for identifying and reporting any concerns, including low-level concerns, about a pupil is explained to all staff during the Safeguarding Update in the mandatory Michaelmas Term INSET, and further information can be found in the Safeguarding Policy.

Equality and Diversity

Full PSHE education provision is an integral part of every pupil's curriculum, though parents have a right to withdraw their children from those parts of Relationships and Sex Education not within the national curriculum science programmes of study.

RSE is taught within the context of family life taking care to ensure that there is no stigmatisation of pupils based on their home circumstances (which may feature single-parent families, LGBTQ+ parents, families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents/carers and other structures) along with reflecting sensitively that some pupils may have a different structure of support around them (such as looked-after children or young carers).

This policy is intended to be inclusive of the requirements, feelings and sensitivities of different ethnic groups, and we are committed to responding solicitously to them. As part of our commitment to ensuring that all pupils receive a high-quality, relevant, and responsive Relationships and Sex Education, we will offer provision appropriate to the particular needs of all of our pupils, including SEND pupils, taking specialist advice where necessary from the Learning Support Department. The School believes that its pupils are entitled to a RSE curriculum that is relevant and appropriate to their needs, and we are committed to dealing sensitively and honestly with issues of gender and sexual orientation.

Moral framework

The School's approach to RSE is underpinned by the fundamental British values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Respect and Tolerance, and Individual Liberty, and the School's values, which include humility, resilience and kindness. An ethos of trust, honesty, and mutual respect is central to RSE lessons and discussions, and pupils are encouraged to understand:

- the difference between right and wrong;
- respect for others, truth, and property;
- how one's actions can have an impact on other people;
- how to make reasoned judgements;
- the importance of respect, empathy and fairness;
- non-exploitation in sexual relationships;
- the concept of commitment and trust;
- an acknowledgement of rights, duties and responsibilities in sexual relationships.

Teaching and Learning

Principles and Methodology

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

Planning and Timetabling

Relationship and Sex Education is primarily taught in the Michaelmas Term in every year group. The Head of PSHE/RSE is responsible for planning statutory PSHE lessons, including those dedicated to RSE topics and the monitoring of this provision, Heads of Year are responsible for overseeing the delivery and content of lessons via their tutor teams.

The holistic approach to PSHE/RSE means that topics will be revisited and woven together thematically where possible. This is complemented with the utilisation of trusted external agencies to enable consistent delivery of certain topics within the RSE framework. We introduce Relationships in MT2, looking to build towards the development of this in LT2. Visiting speakers will therefore be likely to lead sessions on related topics (as featured below) in MT2 and LT2.

	MT1 Health & wellbeing	MT2 Relationships	LT2 Relationships	ST1 Health & wellbeing
Year 9	**Peer influence, substance use and gangs** Healthy and unhealthy friendships, assertiveness, substance misuse, and gang exploitation	**Respectful relationships** Families and parenting, healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and relationship changes	**Intimate relationships** Relationships and sex education including consent, contraception, the risks of STIs, and attitudes to pornography	**Healthy lifestyle** Diet, exercise, lifestyle balance and healthy choices, and first aid
Year 10	**Mental health** Mental health and ill health, stigma, safeguarding health, including during periods of transition or change	**Addressing extremism and radicalisation** Communities, belonging and challenging extremism, harms of misogyny	**Healthy relationships** Relationships and sex expectations, myths, pleasure and challenges, including the impact of the media and pornography	**Exploring influence** The influence and impact of drugs, gangs, role models and the media
Year 11	**Building for the future** Self-efficacy, stress management, and future opportunities	**Communication in relationships** Personal values, assertive communication (including in relation to contraception and sexual health), relationship challenges and abuse	**Families** Different families and parental responsibilities, pregnancy, marriage and forced marriage and changing relationships	**Independence** Responsible health choices, and safety in independent contexts
Year 12	**Mental health and emotional wellbeing**	**Diversity and inclusion** • Living in a diverse society	**Respectful relationships** • Consent	**Health choices and safety** • Independence and keeping safe

	MT1 Health & wellbeing	MT2 Relationships	LT2 Relationships	ST1 Health & wellbeing
	• Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Managing stress • Body image • Healthy coping strategies • The impact of substance use	• Challenging prejudice and discrimination • Harms of misogyny	• Assertive communication • Positive relationships and recognising abuse • Strategies for managing dangerous situations or relationships	• Travel • First aid
Year 13	**Next steps** • Application processes • Future opportunities and career development • Maintaining a positive professional identity • UCAS	**Building and maintaining relationships** • New friendships and relationships, including in the workplace • Personal safety • Intimacy • Conflict resolution • Relationship changes	**Intimate relationships** • Personal values, including in relation to contraception and sexual health • Fertility • Pregnancy	

Assessment

As with the PSHE programme, it is important to recognise that assessment in RSE education is not about 'passing or failing', or about behavioural outcomes. Teachers and pupils both need to know what has been learned, and how learning and understanding has progressed. In order to achieve this, pupils complete and annotate a Learning Map for each unit covered, which encourages them to reflect on the content of their RSE lessons and to identify key aspects of their learning. The Learning Maps are retained and reviewed by tutors to identify any gaps in learning or areas requiring further explanation.

Pupil surveys throughout the academic year encourage pupils to reflect on their learning and provide feedback on the relevance and appropriateness of the Compass programme. The surveys also invite pupils to look ahead to forthcoming topics, identify what they already know and where the gaps in their understanding are in advance. Staff are also surveyed, allowing them to highlight areas of learning where pupils may have struggled or where further support or resourcing would be beneficial. The responses from all surveys are reviewed by the Head of PSHE/RSE and are used to inform the planning, content and delivery of future sessions.

Responding to pupils' questions

It is important that pupils feel able to ask any questions that they wish and that their questions are valued. However, consideration should be given to how to respond to questions.

If necessary, teachers should feel able to ask a pupil to wait for an answer to give them time to consult with the School's leadership team if they feel this appropriate, or if the question raises potential safeguarding concerns. (For instance: 'That is a really interesting question and I need time to think because I want to give you a proper answer.') Teachers should feel able to work with colleagues if necessary to construct an appropriate answer.

Links to other School policies and areas of the curriculum
This policy supports and complements the following other School policies:

- Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Counter Bullying Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Drugs and Drug Testing Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- Pupil Equal Opportunity Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Involving Parents and Carers
Legislation states that parents have the right to withdraw their children from aspects of Sex Education which are not part of the Science curriculum. Any requests of this nature should be addressed to the Headmaster, where a meeting will be arranged to fully understand the wishes of the parent / carer and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. Once these discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the School will respect the parent / carer request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the School will make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms. If a pupil is excused from sex education, it is the School's responsibility to ensure that the pupil receives appropriate, purposeful education during the period of withdrawal. There is no right to withdraw from other aspects of the Relationships Education or Health Education, or any other part of the PSHE programme of study.

The School acknowledges that active communication between home and School is an intrinsic part of the success of the RSE programme and its positive impact on pupils, and as such regularly provides opportunities, both in person and online, for parents to learn more about aspects of the RSE programme, and to ask questions and share concerns with School staff.

Parents' right to withdraw
Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the non-science components of sex education within RSE up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After this point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than being withdrawn, the School will arrange this.

Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from compulsory relationship education as part of the new statutory framework for Relationships and Sex Education from September 2021.

Any requests to withdraw a pupil from these elements of the RSE curriculum should be addressed to the relevant Head of Year, who will make the necessary arrangements for alternative educational activities.

Aspects of RSE covered in lessons
We aim to ensure that all pupils, over time and in the course of the RSE lessons, will have the opportunity to consider:

Different Types of Relationships

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships;
- how these relationships might contribute to human happiness and their importance for bringing up children;
- what marriage is, including their legal status e.g. that marriage carries legal rights and protections not available to couples who are cohabiting or who have married, for example, in an unregistered religious ceremony;
- why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into;
- the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships;
- the roles and responsibilities of parents with respect to raising of children, including the characteristics of successful parenting;
- how to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy; judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others;
- the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship;
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships;
- how stereotypes, in particular stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage (eg how they might normalise non-consensual behaviour or encourage prejudice);
- Impact and harms of misogyny
- 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 people in positions of authority, and due tolerance of other people's beliefs;
- about peer-on-peer abuse, different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, the responsibilities of bystanders to report bullying, and how and where to get help;
- that some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control;
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable;
- the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal;

Being Safe in the Digital World and Online Relationships

- rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online;
- about online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online, and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online;
- what to do and where to get support to report material or manage problematic issues online;

- the impact of viewing pornography and harmful content; how content can target and escalate material through algorithm
- that sexually-explicit material can present a distorted picture of sexual behaviours, can damage the way people see themselves in relation to others, and can negatively affect how they behave towards sexual partners;
- that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children, known as youth-produced sexual imagery) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties;
- how information and data are generated, collected, shared, and used online;
- how to recognise the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships, which include mutual respect, consent, loyalty, trust, shared interests and outlook, sex and friendship;

<u>Being Safe, Intimate and Sexual Relationships and Sexual Health</u>

- the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, strangulation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships;
- how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (in all contexts, including online);
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices made in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, eg physical, emotional, mental, sexual, and reproductive health and wellbeing;
- the facts about reproductive health, including fertility and the potential impact of lifestyle on fertility for men and women;
- that there are a range of strategies for identifying and managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure, resisting pressure, and not pressurising others;
- that they have a choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex;
- the facts about the full range of contraceptive choices, efficacy, and options available;
- the facts around pregnancy, including miscarriage;
- that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion, and where to get further help);
- how the different sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDs, are transmitted, how risk can be reduced through safer sex (including through condom use), and the importance of and facts about testing;
- about the prevalence of some STIs, the impact they can have on those who contract them, and key facts about treatment;
- how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour;
- how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

Pupils are made aware of the relevant legal information when relevant topics are being taught, including:

- Marriage
- Consent, including the age of consent
- Violence against women and girls
- Online behaviours including image and information sharing (including ‘sexting’, youth-produced sexual imagery, nudes, etc)
- Pornography

- Abortion
- Sexuality
- Gender identity
- Substance misuse
- Violence and exploitation by gangs
- Extremism/radicalisation
- Criminal exploitation (for example, through gang involvement or 'county lines' drugs operations)
- hate crime
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Whole School Approach

The RSE curriculum is set in the context of a wider whole-School approach to supporting pupils to be safe, happy and prepared for life at and beyond School. The RSE curriculum complements and is supported by the School's other policies on behaviour, inclusion, respect for equality and diversity, bullying, mental wellbeing, health and safeguarding (including the handling of any concerns that emerge through the RSE programme). The subjects sits within the context of Sedbergh's commitment to a holistic education, which aims develop its pupils socially, morally, spiritually and culturally, and within its House-based system of pastoral care.

The Curriculum – Policy Action Points

UNDERTAKING	**BY WHOM**
• Review this policy on annual basis in relation to statutory requirements and pupil feedback	Senior Deputy Head / Senior Deputy Head (Academic) Head of PSHE/RSE
• Production of relevant and up-to-date resources based on the PSHE/RSE Programme of Study	Head of PSHE/RSE
• Delivery of PSHE programme	All tutors