POLICY: RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE)

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VERSION CONTROL

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POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is designed to ensure that this school complies with the government's statutory guidance on relationship and sex education (RSE). The trustees, in consultation with the school management team, will ensure that the provision of sex and relationship education in this school is carried out in such a way that it encourages pupils to give due consideration to morality and the values of family life. This policy has regard to Part 1, paragraph 2 (curriculum) and Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and to the Department for Education's statutory guidance on Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), updated July 2025 and mandatory from September 2026. This policy should be read alongside the RSE Curriculum document which sets out the school programme for sex and relationship education, which has been developed in consultation with older pupils, staff and the parents of those pupils who were registered with the school at the time and is underpinned by the Steiner Waldorf ethos and curriculum. This curriculum document can be found on the school website or on request from teachers. The RSE curriculum, like the school's wider PSHE curriculum, is informed by the PSHE Association's Programme of Study.

The policy will be implemented at the beginning of the Autumn term, 2026.

The policy has been shared with all trustees, staff and parents and is available on the school website and for new parents on request.

THE AIMS OF THE POLICY

The main aim of this policy is to set out the ways in which the school meets its statutory and moral obligations to provide a comprehensive relationship, sex education for children throughout the whole school. In particular, the policy aims to:

- Confirm the coverage and scope of RSE throughout the school
- Clarify and detail subject content, how it will be taught and who is responsible for teaching it
- To endorse the entitlement of all pupils in this school to sex and relationship education
- To ensure that appropriate training is available for the staff that will deliver the programme of sex and relationship education in this school
- Specify the rights of parents to request that their child is withdrawn from sex education. Also to explain the communication between school and parents with regards to RSE.

ENTITLEMENT

There are important distinctions between 'sex education' and 'relationships education'. Whilst there is often overlap, particularly in the later years, relationships education may cover all forms of relationships and will usually not include any specific references to sexual activity.

All primary aged children (Class 1 – 5)* are entitled to:

- Relationships education (including family, friends, and the needs of others)
- Online safety and awareness
- Being safe (including personal safety and risk, as well us setting personal boundaries, understanding abuse and getting help)
- Sex education is not compulsory at this age, but aspects of it may be covered in relation to the developmental stage and maturity of the classes. This might include elements of human anatomy and reproduction in plants and animals (including humans) and the changes brought about by puberty.

All secondary aged children (Class 6 – 12)* are entitled to:

- Relationships education (including intimate relationships)
- Sex education (including consent, sexual health, and harmful sexual behaviours).

A more detailed description of this content will be covered below.

*Please note that, in order to maintain clarity and compliance in line with DfE guidance, this policy will refer to 'primary' and 'secondary' aged children using these definitions. In practice, where a class crosses the boundary between these two phases – such as a combined Class 5/6 – they may have content delivered from both lists, as appropriate and at the teacher's discretion.

STAFF TRAINING

All class teachers and class guardians will be expected to make some contribution to the programme of sex and relationship education offered in this school since their pastoral role will make them natural recipients of pupils' questions.

Similarly support staff concerned with safeguarding and pupil welfare may be involved through the conversations they have with the pupils they support.

The main sex and relationship education programme will, however, be delivered by teachers with specialist subject knowledge supported by specialist external staff drawn from the local area health services as appropriate. Whenever specialist external staff are used the school follows its Visiting Speaker Policy to ensure suitability through appropriate vetting, of both input and materials, in line with Department for Education guidance.

The trustees will ensure that staff receive regular training to the level of expertise appropriate to their role.

The delivery of the programme will also be dependent on the wider context provided through personal, social and health education and links to other areas of the Steiner Curriculum, and flexibility will be built in so that teachers may pick up on and respond to specific issues and topics arising as well as the individual needs of pupils.

COVERAGE AND SCOPE OF SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

The School's RSE curriculum aims to teach pupils skills and foundational knowledge which will support children to develop positive and respectful relationships as well as the understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils learn how to reflect on their experiences as they mature into independent young adults. They learn how to take responsibility for themselves, support others, and seek advice and support when needed.

Here you will find a more detailed summary of the curriculum content to be taught throughout the school. Please note that this list is not exhaustive but serves as a broad summary of the topics covered and should be read in conjunction with the PSHE curriculum overview document. Often the PSHE curriculum in all its forms is a response to current affairs within the school and in response to the wider world context. The list below is inspired by the DfE guidance on RSE dated July 2025. For further information see that document (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education).

Relationships and sex education is divided into several categories:

- *Families and people who care for me*
- *Caring friendships*
- *Respectful, kind relationships*
- *Online safety and awareness (including updated guidance on positive male role models and AI generated deepfake sexual imagery)*
- *Being safe (including updated guidance on personal safety and boundary setting)*

At the secondary age an additional category is included: *intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health*.

Although the topics outlined below are separated into primary and secondary, content outlined as 'primary' will continue to be covered in the later years. That listed as 'secondary' is in addition to this.

Families and people who care for me

Primary

- The importance of families for children growing up because they can provide love, security, and stability
- Characteristics of safe families and happy family life
- Differences between families and the need to respect other families who may look different from their own
- Marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognised commitment 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

Secondary

- The different types of committed stable relationships and their contribution to wellbeing, and their importance for bringing up children
- The law surrounding marriage and why marriage or civil partnership is an important relationship choice for many couples
- That forced marriage is illegal
- How families and relationships change over time, including through birth, death, separation and new relationships

- The roles and responsibilities of parents and the importance of the early years of a child's life for brain development
- How to judge when a relationship is unsafe and where to seek help when needed

Caring friendships

Primary

- The importance of friendships
- The characteristics of healthy friendships and how to learn the skills for developing caring and kind friendships
- How to manage conflict in friendships and how to get support when needed

Respectful, kind relationships

Primary

- Paying attention to the needs of others in families and other relationships
- The importance of setting and respecting healthy boundaries in relationships
- Communicating effectively and navigating conflict with kindness and respect
- They can expect to be treated with respect by others and the importance of self-respect
- Developing self-esteem and a strong sense of their own identity
- The different types of bullying and how to address them (including online bullying), bystanders, and getting help
- What a stereotype is and how they can be unfair or destructive
- How to seek help when needed, when they are concerned about violence, harm, or when they are unsure who to trust

Secondary

- The characteristics of positive relationships of all kinds
- Romantic relationships that involve mutual respect and trust
- The role of consent in romantic and sexual relationships
- The importance of self-esteem, independence, and having a positive relationship with oneself
- The practical steps pupils can take and skills they can develop to support respectful and kind relationships including respectful communication

- Skills for ending a relationship with kindness
- The negative impacts of pornography
- Power imbalances in relationships
- The damaging effect of stereotypes
- The influence of sub-cultures such as 'involuntary celibates' (incels) or online influencers
- That there may be cultural differences in how issues such as sexual relationships and consent are viewed around the world. The aim will be to promote awareness of this fact, whilst still clearly stating what are the legal and cultural expectations in the UK

Online safety and awareness

Primary

- The need for respectful interactions online
- How to critically evaluate information online and sources of information
- Navigating risks online including those presented by others pretending to be someone else, and that this can lead to dangerous situations
- The law surrounding childhood use of the Internet and that there is a minimum age for joining social media sites
- The importance of exercising caution about sharing any information about themselves online
- Online risks including those related to circulation of material they have provided, the challenges in deleting it, and that they may encounter inappropriate, upsetting material
- How to get advice and support when they feel worried or concerned about something they have seen or engaged with online

Secondary

- The characteristics of social media and AI
- The law surrounding issues such as sharing indecent or sexual images
- The potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18
- The prevalence of deepfakes and the harms caused, as well as how to identify
- Online bullying including harassment, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour and other forms of abusive and/or illegal behaviour
- The distorted picture presented by pornography and that pornography can portray misogynistic behaviours and attitudes

- That social media can lead to escalations in conflicts, how to avoid these escalations and where to go for help and advice
- How information and data is generated, collected, shared, and used online
- That criminals can operate online scams, the risks of sextortion, how to identify online scams and seek help
- The rapid development of AI and the risk this poses
- Seeking advice and support around content on the Internet

Being safe

Primary

- Boundaries within friendships (including online)
- The concept of privacy, ownership and belongings
- That each person's body belongs to them and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe contact, including physical contact
- How to respond safely and appropriately to adults in all contexts
- Recognising harmful, abusive or dangerous behaviours in ourselves and others, including skills for recognising who to trust and who not to trust
- How to seek advice, help, and/or report abuse, concerns, or feelings of being unsafe, including developing the vocabulary and confidence to do so

Secondary

- How to recognise, respect, and communicate consent and boundaries in relationships
- Identifying, resisting and understanding pressure in relationships (including sexual pressure)
- Personal safety in public spaces, such as those related to fire and travel safety (water, roads, and railways) and seeking help
- Recognising and understanding sexual harassment, sexual violence, and the law
- The characteristics of abusive relationships and the law
- The concepts and the laws relating to forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), and seeking support

Sex education

Primary

As outlined above, sex education is not compulsory at primary age, but issues of conception and birth will be addressed at the higher end of primary age. Teachers will use correct anatomical names including for genitalia. In addition, issues around puberty will be covered when the pupils are in Class 5-6. Specific topics such as menstruation may be discussed in younger classes if and when the need arises.

Secondary

- The law about the age of consent
- The potential for sex to be positive and enjoyable
- The full range of contraceptive choices
- Harmful sexual behaviours
- Sexual health, including STIs and protection against them
- Reproductive health, including endometriosis and menopause
- How to seek advice and support around sexual health, pregnancy or sexual abuse
- Alcohol, drugs, and risk taking
- How to counter misinformation as well as access sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Whilst health education is not compulsory in independent schools, this school takes a positive and holistic approach towards teaching health and wellbeing. This means that an understanding of health and wellbeing is directly linked to relationships and sex education. The school includes health and wellbeing education as a full part of its PSHE programme of learning (please see the PSHE policy and the curriculum document).

SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH SEND

In accordance with both the DfE guidance for RSE and the SEND Code of Practice, the school is committed to supporting all pupils in the school and ensures that relationships and sex education is accessible for all pupils. In most cases pupils with SEND are taught RSE alongside their peers using high quality teaching and effective differentiation. Some pupils' needs may be more fully met through teaching in small groups or 1:1. Where this is the case teachers will liaise with the school inclusion co-ordinator and the pupil's parent(s) and/or carer(s). The school also recognises that pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable than their peers to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual abuse,

exploitation and violence, and bullying. Accordingly, this is taken into consideration during lesson planning.

CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS

Parents have been included in the consultation process and invited to make their contribution to:

- The development of the programme
- The teaching of sex and relationship education.

Prior to the commencement of the sex and relationship programme, parents will receive information about what is being taught and how it will be presented to their children.

RSE supplements guidance from home, so it is important that the school has an open dialogue with parents. We inform parents when RSE lessons are to take place and explain proposed content in parents' evenings. We welcome feedback from parents, and staff are happy to talk to them about any concerns that they may have.

Parents' right of withdrawal

Parents will have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided. However, parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from the teaching of the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction that are included in the National Curriculum for science. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from Relationships Education, or from the elements of Relationships and Sex Education delivered through the school's wider PSHE provision, because it is important that all children receive this content, covering topics such as friendships and how to stay safe. Parents can ask for their child to be withdrawn from some or all Sex Education. Three school terms before a pupil turns 16 they can choose to receive Sex Education if they would like to. Parents should contact the school administrator Rob Brown at rob.brown@norwichsteinerschool.co.uk to request withdrawal. Any request will be discussed with the parent and where appropriate the pupil before being granted in line with Department for Education guidance.

SAFEGUARDING

While RSE makes an essential contribution to safeguarding children, it may bring about disclosures or raise safeguarding concerns. Teachers should inform the safeguarding team when RSE lessons are to take place, and if a member of staff believes a child is at risk or in danger, or has any other safeguarding concern, they should seek the advice of the DSLs.

Managing difficult questions

The school recognises that at times pupils may ask questions about topics which go beyond any sex education covered by the school or relate to sex education from which they have been withdrawn. Teachers will endeavour to deal with such situations sensitively and professionally. This might mean asking a pupil to speak to their parents or a trusted adult, it may also include signposting to support services and ongoing pastoral awareness.

Department for Education guidance and further information

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education

Related school policies and documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- British Values Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Internet Safety Policy
- Visiting Speaker Policy

Evaluation and review

The programme will be reviewed regularly through staff monitoring and pupil feedback. The mechanism used to gather pupil voice varies depending on age and includes but is not limited to post lesson signalled responses (thumbs up/in the middle/down); verbal feedback; anonymous written feedback; pupil feedback forms; and discussions during circle time and sponsor lessons. Pupil voice, parental feedback, and staff input will be taken into consideration and any revisions made after the first year of delivery.

Monitoring, audit and governance

This policy belongs to Norwich Steiner School, which is the operational name for the Charity the Norfolk Initiative Steiner School, registered charity number 1099377, company number 4815492

Compliance is monitored through internal audits, policy review as part of self-evaluation, and annual reporting to Trustees on concessions awarded, value, and any compliance issues.