



**Stoke Mandeville Combined
School
Governing Board**

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Stoke Mandeville Combined School
Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy
July 2026

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1. Rationale and ethos

At Stoke Mandeville Combined School, we are committed to providing a holistic approach to education which aims to support the academic, cultural, personal, social and emotional development of all of our pupils. Statutory Relationships Education and Health Education is taught in conjunction with PSHE Education

under the school's umbrella subject – Skills for Life. Sex education is not a mandated requirement within primary schools but the DfE recommends that a primary school should have a sex education programme tailored to the age as well as the physical and emotional maturity of its pupils. Therefore, sex education is taught at our school as part of Relationships Education and the subject is referred to as Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) within the planned Skills for Life curriculum.

2. Aims of the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- Provide information to all stakeholders (governors, staff, parents, carers, pupils and other agencies) regarding the organisation, content and approach to teaching Relationships and Sex Education (RSE);
- Assist parents and carers to understand what constitutes Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and support them to work with their child to secure the very best outcomes for all pupils;
- Demonstrate how the school meets legal requirements with regards to teaching Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

3. Statutory requirements

To comply with The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019 (made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017) which make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools.

To comply with the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance from the DfE (July 2025).

To comply with the requirements to have an up-to-date Relationships and Sex Education policy developed in consultation with pupils, parents and carers (Education Act 1996) and in line with the DfE statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (July 2025).

To have due regard to the Equality Act (2010) which requires schools to prevent discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups. The protected characteristics that apply to school age children are disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

To fulfil statutory safeguarding duties and ensure any safeguarding issues arising from Relationships or RSE teaching are identified and followed in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy and to comply with current Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory requirements.

4. Policy development

This policy was developed in consultation with pupils, staff, parents and governors. The consultation and policy development involved the following steps:

- Review – the Skills for Life Subject Leader collated relevant information including national and local guidance;
- Pupil consultation – School Councillors completed a pupil voice activity in order to share their opinions regarding what is most useful for primary school children to learn about in Skills for Life lessons as well as how the provision of the subject could be improved;
- Staff and Governor consultation – the Working Party considered the policy and made recommendations;
- Parent consultation – the Parent Forum met with the Head Teacher to discuss the policy and make recommendations;
- Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was ratified by the School Governors.

5. Definition of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Statutory Relationships Education at Stoke Mandeville Combined School is taught through the Skills for Life curriculum and addresses the content defined by the DfE guidance (See Appendix 1). Relationships Education equips pupils with the building blocks and characteristics needed to develop healthy, nurturing relationships with other children and adults. In the first instance, it enables them to recognise what a healthy relationship looks like. It then provides them with the opportunity to learn how to build and maintain a range of strong and positive relationships within a range of contexts. Additionally, Relationships Education teaches pupils the knowledge they need in order to recognise unhealthy behaviours and potential dangers in all contexts (including online). It also supplies them with the information needed to seek advice and report concerns when they suspect or know something is wrong.

Along with Relationships Education, non-statutory Sex Education is taught through the Skills for Life curriculum as part of RSE too. Sex Education is taught in Upper Key Stage 2 in addition to the statutory Science curriculum and provides factual and age appropriate knowledge about how and why the body changes during puberty in preparation for reproduction. Furthermore, it teaches about decisions that have to be made before having children as well as introductory scientific facts about conception and birth. As Sex Education is non-statutory, parents / carers have the right to withdraw their child from these lessons (See Section 9). However, key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body (including the menstrual cycle) are part of statutory Health Education and parents / carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from this aspect of the curriculum.

6. Curriculum

Aims

It is intended that Skills for Life is the school's key curriculum area through which pupils acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives, now and in the future. It has been designed to develop the qualities and attributes that pupils need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society.

Content

The Skills for Life curriculum forms part of the school's broad and balanced curriculum. The core knowledge to be addressed in our umbrella subject is broken down into thematic units which are either blocked and taught annually during the course of one specific week throughout the school or taught during a specified block in Years 1, 3 and 5 or Years 2, 4 and 6 (See Appendix 3). The spiral curriculum in place enables pupils to revisit themes throughout their time at the school so they can gradually extend their thinking, expand their knowledge and develop their skills.

Certain objectives within the Skills for Life curriculum complement specific content covered in other National Curriculum subjects - Science, PE, DT and Computing. In order to establish links in a cohesive manner, opportunities have been sought to address these objectives using a cross-curricular approach within the other subjects (See Appendix 3). In a similar vein, particular objectives from the Science curriculum are supplemented as a result of the content covered within the Skills for Life curriculum (See Appendix 2 and Appendix 4).

Within the Skills for Life curriculum, RSE is taught primarily using The Christopher Winter Project resource - *Teaching RSE with Confidence in Primary Schools* during the topic, 'Ourselves, growing and changing' in the Summer Term (Block 6). The spiral programme presented in the published scheme of work provides learning opportunities that are relevant and appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils:

Teaching RSE with Confidence in Primary Schools		
Year Group	Topic	Lesson titles
Reception	My body, my relationships	Lesson 1: Caring friendships Lesson 2: Being kind Lesson 3: Different families Lesson 4: My body, my choices
Year 1	Growing up, staying safe	Lesson 1: Different friends Lesson 2: Growing and changing Lesson 3: Body safety (online and off) Lesson 3: Families and care

Year 2	Differences	Lesson 1: Gender stereotypes Lesson 2: Male and female Lesson 3: Naming body parts Lesson 4: My body belongs to me
Year 3	Valuing differences and keeping safe	Lesson 1: Body differences Lesson 2: Personal space and consent Lesson 3: Families and people who help us Lesson 4: Staying safe and getting help online
Year 4	Growing up with respect	Lesson 1: Changes Lesson 2: What is puberty? Lesson 3: Healthy friendships Lesson 4: Valuing differences
Year 5	Puberty and personal boundaries	Lesson 1: Talking about puberty Lesson 2: The reproductive system Lesson 3: Puberty help and support Lesson 4: Respect boundaries and be an upstander
Year 6	Puberty, relationships and reproduction	Lesson 1: Puberty and reproduction Lesson 2: Communication and consent in relationships Lesson 3: Families, conception and pregnancy Lesson 4: Communication and respect in relationships online
See Appendix 4 for a more detailed overview of each scheme of work.		

When evaluating The Christopher Winter Project materials, the Working Party made amendments to the published scheme in order to tailor the lessons to the needs of the pupils at our school. In consultation with the Skills for Life Subject Leader, a class teacher will amend lesson plans further before teaching a topic to their class (See Assessment).

A further topic relating to RSE, 'Managing hurtful behaviour and bullying', is taught annually in each Year Group during Anti-bullying Week in the Autumn Term. Appropriate resources such as those produced or endorsed by The PSHE Association are used as reference points in order to address issues relating to hurtful behaviour and bullying in an age appropriate and developmentally appropriate manner (See Appendix 3).

If there were ever occasion where new content linked to RSE needed to be introduced in order to respond to emerging needs or issues within the school, parents /carers would be informed of this and relevant materials would be shared on request.

Our RSE programme encompasses a wide range of teaching and learning styles, with an emphasis on interactive learning and the class teacher as facilitator.

Teaching arrangements

RSE is always taught with two members of staff present in the classroom. The class teacher delivers the lesson content and a teaching assistant provides a supporting role. Lessons focusing on puberty and sex education are usually delivered to the class as a whole with boys and girls being taught together within the same classroom. However, occasionally the class might be split so that boys and girls receive the same lessons but at different times by their class teacher.

Working with external agencies

In the event that external organisations are sought to support and enhance the teaching of RSE, the school will check the credentials of the visitor or visiting organisation ahead of booking their services. Prior to the session(s), the school will liaise with the visitor to ensure that the content of their materials fits in with the school's planned programme and the proposed delivery is age appropriate and accessible for all pupils. This will be achieved by viewing and discussing the materials external agencies will use in advance of their visit(s). Visiting speakers will also be briefed in advance regarding the handling of any personal disclosures made by pupils (See Section 7).

Distancing techniques

Distancing techniques such as stories, photos, case studies and puppets are used to teach RSE as they provide depersonalised examples which support pupils to explore what is being taught without sharing their own personal experiences during lessons.

Questioning is used to support distanced discussions when pupils are responding to a stimulus as well. For example: *What is happening to them? Why might this be happening? How are they feeling? What are they thinking? Who could help them? What would you tell them to do if they asked for help? What could you do or say to persuade them to act differently?*

Members of staff refrain from speaking about personal situations that have affected them. If a class teacher or teaching assistant feels that they have an important point to make, they distance it from themselves, e.g. *'Someone I know well ... / A friend of mine ...'*

Sensitive issues

Pupil generated class ground rules ensure that lessons within the Skills for Life curriculum are delivered in a safe and well-managed environment (See Appendix 5 for guidance relating to the creation of class ground rules). Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and raise issues in a respectful and appropriate manner. It might be inappropriate to address certain questions or issues raised in whole class lessons and these will be followed up at another time either on an individual or group basis.

The class Worry Monster is available for pupils who do not feel confident to ask questions while a lesson is taking place. Pupils are able to place questions or queries relating to their learning into the Worry Monster anonymously at any time. The class teacher then monitors the questions when pupils aren't present in the classroom and uses their discretion when deciding which ones are suitable to answer. If the class teacher is unsure whether to broach a topic raised, they are encouraged to seek the advice of the Skills for Life Subject Leader who might in-turn refer to the Head teacher for advice and clarification. (*Upper Key Stage 2 might use an Ask It Basket instead of the Worry Monster.*)

Whilst it is vital to have trust and openness, we recognise that a pupil might ask a question that goes beyond the RSE curriculum coverage for their Year Group and, in this instance, we will find a different avenue to support the individual. This may include asking the pupil to speak to a trusted adult at home or signposting relevant support services. The school will share information with parents /carers on an individual basis should the need arise as we recognise that if the question goes unanswered, inappropriate sources of information (including those found online) might be sought. In addition, we cannot offer total confidentiality to pupils. Any disclosures or areas of concern will be followed up in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Assessment

To ensure the content and delivery of RSE is appropriate and relevant to our pupils, the class teacher uses a simple baseline assessment to ascertain the existing knowledge, experience and needs of pupils within the class at least one week prior to teaching a unit of work. Based on the pupils' starting points, the class teacher customises the content of a scheme of work in consultation with the Skills for Life Subject Leader in order to meet the differing abilities and requirements of the class. At the end of a unit of work, pupils update their baseline assessments in order to measure personal progress from their starting points. The class teacher also uses the updated baseline assessments to measure and evidence the progress of the class. In addition, the teacher uses outcomes to inform future teaching.

Inclusion and accessibility

We provide an inclusive curriculum that promotes an understanding as well as mutual respect and tolerance for all. We reflect diversity in terms of, but not limited to: age, sex or sexual orientation, gender, religious background, belief, language, race, social background, culture, appearance, family life *, special needs, ability or disability within our curriculum in order to ensure that no pupil feels excluded. We also teach pupils to respect difference, promote equality and challenge stigma. Furthermore, we ensure that the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, are met by adaptive teaching. We remain mindful that pupils with SEND, particularly those with SEMH or learning disabilities, may be more vulnerable than their peers so accessibility to all areas of the Skills for Life curriculum is crucial.

* "Schools should be sensitive to pupils' circumstances, recognising that families of many forms provide a nurturing environment for children, and can include single parent families, same-sex parents, families headed by grandparents, young carers, kinship carers, adoptive parents and foster parents / carers. Teaching should illustrate a wide range of family structures in a positive way, and care should be taken to ensure that children are not stigmatised based on their home circumstances." (Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance from the DfE (July 2025), Page 7, Section 26)

7. Confidentiality and safeguarding

Any personal disclosures made by pupils will be followed up in accordance with the DfE's statutory document, Keeping Children Safe in Education, together with the school's Child Protection policy and Safeguarding policy. Class teachers and teaching assistants will report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL and share concerns with parents / carers according to the school's safeguarding procedures.

8. Working with parents and carers

The school recognises that the role of parents and carers is vital in the development of their children's understanding of RSE. Therefore, we aim to work closely with parents and carers in order to support their fundamental position as well as increase their confidence in the RSE curriculum at our school. An information session is held annually in order to inform parents and carers about the purpose and content of the school's RSE curriculum. The policy, along with the materials that are used in the teaching of RSE, are available during the course of the meeting to support the dialogue between home and school. (Parents and carers also have full access to the policy at all points throughout the year as it is published on the website and all resources for RSE are available on request as well.) In addition, the meeting provides parents and carers with the opportunity to raise questions and queries as well as allay fears and concerns. Subsequent meetings to support individual parents and carers are available on request.

Letters are distributed to parents and carers ahead of the delivery of the 'Ourselves, growing and changing' topics in order to remind them of the content to be delivered in their child's Year Group.

9. Right to withdraw

Relationships Education is a statutory subject so parents and carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from these lessons. Similarly, lessons focusing on key facts relating to puberty and the changing adolescent body (including the menstrual cycle) are part of the statutory Health Education curriculum so parents /carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from these sessions either. The same also applies to biological aspects of the statutory Science curriculum which relates to RSE.

Parents and carers do have the right to withdraw their child from some or all of the learning focusing on sex education. Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in Appendix 6 of this policy and addressed to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will liaise with the parent / carer to discuss their reasons for wanting to withdraw their child. Additionally, the discussion will provide the opportunity for parents / carers to hear about the benefits of receiving this fact-based education and the detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on their child. This could include safeguarding, the dangers of seeking information online, possible social and emotional effects of being excluded as well as the likelihood of the child hearing their peers' version of what was said in class, rather than what was directly said by the class teacher. Detrimental effects may be mitigated if the parents / carers propose to deliver sex education to their child at home instead. A copy of the withdrawal request and agreed actions will be placed in the pupil's educational record. The agreed actions will reference how the class teacher will respond to questions that relate to sex education from which the child has been withdrawn with an emphasis placed on supporting the young person. Alternative, appropriate and purposeful work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.

10. Monitoring, evaluation and training

RSE provision is monitored and evaluated by the Skills for Life Subject Leader, SLT and Governors in line with the monitoring cycle agreed by the school. The RSE policy is reviewed every two years. (See Section 12).

To ensure staff are confident to deliver all aspects of RSE, access to online, in school, local and national training is made available in accordance with the school's CPD programme for staff development.

11. Roles and responsibilities

It is the statutory responsibility of the Governing Body to ensure the school has a compliant and up-to-date RSE policy. The Governing Body are also required to approve the policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that Skills for Life (Health Education, Relationships Education, RSE and PSHE Education) is taught consistently across the school. In addition, the Headteacher is responsible for managing requests with regards to the parental right to withdraw from the non-statutory components of Relationships and Sex Education (See Section 9).

The Skills for Life Subject Leader is responsible for leading and managing the Skills for Life curriculum which includes statutory Relationships Education as well as non-statutory Sex Education.

Class teachers are responsible for delivering RSE to their own class in a positive and sensitive manner. Teaching assistants are responsible for supporting the learning of RSE.

Pupils are expected to engage fully with RSE provision. When discussing issues relating to RSE, pupils are expected to treat others with respect and sensitivity.

12. Policy review date

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the stakeholders listed in Section 4 to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils, staff and parents / carers and that it is in line with current Department for Education advice and guidance. Any amendments to the policy will be made by the Skills for Life Subject Leader before it is ratified by the School Governors.

13. Appendix 1 – DfE Guidance

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

14. Appendix 2 – Curriculum map

15. Appendix 3 – Skills for Life long-term overview

16. Appendix 4 – *Teaching RSE with Confidence in Primary Schools* curriculum overview

17. Appendix 5 – Guidance for creating classroom ground rules

- Ground rules help to minimise comments of a negative nature made towards others; whether intentional or not.
- Examples of ground rules might include:
 - Openness (*We will discuss examples but will not use names or descriptions which could identify anyone.*)
 - Keep the conversation in the room (*We feel safe discussing issues and we know our teacher will not repeat what is said in the classroom unless they are concerned we are at risk.*)
 - Non-judgement approach (*'We will challenge the opinion, not the person.'*)
 - Right to pass (*We have the right to pass and we will not put anyone 'on the spot'.*)
 - Make no assumptions (*We will listen to the other person's point of view respectfully and expect to be listened to ourselves.*)
 - Using appropriate language (*We will use the correct terms rather than slang terms as they can be offensive.*)
 - Answering questions (*We will not ask personal questions or anything intended to deliberately embarrass others.*)
 - Seeking help and advice (*We will ask for help if we need it. We will encourage friends to seek help if we think they need it.*)

18. Appendix 6 – Proforma for right to withdraw from Sex Education lessons

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT / CARER			
Name of child		Class	
Name of parent / carer		Date	
Reason for withdrawing from sex education within Relationships and Sex Education			
Any other information you would like the school to consider			
Parent / Carer signature			

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL	
Agreed actions from discussion with parents	Include notes from discussions with parents and agreed actions taken.